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LOCAL MARCH 24, 2015 9:39 PM

Sacramento City Council approves urban farm ordinance

HIGHLIGHTS

Buying locally sourced fruits and vegetables may soon become as simple as walking over to a neighbor's garden, thanks to a new urban farm ordinance passed Tuesday night by the Sacramento City Council.



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BY MARISSA LANG
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Buying locally sourced fruits and vegetables may soon become as simple as walking over to a neighbor's garden, thanks to a new urban farm ordinance passed Tuesday night by the Sacramento City Council.

In a 6-1 vote, the city effectively opened the door to minifarms on private properties and in vacant lots that would be able to sell produce out of urban farm stands, despite reservations from some council members about urban beekeeping and how urban agriculture may affect those who live close to the new farms.

The new ordinance enables city residents to grow and sell food directly from their properties and offers tax incentives to landowners who allow their properties, including vacant lots in residential, commercial, industrial and manufacturing zones throughout the city, to be turned into minifarms. The farms would be restricted to 3 acres.

The aim, in part, is to reduce urban blight and bring fruit and vegetables to so-called "food insecure" populations, whose access to fresh produce has been limited by a lack of healthy options in low-income neighborhoods.

A 2009 study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that 23.5 million people do not have access to a supermarket within a mile of their home.

Urban farm stands in residential neighborhoods would be restricted to operating Tuesdays and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., except those on vacant lots, which would be allowed to operate without time or day restrictions.

Advocates of urban farming played on Sacramento's campaign to market itself as the farm-to-fork capital of the country and challenged the city to get farm food to "every fork."

More than 100 people packed the council chambers to support the ordinance.

James Brady, a self-proclaimed urban farmer who works as an aquaponics consultant, told the council that the benefits to low-income communities and people extend beyond the nutrition. He said giving people the opportunity to sell the food they produce would grow a new population of entrepreneurs and allow low-income people to grow their own food and earn additional income by selling to their neighbors.

Representatives from the Southeast Asian American community said another, less visible benefit to low-income and immigrant communities is purpose, pride and empowerment.

“My family arrived in this country with very few skills and spoke no English,” said Cha Vang, an organizer with Hmong Innovating Politics. “But my mom knew that she could always rely on her ability to grow, cultivate and garden anything, anywhere. Not only did gardening empower her, it also provided our family’s dinner table with fresh produce when most other low-income families had to settle for unhealthy fast food.”

More than 300 Sacramento residents signed a petition asking the council to pass the ordinance, according to the Sacramento Urban Agriculture Coalition.

In passing the urban farm ordinance, Sacramento followed the lead of several cities around country that have looked to inner-city agriculture to combat blight and produce more fresh fruits and vegetables in neighborhoods with few grocery stores. Among them: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle.

The ordinance’s passage Tuesday was not without concerns from council members.

Councilwoman Angelique Ashby said in Natomas, properties are often divided up among several people or families. She worried that the person with control of the yard could unilaterally make a decision to delve into urban farming without consulting with other people in the property.

Councilman Larry Carr, the lone no vote on the measure, worried about the urban beekeeping aspects of the ordinance and asked whether the insects could be contained or kept away from people. In an attempt to quell his concerns, Councilman Jeff Harris, himself a beekeeper, invited Carr to his home.

Prior to passing the ordinance, agriculture activity – growing produce for sale – was only allowed in specially zoned lots.

New urban farmers would be subject to city water conservation ordinances and would be required to adhere to the same restrictions as other outdoor water users.

Anyone attempting to sell their produce out of an urban farm stand would be required to obtain a business operations tax certificate, city officials said Tuesday. For a stand that earns less than \$10,000 per year, a certificate would cost \$31.

No liability insurance would be required.

Tax incentives for lot owners who allow their property to be turned into minifarms could add up to \$6,127 an acre each year, according to Sacramento city staff estimates, but a New York City study found community gardens boosted the values of nearby properties.

Call The Bee’s Marissa Lang, (916) 321-1038. Follow her on Twitter at @Marissa_Jae.

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FOOD & DRINK JULY 31, 2015 5:01 PM

Hundreds of vacant lots in city may benefit from urban ag ordinance

HIGHLIGHTS

Proposed ordinance would give vacant lot owners a tax break

Many lots in Fruitridge, South Oak Park

Interest in farming vacant lots growing



Video: Sacramento vacant lot to become urban farm 01:04



1 of 4



BY EDWARD ORTIZ
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When urban farmer Fatima Malik steps past a chain-link fence onto a vacant lot in Del Paso Heights, she sees a plot of land that could someday be a fruit tree farm.

The parcel on Silver Eagle Road is one of hundreds scattered throughout Sacramento that could become urban farmland if the City Council approves an ordinance giving owners a tax break for converting their land to gardens.

The ordinance would establish agriculture incentive zones where vacant lot owners would enter into a five-year contract with the city to allow farming on a vacant lot in order to be taxed at a lower, agricultural tax rate.

For Malik, a member of the Del Paso Heights Growers Alliance, the ordinance will be the starting point for contacting owners of vacant lots along Silver Eagle Road. "There are a whole bunch of vacant lots on this street that could have urban farming on them," Malik said.

She said that the cost of converting the Bianca Dexter's weed-choked property to a fruit tree farm would be \$300,000.

Passage of the ordinance, which may happen as soon as this fall, is seen as crucial step in encouraging the expansion of urban farming in the city. San Francisco became the first city in the state to offer the tax breaks last year, and has two vacant lots participating.

Dexter says the ordinance would help her make the land where she grew up useful.

"Nothing is taking place with the land," Dexter said. "I want to put it to good use for the neighborhood, and the community."

Chanowk Yisrael, who operates the half-acre Yisrael Family farm in South Oak Park, said he has been approached by at least six landowners who want him to farm their vacant land. Yisrael said that there are close to 70 vacant or blighted lots in the South Oak Park and Fruitridge neighborhoods that could be planted.

“There are so many people that want me to do things on their land, but I don’t have enough people to do it,” Yisrael said. “So, it’s high time we train people who want to do this work because now there will be places where this work can be done.”

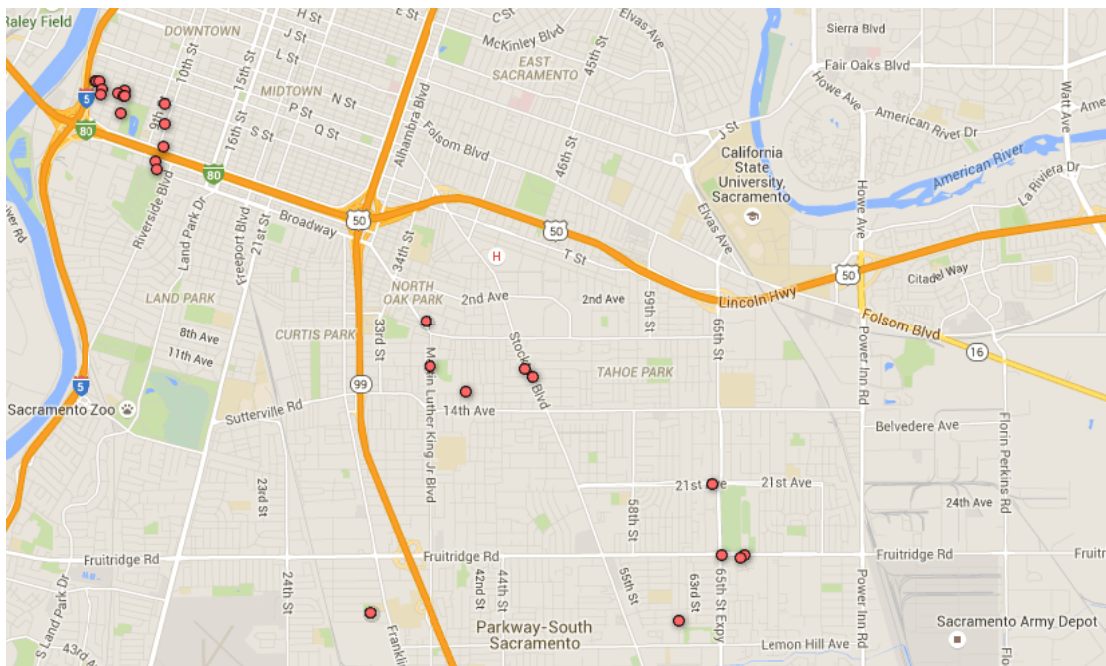
The tax incentive zone ordinance comes shortly after the city passed new rules allowing urban farmers to sell produce and fruit on-site.

“We would like to see some barriers come down for urban farmers to farm vacant and blighted lots,” said Helen Selph, associate planner with the city’s Community Development Department. “We want to give them (urban farmers) some tenure. We want them to know that when they put a lot of effort into a parcel that they can farm it for a while.”

Sacramento’s existing urban agriculture ordinance and the proposed tax incentive ordinance are an outgrowth of AB 551, state legislation passed in 2013. The bill authorized cities and counties to contract with landowners for reduced property taxes for urban farms.

Selph said her department does not have a current inventory of how many vacant lots could benefit from the tax breaks. The department estimates hundreds of lots would be eligible.

Neighborhoods like Oak Park and Del Paso Heights that have been identified as food deserts are the most promising areas for vacant lot conversion, said Matt Read, organizer with the Sacramento Urban Farming Coalition. The coalition is helping the city craft the ordinance language. Read said the coalition has identified 20 vacant lots in and around the Fruitridge area where there is interest from either a lot owner or an urban farmer for farming on a vacant lot. Southside Park also has lots that would be eligible to participate.



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Map ©Report a map error

The ordinance brings with it several drawbacks. One would be a property tax revenue loss for the county of Sacramento, Read said. However, the loss would be small. The ordinance caps revenue loss at \$250,000 for the city and the county.

Converted vacant lots would be assessed at the going tax rate for the state’s irrigated farmland, according to the ordinance language. That rate is roughly \$12,100 per acre, according to the State Board of Equalization. The Sacramento County Assessor estimates property owners will save an average of \$937 a year per parcel.

The tax savings don’t completely offset the costs of creating farms on vacant lots. Water delivery, for instance, is a significant expense. The city will require all vacant lots included in the program to install water meters, said Jim McDonald, planner with Sacramento’s Community Development department. “It could cost between \$5,000 and \$10,000 for the water meter, the taps and the labor,” he said.

McDonald said the tax incentive zone ordinance is designed to defray such costs. "Owners can already allow urban farming without the tax break, but then they would be out the cost of the water hookup."

The drought may be a factor since the ordinance stipulates that the urban farms must conform to the city's water conservation plan, which would not allow for any irrigation other than drip irrigation, and would limit what can be grown.

The ordinance will be heard by the city's Planning Commission before it heads to the City Council for what is expected to be a fall vote.

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Sacramento County OKs birds, bees and farm stands with urban ag ordinance

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What will the county urban agriculture ordinance do for the Yisrael Family Urban Farm? 0:55



1 of 2



BY ROBIN OPSAHL
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Residents of urban and suburban Sacramento County will be able to legally grow and sell crops, keep bees, and raise chickens and ducks at home under an urban agriculture ordinance that county supervisors unanimously passed Tuesday.

Proponents say the new legal framework will make life easier for small-scale farmers and provide fresh food in areas that lack full-service grocery stores.

“This sets up a foundation for people working as urban farmers that wasn’t there before,” said Randy Stannard, chairman of Oak Park Sol, a group that helps residents turn vacant lots and underused outdoor areas into community gardens and urban farms.

The new county rules, which amend the zoning code and take effect 30 days after approval, are modeled on regulations that Sacramento City Council members passed in 2015.

The county ordinance allows for market gardens on vacant lots and for people to set up farm stands to sell home-grown produce. It also legalizes keeping bees, chickens and ducks on small lots. Larger animals, such as cows, can be kept temporarily on lots under 20,000 square feet for educational programs, such as 4H.

The county will issue permits for urban farming activities. The permit fees will be waived for the first year, which will serve as a testing period for the new regulations.

The urban agriculture ordinance gives backyard farmers a chance to address food insecurity issues in their communities, said Katie Valenzuela Garcia, a coordinator with the Sacramento Urban Agriculture Coalition.

During the Board of Supervisors meeting Tuesday, Garcia read a note from Chanowk Yisrael, an urban farmer who lives just outside the city limits in south Sacramento. In his note, Yisrael wrote that selling food from his farm would provide a source of fresh produce in an area that has been called a “food desert” for its lack of grocery stores and farmers markets selling fruits and vegetables.

“I ask you to pass the urban agriculture ordinance to empower urban farmers like myself to grow organically grown produce and get that life-giving food into the hands of those who need it the most,” Yisrael wrote.

Stannard said the ordinance would benefit members of the Southeast Asian community, who make up the majority of urban farmers in Sacramento County. “This ordinance would allow for a lot of Southeast Asian growers to economically and culturally have stable roots,” he said.

Some details of the ordinance must still be worked out. County Supervisor Don Nottoli said the regulations for temporarily keeping larger animals on small properties aren’t clearly defined, which could lead to problems.

“The issue is what standards people can apply to make determinations on what’s acceptable,” Nottoli said. “A herd of steer isn’t going to fit on a 7-acre lot.”

Proponents of urban farming said their next goal is to create special zones where owners of vacant lots could receive tax incentives for devoting their land to agriculture. The tax incentives would encourage urban farming and decrease urban blight, Garcia said.

“We will immediately turn and be working with city staff to bring that future action forward,” she said.



Sacramento vacant lot to become urban farm

Fatima Malik wants to farm this vacant plot in Del Paso Heights. The City of Sacramento is proposing new tax incentives to encourage the conversion of such vacant lots into miniature farms.

Edward Ortiz - The Sacramento Bee

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Improving Unincorporated SacCounty Neighborhoods

10/10/2013 Economic Development, Community Planning, Agriculture



Together: increasing safety and addressing neglected properties

Article Date: Thursday, October 10, 2013

Sacramento County is marshaling resources in areas of the unincorporated County that have suffered from a high number of foreclosed homes, devaluation of commercial corridors and neighborhoods, and increased crime.

“With the worst of the recession behind us, we can begin to focus on some of the more mature neighborhoods that are the backbone of the County,”

said County Executive Bradley J. Hudson. “We intend to work with residents to restore neighborhoods and create a sense of pride.”

The County is embarking on a comprehensive, multi-agency approach to address problem areas. Code Enforcement, Probation and Sheriff teams will focus on property and criminal elements. Probation Officers, with the assistance of POP Officers (Problem Oriented Policing), and Code will evaluate properties and investigate negligent property owners. They will research crime history on certain properties prior to Code Enforcement staff going to the residence to ensure safety.

By working together, we’ll be better able to get comprehensive results in an area as we address public and private property and crime issues,” said Lori Moss, Director of Community Development. “Working in teams, aided by our newly adopted regulatory ordinances as part of the 'Neighborhood Livability Initiative' we will gain compliance from problem properties.”

The newer codes set specific standards for landscaping and blight issues, and answer questions such as “how high does grass have to be overgrown to warrant Code Enforcement’s involvement?” When residents complain about unkempt properties and want something done there are now clear guidelines to address the issues.

As part of the effort, a comprehensive clean-up will take place in the North Highlands area on October 12 from 8 a.m. to noon. Code Enforcement, Probation, Waste Management and Recycling, Sheriff’s Department, Atlas Disposal of Sacramento and a host of volunteers will team up for a 4-hour clean-up to remove extra junk and rubbish. They will provide large waste bins and remove trash and debris at no cost to residents. At the same time, they will be connecting with residents on blight issues that may require additional follow-up.

“When residents see the County actively responding to problem properties and removing problem individuals, it will do a lot to get citizens engaged in their neighborhoods again,” said Carl Simpson, Code Enforcement Chief. “With the Sheriff and Probation departments, we will begin by focusing on areas with the highest need,” said Simpson. “Not only will the team-approach provide extra safety for employees, it will allow criminal activity to be dealt with on the spot.”

To enforce this effort, a Community Prosecutor will be brought into the District Attorney’s office, and set up office at the Marconi Sheriff station. “Having a dedicated prosecutor will go a long way to enforce the regulations and increase effectiveness of the neighborhood cleanups,” said Karen Maxwell, Assistant Chief Deputy District Attorney. “We’ve applied for a grant to fund an additional prosecutor and Code Enforcement officer, and cover additional Sheriff costs.”

For more information, visit [Code Enforcement’s website](#). To report an issue, click on the “Contact Your Code Chief.”



Neighborhood Cleanup

Sacramento County Approves New Development Code

7/22/2015 Economic Development, Community Planning, Agriculture



Sacramento County's new Development Code applies to both commercial and residential development

Article Date: Wednesday, July 22, 2015

Today, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors approved the first major update to the County's Development Code in 30 years. This vote was the final step in a multi-year process to update the Zoning Code and Design Guidelines, which make up the Development Code.

"We appreciate all of the feedback we received from our constituents during this process, including from multiple public meetings that occurred out in the community," said Supervisor Phil Serna, Chairman of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. "The public's input, along with County staff's hard work and dedication, has resulted in a Development Code that will improve the quality of life in Sacramento County."

The updated Development Code will streamline development. It simplifies land use entitlements and lowers the hearing authority for specific types of projects. For example, an indoor recreation facility for 200 people will now be a permitted use. Previously, these facilities had to apply for a \$15,000 conditional use permit. The County has also added flexibility to development in industrial zones to encourage mixed-use development. Restaurants are now permitted by right in industrial business parks. The lowered hearing authority for these projects means that businesses will save 25 to 30 percent on their permit costs and processing times with the County.

For residential neighborhoods, the updated Design Guidelines emphasize Active Design to encourage walking and biking, and improve access to public transit. The Zoning Code adds new standards to increase the quality of residential neighborhoods and to protect residents from nuisances.

“The new development code balances the dual goals of improving the livability of our residential neighborhoods and increasing economic development in Sacramento County,” said County Executive Brad Hudson. “We are proud of the work we’ve done to reach this milestone.”

The [Department of Community Development](#) set three main goals for the update.

1. Provide business and user friendly practices that promote economic development and streamline the entitlement process, offering flexibility while ensuring appropriate community review.
2. Create Design Guidelines and Development Standards that achieve higher standards for the quality of both residential and commercial buildings.
3. Promote low-impact development, active design, walkable communities, energy efficiency and water conservation.

During the past three years, the Department has presented the Development Code update to a variety of stakeholders, community groups, Community Planning Advisory Councils, business organizations and others at more than 80 public meetings. Based on feedback from the public and the direction of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, the Department of Community Development has made many updates to the Public Review Draft between February 2014 and July 2015. The final draft of the Zoning Code was posted on the County’s website and distributed to the public on June 11, 41 days in advance of the final hearing.

For more information and related documents, visit the [Zoning Code Update web page](#).



Example of desired commercial development

Contact Info:

CITY BEAT OCTOBER 27, 2015 4:39 PM

Sacramento council approves \$12.50 minimum wage plan after compromise reached

HIGHLIGHTS

City Council votes for the new plan Tuesday night

Compromise removes controversial exemptions from proposal

Mayor Johnson, business and labor negotiate new deal



Video: Sacramento police arrest protester at minimum wage hearing 01:55



< 1 of 2 >



BY RYAN LILLIS
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The Sacramento City Council approved an increase in the city’s minimum wage Tuesday night by a 6-3 vote after a last-minute compromise emerged on the plan and protesters created a tense scene at City Hall.

The new proposal, released as a City Council hearing started, removed controversial exemptions from the original plan but kept the wage numbers the same. The plan still called for the minimum wage to increase to \$12.50 an hour by 2020, with increases after that date linked to the Consumer Price Index.

While the compromise plan earned the support of some key interest groups, labor groups and low-wage workers blasted the proposal. Two protesters were taken into police custody, including one woman who yelled, “I’m pregnant” as she was led out of the City Council chambers in handcuffs.

Mayor Kevin Johnson, Councilman Jay Schenirer, and business and labor leaders worked out the compromise in recent days, according to a source with direct knowledge of the negotiations. Leaders of the Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce and the political advocacy group Region Business testified in support of the plan.

However, Fabrizio Sasso, head of the Sacramento Central Labor Council and a member of the task force that released the original plan, urged the City Council to vote against the new compromise. Some small-business owners also criticized the proposal.

“I’m not accepting a proposal nobody’s seen,” Sasso said in an interview. “They shouldn’t vote in haste. They should study this and the impacts of it.”

He added during the council hearing that the proposal would “increase income inequality in our city.”

Johnson, Schenirer and council members Allen Warren, Jeff Harris, Rick Jennings and Larry Carr voted for the proposal. Council members Angelique Ashby, Steve Hansen and Eric Guerra voted against the plan.

While the minimum-wage increase in the most recent plan remains unchanged, the proposal does not include a “total compensation” provision from a proposal released last month that would have allowed businesses to pay the lower state minimum wage if they could prove employees took home at least \$15 an hour with tips. That provision had been deemed illegal by the state Office of Legislative Counsel, and two workers’ rights groups threatened earlier this month to sue the city if the stipulation was approved.

In addition to the total compensation section, other exemptions in the original proposal also have been removed. Those include exempting employers from paying minimum wage to the following sets of workers: those under the age of 18, some employees with developmental disabilities and employees up to age 25 who are in job training programs “or part of re-entry or release job training programs operated by nonprofit corporations or governmental agencies,” according to a city staff report.

A new provision of the proposal would allow employers to pay \$2 an hour below the minimum wage if they provide health care to workers. Credits also would be available to businesses that provide job training to employees.

If approved, the minimum-wage increase would start with a boost to \$10.50 on Jan. 1, 2017, \$11 an hour in 2018 and \$11.75 in 2019.

The wage increase schedule for small businesses also changed.

Businesses and nonprofits with fewer than 100 employees would have to pay the new minimum wage one year after other businesses. The previous proposal had allowed businesses with fewer than 40 employees a six-month delay.

In addition to labor leaders, the operators of small businesses – including Relles Florist, Revolution Wines and the Esquire IMAX Theatre – testified against the proposal.

“This change will add \$100,000 to our bottom line,” said Doug Link with the Esquire IMAX, adding that the theater has barely broken even over the past 15 years.

Another speaker, Brenda Ruiz, criticized the City Council for presenting an altered plan the day of the vote. “Are we going to draw it up right now?” she asked. “Let’s get out the cocktail napkins and some Sharpies.”

Business groups, some of whom had opposed the previous proposal, ended up supporting the last-minute plan.

Peter Tateishi, president and CEO of the Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce, said “this is a more workable compromise.”

“We’re happy to see the exemptions have been corrected so more small businesses won’t be impacted,” he said.

Schenirer, who co-chaired a mayoral task force that spent weeks exploring a minimum-wage plan, presented the new proposal at the start of the City Council hearing. He acknowledged the changes would not have the support of all of his council colleagues or from many in the large crowd at City Hall.

However, Schenirer said doing nothing was “not acceptable to me.”

“It’s not perfect, it’s not even close to perfect, but I’m not willing to do nothing,” he said. “I don’t think Sacramento should sit around and wait for the state” to potentially raise the minimum wage.

The 15-member task force appointed by Johnson released the initial proposal in September. But support for the plan quickly faded, with major business and labor groups eventually voicing opposition to the proposal in recent days.

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TRANSPORTATION MARCH 17, 2016 2:55 PM

Sacramento 'zeros' in on dangerous streets, hopes to reduce injuries

HIGHLIGHTS

'Vision Zero' project goal is to identify high-injury areas

Community residents would help suggest safety improvements

Keys are enforcement, education, and street re-engineering



BY TONY BIZJAK
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Sacramento city leaders are joining with bicycle and pedestrian advocates for a community-based effort to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on city streets.

The program, called Vision Zero, also will try to do away with, or at least not use, the word “accident” to describe the crashes.

“Traffic crashes aren’t accidents; they are preventable and can be systematically eliminated,” said city traffic chief Hector Barron.

Vision Zero is an international movement, popping up recently in American cities, that emphasizes cooperative efforts between government, advocacy groups, residents and others to make streets safer for all users, notably pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

Barron acknowledged the “zero” fatalities idea would seem to be unrealistic, but it serves the purpose of setting a high bar. “It is important to have a goal so that we can strive to make improvements. It helps in terms of long-term visioning.”

Sacramento officials say 130 people died in crashes on city streets in a five-year period between 2010 and 2014, including 48 pedestrians and 13 cyclists. Another 450 crashes caused severe injuries.

Barron said the city will set up a Vision Zero task force, including police and fire representatives as well as others in the community, to determine where the worst trouble spots are. The group will take a multipronged approach to reducing injuries, including traffic enforcement, public education and street redesigns.

At this point, the project does not involve special funding. The task force’s analysis could, though, lead to safety grant requests and reprioritizing of existing and future street, traffic and law enforcement funding toward Vision Zero projects.

Cycling and pedestrian advocates have already begun pushing the Vision Zero concept in their work. Their research shows the most dangerous streets and intersections in the city are the wide, high-speed streets that run through the city's neighborhoods, such as Del Paso Road in Natomas, Stockton Boulevard, Fruitridge Road, 65th Street and 47th Avenue.

Jim Brown, director of the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates group, said the intersection of Stockton Boulevard and Fruitridge Road is an example of a problematic intersection for all users. It is busy, wide, with numerous turn lanes, and is hard for pedestrians and cyclists to negotiate without crossing paths with numerous cars.

Brown called Vision Zero "an opportunity to shine a light on who is most at risk. Disproportionately, it's low income people in the (city's) suburbs. We'll be focusing on solutions that benefit areas that have traditionally been underserved when it comes to accommodations for cycling."

Kirin Kumar, project manager for WalkSacramento, said his group is interested in getting community residents involved in deciding what safety priorities their areas need. WalkSacramento did a "walk audit" recently on Broadway with Tahoe Park residents, he said, compiling a list of safety changes that could be made as money becomes available.

Sacramento police officials say they will participate. The department eliminated its traffic unit during the recession but has recently begun reassembling it. It now has four motorcycle officers, not enough to cover the city, Lt. Justin Risley said. The Vision Zero program could help police leverage their resources. "Vision Zero is about collaboration and finding multiple solutions," he said.

City officials said the Vision Zero concept is a formalized extension of work already being done or planned. The city in recent years has been reducing some street widths and reducing lanes to slow traffic, adding bike lanes, separating sidewalks from traffic, and building pedestrian islands to increase safety. Recently, the city has added flashing beacons at some crosswalks and installed some pedestrian-only traffic signals.

The Citrus Heights Police Department recently announced that it is deploying extra officers to areas where traffic violations are highest, including locations most prone to collisions. The department has mapped areas for two years where pedestrian and bike collisions have occurred.

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A proposed Sacramento bike program seeks to eliminate road fatalities

Can a comprehensive safety program really take annual deaths to zero?

By [Graham Womack](#)

Between 2010 and 2014, 130 people were killed in traffic crashes in Sacramento, including 48 pedestrians and 13 bicyclists. Now, some activists are aiming to change those statistics with Vision Zero, a safety-oriented program that originated in Sweden in 1997.

Sacramento City Council voted unanimously last month to develop a Vision Zero task force and action plan locally. The program, which holds that traffic crashes are predictable and preventable, seeks to bring traffic fatalities down to zero and follows in the path of a similar south Sacramento effort.



PHOTO BY THINKSTOCK/ANGELSIMON

City Councilman Steve Hansen, who first brought Vision Zero to council last year and made the motion to create the task force, called the initiative “a very substantive thing.”

Hansen envisions the task force examining how local development practices affect transportation. He also wants the program to consider ways to promote safety via improved roads, better biking and walking opportunities and education. More than this, Hansen says he'd like to see decades of car-oriented guidelines in Sacramento revisited.

“There are policies that have been put in place and things that have been allowed to happen that de-emphasize walking,” Hansen told SN&R. “We need to change these policies if we're going to actually help people.”

Hansen stressed the importance of Vision Zero.

“I think getting this right will leave a whole generation of Sacramentans better off,” Hansen said at the March 15 meeting.

Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates Executive Director Jim Brown questions, however, if the city can go

beyond discussing policy to actually implementing Vision Zero and affecting change.

“That's been my fear all along,” Brown said. “It's tempting to adopt a policy that doesn't have a lot of teeth to it.”

Brown's group and Kirin Kumar of Walk Sacramento, a nonprofit that advocates to make the area more pedestrian friendly, are currently collaborating to bring a Vision Zero program to south Sacramento. The two groups received a planning grant of roughly \$25,000 from the California Endowment to develop the program.

Working independently of the city, Brown and Kumar have collected data and talked to south Sacramento residents. Brown said their program is a model for how Vision Zero programs can be implemented via practical measures such as bike lane changes, and they plan to share their research with others. Brown and Kumar say they hope to join the city's task force. “We've already told the city we'd be happy to share all of our findings,” Brown said.

Too often, Brown said, the city doesn't seek enough community input in the early stages of projects. He pointed to a bike lane that was added to Stockton Boulevard several years ago as evidence.

“I doubt anybody asked residents, ‘Do you feel OK riding there?’” he said.

Brown called the city's planning process “top-down,” saying it leads to “no buy-in” from residents.

City traffic engineer Hector Barron disagreed, telling SN&R, “We'd have to have some level of outreach before we come back to council.”

There are plenty of neighborhoods the city can visit as part of this approach. Brown said that bike fatalities in Sacramento occur in an arc that runs through North Highlands, Arden-Arcade, Power Inn Road and south Sacramento. Most victims, he added, tend to be poor, minority men.

Vision Zero already faces one potential challenge, a common one for transit projects and initiatives locally: funding. Barron told SN&R he'd like to bring in a consultant to help with the action plan, but that he needs more money to do this.

Although he's not yet sure what the costs will be, Barron said he will return to city council in May or June during its budget cycle to request additional funds.

□

BUSINESS & REAL ESTATE DECEMBER 7, 2016 1:33 PM

Sacramento says no to more liquor in Oak Park: 'If you have alcohol, they will come'

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BY ANITA CHABRIA
achabria@sacbee.com

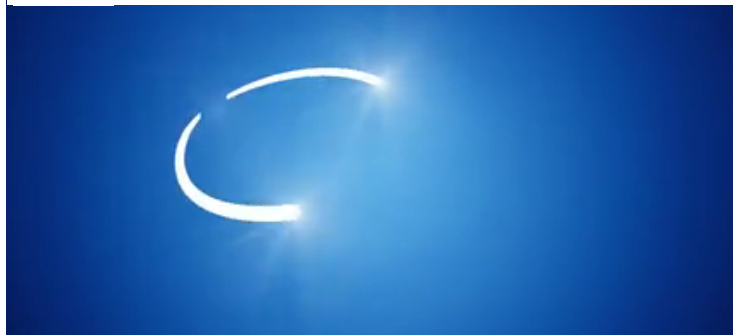
A ban on small-store alcohol sales in Oak Park will continue after the Sacramento City Council rejected an effort to lift the prohibition Tuesday night and allow a 7-Eleven to open in the neighborhood.

The contentious 4-3 vote surprised dozens of residents who protested the plan for 22 months but thought the City Council would approve the change.

"I thought this thing was going to happen," said Bill Motmans, a board member of the Tahoe Park Neighborhood Association.

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With the vote, the city will continue to ban alcohol sales in stores less than 15,000 square feet in size along a specially designated Oak Park business corridor along Broadway and Stockton Boulevard. The city imposed the ban in 2001 in an attempt to lower crime and blight in a troubled part of town that had an overabundance of bottle shops.

When the ban was first implemented, it applied to small stores in which more than half of shelf space was devoted to alcohol. But in 2013, the city accidentally expanded the ban to stores with any space devoted to alcohol when it changed the language during an update of planning department codes.

The mistake was not discovered for years, until Frank Louie and Gloria Wong Louie decided to retire from the popular Chinese restaurant they've run for 27 years at the corner of Broadway and Stockton. The couple wanted to rent their space to 7-Eleven.

In exploring city requirements, the Louies discovered the 2013 code change.

City staff workers recommended correcting the ordinance back to its original intent, but community members protested. Many felt that the stricter ban has been significant in helping to reduce crime and other problems in the area, and they fought vehemently to keep the mistake in place.

Councilman Jay Schenirer has attempted for months to broker a compromise, calling it a "difficult" issue.

On Tuesday, he tried to salvage a compromise by suggesting that the ban remain in effect on Stockton Boulevard and be lifted on Broadway. Broadway is undergoing an economic renaissance with new shops and restaurants opening, while Stockton Boulevard continues to face economic challenges.

Schenirer said lifting the ban on Broadway could keep its momentum going by allowing more types of businesses. Under his proposal, stores wanting to sell alcohol would have gone through an individual permitting process that allowed neighborhood input and restrictions.

"We should let the neighborhoods decide what is best for them," he said. "I don't think this is about 7-Eleven and it's not about Frank Louie. This is about a neighborhood and where they are and what they can do and not do. ... It's a little bit of laziness on the part of government to say, 'No, you can't do this at all' rather than having to do the work and look at individual shops."

Gloria Wong Louie said during Tuesday's meeting that she had met "many wonderful people" and had "seen the corridor improve immensely" during her decades in the area, and she asked the council to support the change.

"It takes corporate and local businesses, big and small, to help a community flourish," she said.

But Councilwoman Angelique Ashby said that while she did not want to cause a hardship for the Louies, the City Council should listen to the five neighborhood associations protesting the plan. She pointed to the contentious development in Curtis Park where some neighborhood residents have vocally opposed a proposed Safeway gas station at the site, and the council did not approve the project.

"When Curtis Park came to us and told us they felt strongly about gas, we listened to them," she said.

Councilman Allen Warren also opposed dropping the ban. He said he did not think the area would benefit from more alcohol sales and that it could lead to problems.

"If you have alcohol, they will come," he said.

Councilmen Larry Carr and Eric Guerra also voted against the proposal, while Vice Mayor Rick Jennings and Councilman Jeff Harris supported it.

A representative for 7-Eleven declined to comment after the meeting.

Anita Chabria: 916-321-1049, @chabriaa

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Gov. Brown just signed 15 housing bills. Here's how they're supposed to help the affordability crisis

By **Liam Dillon**

SEPTEMBER 29, 2017, 12:00 PM | REPORTING FROM SAN FRANCISCO

Gov. **Jerry Brown** has finalized lawmakers' most robust response to California's housing affordability problems in recent memory.

The "15 good bills" Brown signed into law here Friday morning include a new fee on real estate transactions and a \$4-billion bond on the 2018 ballot that together could raise close to \$1 billion a year in the near term to help subsidize new homes for low-income residents.

"It is a big challenge. We have risen to it this year," Brown said.

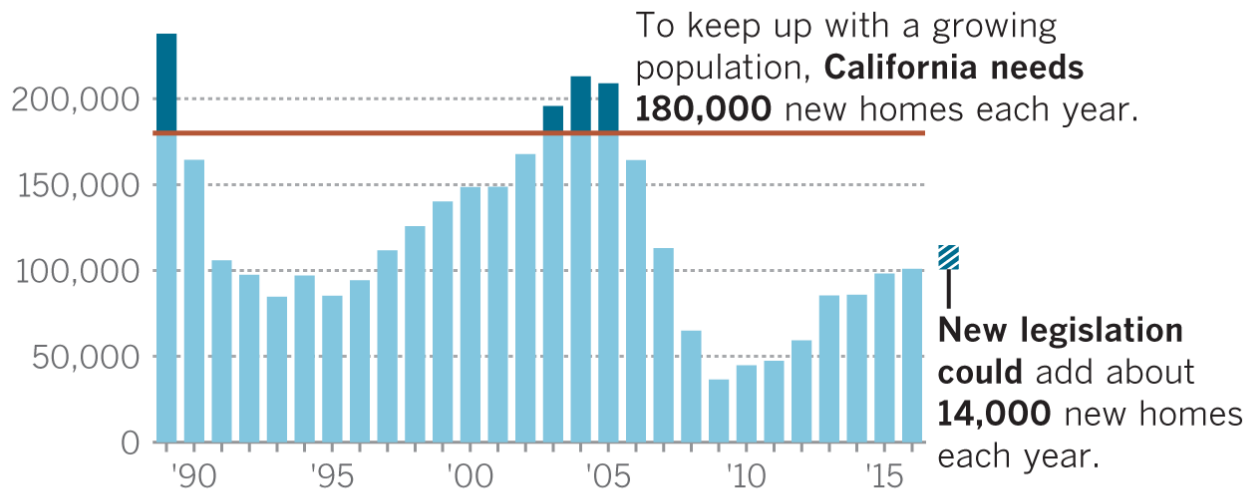
The governor signed the legislation surrounded by lawmakers and advocates at Hunters View, a **\$450-million project** in San Francisco that is redeveloping what was once crumbling public housing into new homes for 700 low- and middle-income families. Speakers at the ceremony hailed the package of bills as a sea change in how the state handles housing issues.

"Today California begins a pivot from a housing-last policy to a housing-first policy," said Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco), who wrote one of the key measures.

Still, the array of new laws Brown signed Friday will hardly put a dent in the state's housing problems. Developers need to build about 100,000 new homes each year beyond what's already planned, simply to keep pace with California's population growth.

Money from the bond — assuming it's approved by voters in November 2018 — and the new real estate fee are estimated to finance about 14,000 additional houses a year, still leaving the state tens of thousands of units short annually, **according to the state and third parties**. Moreover, all the bond money could be spent in as little as five years.

New homes built each year in California



Note: One of the bills would require voter approval in 2018.

Sources: Construction Industry Research Board and California Department of Housing and Community Development

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.(.)

Legislators and others in attendance emphasized that this year's package of bills was only the start of what they planned to do on housing.

"We know we have much more work to do," said Assemblyman Richard Bloom (D-Santa Monica), who authored multiple bills in the package. "And we will keep working this issue for as long as we need to."

Here's a rundown of how the bills aim to address different factors that add to the state's housing problems:

Spending more money to build housing, primarily for low-income residents

Most of the money raised by **Senate Bill 2**, the \$75 real estate transaction fee, and **Senate Bill 3**, the \$4-billion housing bond, would go toward helping pay for the development of new homes for low-income residents, defined as people earning 60% or less of the median income in a given community. So in Los Angeles that means a family of four having a combined income of less than \$54,060 a year.

The measures also will go toward new construction to benefit the homeless and farmworkers with a small percentage of money reserved to help pay for middle-class housing construction. For those homes, residents will be able to earn up to

150% of median income in the highest cost areas — that's \$135,000 annually for a family of four in Los Angeles, for example.

Both measures include dollars for other efforts besides helping subsidize homebuilding. Half of the money raised in the first year under SB 2 will go to cities and counties to update neighborhood development blueprints and other planning documents. And \$1 billion of the housing bond will go toward home loans for veterans.

SB 2 is expected to raise \$250 million a year by charging people a \$75 starting fee to refinance a mortgage or make other real estate transactions, except for home or commercial property sales. The most anyone can be charged is \$225 per transaction. SB 3 will authorize a bond that will be paid back with interest by tax dollars earmarked in the state budget, though the veterans will repay their loans themselves.

Making it easier for developers to build

Housing advocates and academics cite burdensome regulations, including some local governments' lengthy approval processes, as a problem limiting the state's housing growth.

A trio of measures aims to whittle down some of those rules. **Senate Bill 35** forces cities to approve projects that comply with existing zoning if not enough housing has been built to keep pace with [their state home-building targets](#). Such projects must also reserve a certain percentage of homes for low-income residents and [pay construction workers union-level wages](#) and abide by union-standard hiring rules.

Assembly Bill 73 and **Senate Bill 540** give cities an incentive to plan neighborhoods for new development. Under AB 73, a city receives money when it designates a particular community for more housing and then additional dollars once it starts issuing permits for new homes. In these neighborhoods, at least 20% of the housing must be reserved for low- or middle-income residents, and projects will have to be granted permits without delay if they meet zoning standards.

SB 540 authorizes a state grant or loan for a local government to do planning and environmental reviews to cover a particular neighborhood. Developers in the designated community also will have to reserve a certain percentage of homes for

low- and middle-income residents and the city's approvals there would be approved without delay.

Money to implement both laws could come from the new real estate transaction fee and the bond.

Pushing developers to build and preserve more low-income housing

Because of a [2009 court decision](#) involving a Los Angeles developer, cities are not allowed to force builders of apartment complexes to reserve a portion of their projects for low-income residents. Those policies were called an illegal expansion of rent control.

Now, **Assembly Bill 1505** changes the rules so that cities can once again implement low-income requirements. San Jose [already is considering a policy](#) that would force developers to set aside 15% of their projects.

Typically when developers agree to build low-income apartments, that agreement lasts a certain time, often between 30 and 50 years. Afterward, owners of the property can charge market-rate rents. The California Housing Partnership Corp., a nonprofit low-income housing advocate, [recently estimated](#) that 14,000 low-income units in Los Angeles County are at risk of losing their income restrictions in the next five years.

Assembly Bill 1521 requires owners to accept a qualified offer to purchase the apartment complex from someone who pledges to continue renting the homes to low-income residents.

The state now runs a [tax credit program giving large banks and other investors incentives](#) to help finance housing for farmworkers. **Assembly Bill 571** expands that effort with an eye toward making it easier for developers to bundle it with other sources to build farmworker housing.

Forcing cities to plan for more housing

Every eight years, cities and counties have to plan for enough new homes to meet state projections of population growth. This process, however, [has not led to sufficient housing production to meet demand](#).

Three new laws expand requirements for cities to plan for housing. **Assembly Bill 1397** forces local governments to zone land for housing where it could actually go, instead of putting sites they don't intend to approve in their housing plan. In one example, La Cañada Flintridge rezoned a big box commercial property for apartments or condominiums, but [city officials later told residents](#) any new homes on the site would be almost impossible to build.

Senate Bill 166 makes cities add additional sites to their housing plans if they approve projects at densities lower than what local elected officials had anticipated in their proposals. The goal is to make up for the housing units that weren't built.

Assembly Bill 879 instructs cities to analyze how long it takes developers to actually build their projects once they've been approved, and then take steps to shorten that time.

Penalizing cities that say no to housing

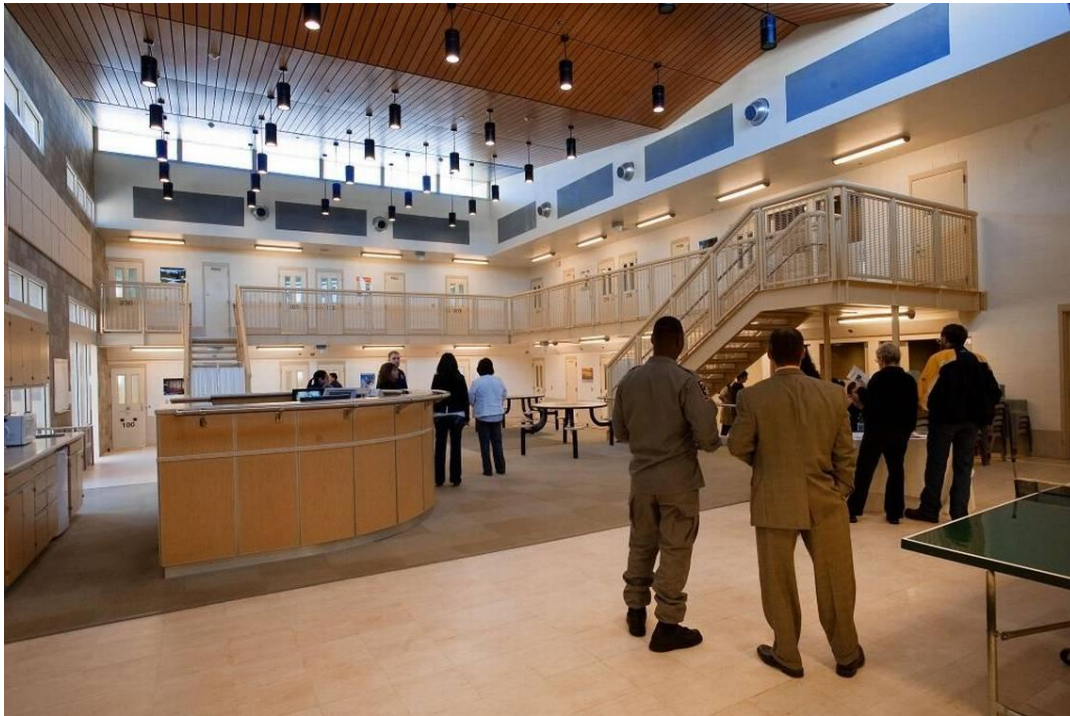
The Housing Accountability Act passed in 1982 prohibits cities from saying no to housing projects that meet zoning requirements simply because they don't like them. But such cases are hard to prove. Three measures, **Senate Bill 167**, **Assembly Bill 678** and **Assembly Bill 1515**, will beef up the existing law by making it easier for developers to prove a city acted in bad faith when denying a project, and by upping a city's penalty to \$10,000 per unit they rejected.

Assembly Bill 72 gives the state housing department more authority to investigate cities that don't follow through with their housing plans and refer cases to California's attorney general for possible legal action.

FOR THE RECORD

Sept. 29, 1:42 p.m.: An earlier version of this article referred to Assembly Bill 879 as Assembly Bill 897.

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EDITORIALS

Why bill parents for locking up their kids?

BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD

APRIL 13, 2017 1:00 PM

Sacramento County supervisors quietly took a significant step toward fairer justice this week by voting to stop charging fees to families of juvenile offenders.

According to a recent UC Berkeley study, Sacramento County has among the highest fees in the state – about \$550 a month for juvenile hall, \$206 a month for probation supervision, \$725 a month for electronic monitoring and \$20 for each drug test.

Chief Probation Officer Lee Seale and Public Defender Paulino Durán recommended the move to the board, noting that while the county has reduced the numbers in juvenile detention or on probation, black and brown youths are still over-represented.

There’s also a better understanding that many of these juveniles come from poor families, and that these fees add up quickly for families struggling to pay the rent and put food on the table. Recent research shows that creates more stress for families and can lead to more kids in trouble.

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Because the families are so poor, most of the fees never get paid. The resolution approved Tuesday by the board also writes off as much as \$23.2 million in uncollected debt.

This move does come at a cost. When the fees end July 1, that means a loss of \$385,500 from the Probation Department and Public Defender's Office that may have to be made up, though Seale says his department can cover the revenue cut.

The county started charging most of the fees in 2005 to discourage parents from taking advantage of the system to care for youths who were getting into trouble but not committing serious crimes.

But the tough-on-crime at all costs philosophy has changed with criminal justice reform. Pushed by advocacy groups, several other counties have also recently repealed the fees, including Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles and Santa Clara.

The Legislature is debating Senate Bill 190, introduced by Sens. Holly Mitchell, D-Los Angeles, and Ricardo Lara, D-Bell Gardens, which would end the fees in all counties. Better yet, each county should look at its own budget situation and eventually reach the same conclusion:

When it comes to youths who have gone off track, punishing their families with fees they can't afford to pay is self-defeating and unjust.



Lee Seale, Sacramento County's chief probation officer. **Randy Pench** - Sacramento Bee file

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Mozzy breaks down Oak Park slang 1:05



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Deadly online rap battle prompts Sacramento to move forward on controversial gang program

BY ANITA CHABRIA AND RYAN LILLIS
achabria@sacbee.com

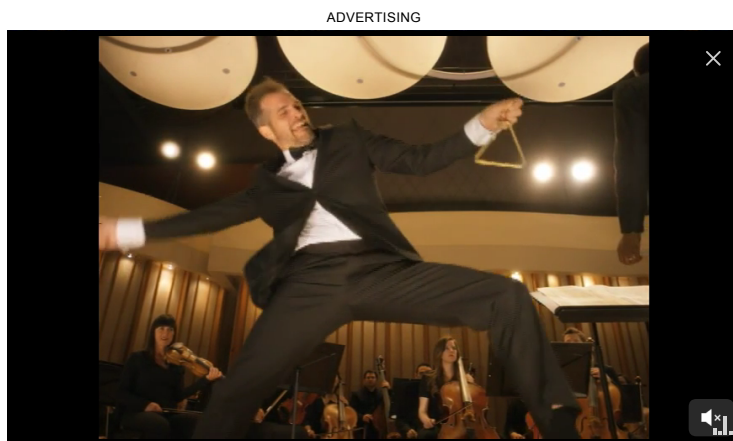
AUGUST 29, 2017 11:55 AM

A deadly shooting in Meadowview over the weekend related to a trio of local rappers and the gangs who support them pushed the Sacramento City Council to immediately approve a controversial gun-violence prevention program that targets the handful of young men suspected of being behind most of the violence.

In front of a packed City Council Chambers, the council voted 9-0 on Tuesday to adopt a three-year, \$1.5 million contract for Advance Peace, a mentoring and intervention approach to gun violence. Pioneered in Richmond, the program is credited by city leaders there for significantly reducing gun crime, but has been criticized for giving cash stipends to participants for reaching goals such as earning a high school diploma.

The Advance Peace program in Sacramento would target about 50 young men, mostly black and Latino, who are thought by police and city leaders to be responsible for most gun violence in the city, especially gang-related crimes that are often retaliatory and personal. City police are currently investigating five homicides this year that are possibly gang related, said police spokesman Officer Eddie Macaulay. In total, 13 people in the city have

died this year from gunshot wounds.



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“We don’t have a moment to wait here,” said Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg. “It’s another shooting on Sunday in Meadowview involving this feud over who gets credit for writing music. On the one hand it’s baffling, but on the other hand it’s real.”

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Councilman Rick Jennings, one of the chief advocates of bringing Advance Peace to Sacramento, said the program is “investing in the most at-risk population.”

“This population that we’re talking about now, we have not been able to touch this population,” Jennings said. “There’s too many people dying from senseless violence. There’s too many people dying. We need (Advance Peace) now.”

Councilwoman Angelique Ashby expressed a list of concerns with the agreement. She said the proposal was “sorely lacking (in details) and in my opinion leaves the city of Sacramento completely vulnerable to being taken advantage of.”

Ashby said there was nothing in the contract requiring Advance Peace to work directly with any of the local activists who packed the Council Chambers on Tuesday, or with the police department and local school districts. She said the contract also did not explicitly state that outreach will occur in Oak Park, Del Paso Heights and Meadowview – three city neighborhoods heavily impacted by violent crime.

Ashby also expressed concerns that the contract does not require Advance Peace to match the city’s financial investment in the program with its own money. The mayor and others countered that Advance Peace intends to match the city dollars. The council directed City Manager Howard Chan to address Ashby’s concerns in the contract, and Ashby ultimately supported the proposal.

“Yes, (the contract) is a little bit messy, but no more messy than what’s going on in the Oak Park and Meadowview neighborhoods,” Steinberg said.

In recent months, the increase in gun violence has been mirrored by acrimonious social media exchanges between three local rappers who go by the names Mozzy, C-Bo and Lavish D. The three men have exchanged numerous barbs and “diss” songs that city leaders and law enforcement believe could be spurring supporters to take revenge offline.

The Meadowview shooting took place at a popular neighborhood park Sunday afternoon during a video shoot for C-Bo, whose given name is Shawn Thomas. Four people were injured and one man, 49-year-old Ernie Jessey Cadena, was killed.

Thomas promoted the video shoot on Instagram. In his post, viewed by more than 17,000 people, Thomas wrote, “let’s go sactown OG’s will be out side.” Cadena, a father with one daughter and second child due in coming weeks, was at the park to attend a barbeque and the filming of the music video, according to community activist Les Simmons.

The promotion of the video shoot, also billed as a unity barbeque in the wake of the escalating violence, may have drawn the notice of supporters of rival rappers, said community activist Berry Accius.

“Yesterday’s shooting definitely did not happen because it was a random act of violence. This is something that has definitely been a build-up,” said Simmons, a pastor who supports Advance Peace.

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Sacramento Police Chief Daniel Hahn said the department is aware of the ongoing social media feud between the rival rappers and expects that it is not over. Hahn said there is “a decent likelihood that more shootings will come from (the Meadowview) shooting.”

Hahn said that he supports the Advance Peace program as another “tool” in fighting gun crime, but that current police enforcement and community intervention programs are also necessary.

“Sunday is a perfect example of why we need to attack violence in our communities in many different ways,” Hahn said. He added that he believed monitoring the program and requiring proof of results would be essential to evaluating its success.

“Measurement is a huge part of this,” Hahn said.

Simmons called Sunday’s shooting a “defining moment” for the city to take action, similar to the 2011 shooting of Monique Nelson, 30, who was a bystander killed during a shootout in the parking lot of Fly Cuts & Styles on Stockton Boulevard while draping her body over her then 2-year-old son to protect him from the flying bullets. Simmons was one of more than a dozen activists who spoke in favor of the council proposal Tuesday night.

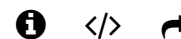
The Meadowview Park shooting is also part of a larger trend of increased violence in the city. Firearms were used in 280 assaults last year, a 12 percent increase over 2015. There has been an uptick in homicides this year, officials said, and police have increased patrols in Oak Park throughout the summer.

“Do we have a problem?” said Khaalid Muttaqi, the city’s gang prevention task force director. “The statistics and the data tell us that we do.”

The Advance Peace program targets “the most lethal young men walking the streets,” according to its founder, DeVone Boggan. Boggan’s program recruits streetwise ex-gang members and convicted gun felons who have reformed into stable lives but still have the neighborhood credibility to speak to younger generations of gang members.

Those mentors help recruit “fellows” into an 18-month program that uses one-on-one cognitive behavioral therapy and life coaching — along with a stipend of up to \$1,000 a month for nine months — to help participants move away from violence.

Because the vote at City Council involves a contract and has not had the required 10-day notice, a two-thirds approval will be required by Council members.



Innovative program to curb gun violence could be on its way to Sacramento

DeVone Boggan with Richmond, Calif.’s Office of Neighborhood Safety explains how Advance Peace disrupts the cycle of gun violence in communities. The program could be coming to Sacramento in the near future if it makes it past a city council vote.

Hector Amezcua - The Sacramento Bee

Anita Chabria: 916-321-1049, @chabriaa

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Mother of slain football star thinks Sacramento program could have saved her son 0:49



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CRIME - SACTO 911

Sacramento targets city's most lethal criminals in controversial anti-violence program

BY ANITA CHABRIA
achabria@sacbee.com

DECEMBER 11, 2017 05:58 PM

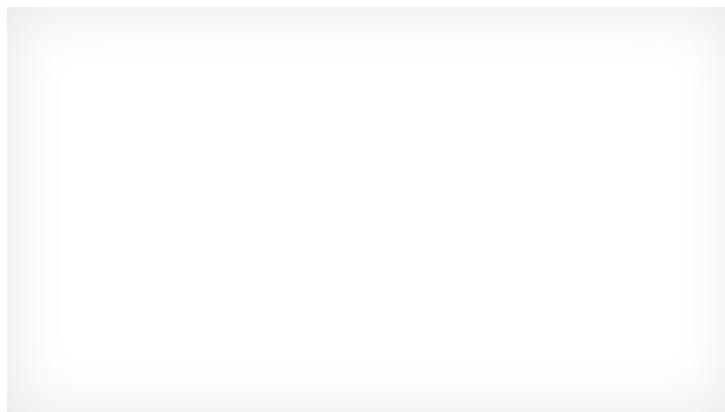
UPDATED DECEMBER 11, 2017 07:22 PM

Sacramento leaders on Monday signed a contract to launch a controversial gun-violence reduction program in an effort to convince dangerous young men on Sacramento streets to give up their homicidal lifestyles.

Sacramento has committed to a four-year, \$1.5 million contract with Advance Peace, a program originating in Richmond that targets “shooters,” often black or Latino, who are most likely to commit or be the victims of gun violence. The program pairs those men with older community members – often reformed former gang members or felons themselves – in an effort to guide the shooters out of criminal pursuits.

Advance Peace has generated controversy because it provides payments to gun criminals for completing specific programs intended to reform their ways. Under the contract, the stipends are backed by outside philanthropic funds, not city money.

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“Our hope and that of the community members here is that Advance Peace will help these young men who are at the center of this crisis see and value that there is more to life than what they are doing,” Mayor Darrell Steinberg said during a ceremonial signing of the contract with neighborhood activists Monday afternoon in Meadowview.

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Steinberg said there have been 36 gang-related homicides this year in Sacramento, and more than 1,000 arrests in gun-related crimes. In Sacramento, the rate of homicides “cleared” was 55.8 percent in 2015, according to the latest data available from the state Department of Justice, significantly less than the national average of 61.5 percent reported through FBI figures.

Councilman Larry Carr said many gun crimes are committed by men who know one another or are rivals. Those crimes can be difficult to solve because of the relationships of those involved and because community members can be hesitant to cooperate with investigations. In Sacramento, a series of shootings has been tied to online music videos in which the artists trade online insults that lead to street violence.

“They menace and otherwise threaten an otherwise safe community,” Carr said of the young men suspected of gun violence. In Sacramento, Advance Peace will target about 50 people for its first group, which is expected to start by spring 2018.

Advance Peace is credited by supporters with reducing gun violence in Richmond. An independent review of Advance Peace by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency found 83 percent of fellows who participated there have avoided injury by a firearm since going through the program and 77 percent haven’t had a new firearm charge or arrest.

Richmond also saw a 57 percent drop in gang-related gun homicides and a 51 percent drop in gun-related assaults in the six-year period from 2010 to 2016 when Advance Peace was operating, compared to the previous six years, according to Advance Peace data collected through the Richmond Police Department.

Sacramento is the first city to attempt to replicate Richmond’s program.

Critics say Advance Peace pays violent criminals not to shoot guns.

Participants can receive \$9,000 stipends during an 18-month period for reaching goals such as successfully completing substance abuse treatment or completing education. In Sacramento, Sheriff Scott Jones and Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert have expressed reservations.

Sacramento Police Department Chief Daniel Hahn, who attended Monday’s event, said he has met with Advance Peace CEO DeVone Boggan and believes law enforcement will be able to work with the program, especially if the street-level outreach workers are local hires.

“I find it hard to believe that if you have (community members as outreach workers), that they care if people are going to get hurt, that they wouldn’t do something” to work with law enforcement if they had knowledge of an impending crime, Hahn said.

“We have to be willing to try new things because the alternative is people dying, getting injured, and it’s not just the impact on them, it’s the whole community,” he said.

City Manager Howard Chan said the contract specifies money for stipends will not come from city funds. Advance Peace is backed by Silicon Valley venture capital firm DRK Foundation and will contribute \$1.5 million in matching funds, which will be used in part to pay the expenses of participants.

The city’s \$1.5 million will pay for office space, staff and administrative costs of running the program. The city can cancel its agreement after the first cohort completes its 18-month fellowship.

Nicole Clavo, the mother of Jaulon “J.J.” Clavo, also spoke at the signing in support of Advance Peace.

J.J. Clavo was 17 when he was shot in Del Paso Heights two years ago, allegedly by 16-year-old Keymontae Lindsey. Lindsey’s next court date to decide if he will be tried as a juvenile or adult is currently scheduled for Dec. 19, said his lawyer, Kevin Adamson.

“I can only imagine had Advance Peace ... been in place in 2015 when my son was murdered, that he may have not been murdered,” Nicole Clavo said. “Because that young man may have had programs or mentors that would have been available to him that would have taken the gun out of his hand.”

Anita Chabria: 916-321-1049, @chabriaa

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City Beat

News, insight and discussion on Sacramento and its neighborhoods

CITY BEAT

Cops muted their body cams after Stephon Clark shooting. Now they need to keep mikes on.

BY RYAN LILLIS AND NASHELLY CHAVEZ
RLillis@sacbee.com

April 10, 2018 12:01 AM
Updated April 10, 2018 05:19 PM

The Sacramento Police Department has ordered officers to keep their body cameras and microphones on after community members criticized the muting of footage minutes after the Stephon Clark shooting, according to a department email obtained by The Sacramento Bee.

The department sent the memo to rank-and-file officers last Wednesday, saying officers “shall not deactivate or mute their BWCs (body worn cameras) until the investigative or enforcement activity involving a member of the public has concluded.” The memo states that cameras may be turned off when officers are discussing issues with a doctor or nurse, when victims refuse to give a statement while being recorded or when the incident involves “sensitive circumstances” such as sexual assault.

Officers must say on camera why they are turning off the cameras before doing so, according to the memo. Police supervisors can also give approval for cameras to be turned off or muted.



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“We will continue to work through the development, review and vetting of an updated BWC policy and hope to have that completed soon,” the memo reads. “However, the current policy requires some immediate clarification and additions that cannot wait until the review process is complete.”

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Based on police footage, officers muted their body cams about six minutes after shooting Clark on March 18 as they began to discuss with other cops what transpired. That contributed to distrust among African-Americans and activists after the incident.

"They all just muted their mikes. ... It was a moment of, what are they doing? What are they saying?" Les Simmons, a pastor and social activist in Sacramento, said after viewing the footage with two of Clark's family members last month.

Deputy Chief Ken Bernard told the city police review commission on Monday that the department's leadership ranks are exploring their policies on body cameras and microphones. Police commission member Mario Guerrero said he is "hoping we really take a look at that policy."

Bernard said the department's previous policy had allowed officers to turn their microphones off.

Councilman Allen Warren said last week he wants the City Council to consider an ordinance that would bring disciplinary action against officers who turn off microphones on their body cameras.

Bernard's comments came during a commission hearing on the Police Department's use of force and pursuit policies. Commission members expressed support for re-examining those policies. "I hope it happens really swiftly here, because I think it needs to happen," said commission member Kiran Savage-Sangwan.

The meeting was a precursor to Tuesday's City Council session in which Police Chief Daniel Hahn will begin answering a series of questions from Mayor Darrell Steinberg and the City Council about the Police Department's policies on use of force and pursuing suspects.

"It's an opportunity for the council and the community to ask all the questions that need to be asked and for us, with the chief, to define a reasonable time frame going forward (to make changes to department policies)," the mayor said Monday. "This is an opportunity for real change, and we want to do it right."

The mayor said the police commission would "play a very, very important role in the weeks and months ahead" as the city and the Police Department explore policy changes.

"We want them to be out in the community, to be listening and to be receiving a lot of input," the mayor said. "We want them to be the first level of review with suggested changes to protocol and policies, the first place the changes should be reviewed.."

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Anti-bullying training provided to JFK parents

November 2, 2012



An anti-bullying training for parents and community members will be held at John F. Kennedy High School on Wednesday, Nov. 14. Principal Chad Sweitzer hopes it will help make parents aware of how they can support school staff at home by knowing what to look for when it comes to bullying.

Sweitzer said he has seen a huge increase in bullying through technology, on the Internet on Facebook and Twitter and via texting. He said many times the bullying will occur over a weekend with one student saying something about another on Facebook, and come Monday morning rumors are flying. "We always try to bring the kids in and sit them down face-to-face with some of our students that do peer mediation or with our counselors on campus and try to work out the problems," he said.

Sweitzer would like to see their auditorium, which can hold about 450, filled to capacity for this training.

The training is part of a district-wide crackdown on bullying that began in June 2011 when the Sacramento City Unified School District's Board of Education approved a new anti-bullying policy aimed at reducing incidents of bullying on campus and in cyberspace.

According to Sheila Self, bullying prevention specialist for SCUSD, this policy spells out rules and regulations that reflect changes that have occurred in California law as it relates to bullying.

Additionally, she said there is a greater understanding of the health consequences of bullying. She said students who are bullied have three times as many headaches and twice as many sleep problems and stomachaches, plus feelings of depression and anxiety.

"We're beginning to understand that it's not just about the right of passage, but that bullying has a direct effect on to our health and in terms of feeling safe at school on our academic performance," Self said.

Sweitzer said last year's anti-bullying information session was well-attended.

"The parents asked a lot of questions, I think they even learned a thing or two, and learned what the responses can be when the students are being bullied and who they can turn for help on the school campus," he said.

Providing Tools

One person very happy SCUSD is stepping up to provide anti-bullying training to parents is Pocket resident Maria Sullivan. She worked last year with Self to bring a similar anti-bullying program to Genevieve Didion K-8 after both her children – now 4th and 7th graders – were the victims of bullying.

Sullivan said programs like these has helped her have the tools she needs to teach her children how to handle bullies. "(My son) thought it was his fault because kids didn't like him, and now he has the skills that he doesn't think it's his fault and if he doesn't think it's right, he knows he has the right to say something," she said.

Additionally, Sullivan said anti-bullying programs also help teach parents what to do if it's their child who is the bully. Most parents, who have a child who bullies, don't know it. "It's not because you're a bad parent, it's just that you don't understand and they don't understand it's not okay," she said. "Sheila's program gives the kids that skill on both sides of the fence."

Getting Involved

So what will parents who attend the anti-bullying program at JFK High School learn?

Self said they will learn a number of things about bullying, including just what the scope of the problem is, myths, what SCUSD's anti-bullying policy is, and how to report bullying. "Parents will get a really good sense of both sides of the coin – if your child is actually bullying others or if your child is being targeted," she said. "We are very much promoting working with both students in order to remediate the bullying on campus."

In addition, Self hopes parents who attend the anti-bullying training become confident communicators with their kids about bullying. "I think becoming more hopeful that this isn't something that has to continue, that we can take action to stop it when we see it, and that we can have safe school campuses where learning really can take place," she said.

Sweitzer said the training promotes parental involvement, including the need to monitor students' cell phones and Facebook pages. "As a high school student, I would imagine I wouldn't want my parents looking at my Facebook page, but parents still need to be active participants in what's going on in their kids' lives and that's a huge part of it," he said.

And Sullivan said it's important for parents to take part in an anti-bullying training like this to help them understand what their children are confronted with and how to offer support.

"Bullying is real and to protect your child so your child does not become a victim . . . we have to make sure they have the tools to succeed," she says. "It's important that parents step up and are there."

EDUCATION DECEMBER 15, 2013 12:00 AM

Sacramento City Unified trustees to consider transgender policy

HIGHLIGHTS

Sacramento City Unified School District trustees are poised this week to approve new guidelines designed to accommodate and protect transgender students.

By Loretta Kalb - lkalb@sacbee.com

Sacramento City Unified School District trustees are poised this week to approve new guidelines designed to accommodate and protect transgender students.

The policy, two years in the making, is aligned with a bill Gov. Jerry Brown signed in August solidifying rights for transgender youths in California school districts. The Sacramento City Unified policy is similar to others adopted at school districts in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Oakland.

Supporters say accommodating transgender students – those who identify with a gender different from their sex at birth – is not new in Sacramento city schools. The district began addressing the needs of **LGBTQ students** a decade ago, passing a resolution in support of their safety in 2004 and starting the LGBTQ task force in 2005.

The proposed transgender policy was drafted by a subcommittee of the district's LGBTQ Task Force. It calls on the district to accommodate and honor a transgender student's desire to be addressed by a name and pronoun that corresponds to his or her gender identity.

It also specifies that students can't be forced to use the restroom or locker room that corresponds to his or her birth sex. A transgender student can ask to use facilities of the opposite gender, prompting school officials to consult with the student's parents or guardians. The policy doesn't directly address whether parents or guardians can block their child's request.

Advocates of the transgender policy say it's necessary because students at some Sacramento schools aren't always accommodated. The policy would ensure that no child's concerns go unaddressed.

"Right now, decisions are made on a case-by-case basis," said Lawrence Shweky, coordinator of integrated support services for the district. "There isn't a standard protocol in place." In some cases, he said, a principal may not go along with the request.

Board member Jay Hansen, who represents downtown, midtown, Land Park and Curtis Park, said he feels passionately about the issue and knows it is controversial.

“It’s going to take time for us to implement it properly and give people the appropriate context and time to understand what we’re doing,” said Hansen, who is gay. “I think people know it’s the right thing to do.”

A vote is expected at the Dec. 19 school board meeting.

“This has been a long time in coming,” Vice President Patrick Kennedy said.

Board member Christina Pritchett said she received questions and concerns from some of her constituents.

“Everybody cares,” Pritchett said later. “It’s not that people don’t care about these types of students. They (are) worried about their own child.”

At the meeting, Pritchett voiced her support for affected students. “It’s hard enough to be a teenager. Right? But to be a teenager who is struggling with their identity is a whole lot worse.”

All but one public speaker voiced support.

Ralph Merletti, a substitute teacher and an unsuccessful candidate for Kennedy’s Area 7 seat in the 2012 school board election, said in an interview that he worries about “this attempt to normalize and mainstream every type of abnormal behavior there is. We seem to be saying unless we give them everything they ask for, not only tolerance and acceptance but also a stamp of approval ... they are going to be so depressed they’re going to be thinking about suicide.

“There has to be another way of taking care of this.”

Other area school districts have policies aimed at protecting all students, including those who are transgender, from discrimination. But some are exploring further action.

At Twin Rivers Unified, Director of Student Services Rudy Puente said that after meeting with the Gender Health Committee his office is reviewing model transgender policies for further discussion.

The issue gained statewide prominence in August when Brown signed Assembly Bill 1266 by Assemblyman Tom Ammiano, D-San Francisco. The measure allows transgender students to use the school facilities that reflect their gender identity. Opponents have submitted signatures to overturn the law through a statewide referendum and expect to learn in January whether it has qualified for the ballot.

Brad Dacus of the Pacific Justice Institute, which wrote the referendum language, said the district's proposed policy fails to protect all students' privacy. "It still allows a boy, a biological boy, to be able to enter the bathroom and the locker rooms and showers of girls," he said.

It is unclear whether the referendum would have any effect on Sacramento City Unified's transgender rules.

Ben Hudson, who helped draft the policy and is executive director of the Gender Health Center, said there is no reason to assume that a transgender student will be a predator any more than any other student.

"In fact, transgender students are far more likely to be more private about their bodies," he said, "and it is their safety that we need to be concerned about in restrooms."

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Sac Unified School District Unanimously Votes in Favor of Transgender Policy

Posted 10:42 PM, December 19, 2013, by [Ian McDonald](#), Updated at 02:22pm, February 3, 2014

Sacramento School District Votes to Move Forward on Transgender Policy

KTXL - Sacramento



SACRAMENTO-

Sacramento City Unified School District voted unanimously in favor of a transgender policy for students, 7-0.

This means about two dozen students can now use bathrooms, participate in sports and dress according to their gender identity.

“Stripping down to your undergarments with a guy right next to me, that’s not too comfortable,” said Vera, a student in the district.



AB 1266, could face some hurdles on the state level.

“Six hundred nineteen thousand signatures have been collected against this 30,000 right here in Sacramento. It means the law won’t go into effect in January,” attorney Michael Faber said. “There could be a referendum and the law would be decided in November.”

The school board heard those against and those for the policy. Many of them personal stories of why the policy supporting transgender students should be put in place.

“I was bullied, brutally beaten and stabbed in my high school,” said Jennie Lorena Thomas, a transgender supporter.

The law has been met with controversy dubbed the “coed bathroom law,” allowing students to identify their own gender regardless of if they were born a female or male.

In the end, the school board made a decision to move forward with adopting the policy.

“There’s a only a few students who will be impacted and we want them to be successful,” Jay Hansen, a SCUSD school board member, said.

School District Approves New Policy Protecting Transgender Students

SACRAMENTO (CBS13) – Sacramento City Unified School District voted unanimously Friday to approve a new policy protecting its transgender students. The reforms are among the first of their kind in the state.

It's the new edition to the book on gender identity.

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"This policy will increase the quality of life for all youth, teams youth and all youth," said one person at the meeting.

"This is not about bathrooms. This is not about showers. It's about accepting us as individuals," said another person.

"This policy has been really well thought out," said one person.

In front of a crowd of mostly supporters, the school board spelled out how it will respond to the needs of transgender students.

"You can't just walk in and go talk to the principal and say, 'Today I'm a girl and I want to go into the girls locker room. That's not how this is going to happen,'" said Jay Hansen, a school board member. "It's going to be a long process. It's going to be very thoughtfully done."

The new policy requires students and their parents or guardians to consult with school officials if they view themselves as transgender or gender variant.

The school district rules state transgender students...

- Shall not be forced to use the restroom corresponding to their sex at birth.
- Shall not be forced to use the locker room corresponding to their sex at birth.
- Have the right to be addressed by the names and pronouns that correspond to their gender identity.

"Now, as for the locker rooms and showers, that's an entirely different dilemma," said one person at the meeting.

Opponents say the new transgender rules infringe on the privacy of other students.

"Yes, there's going to be privacy concerns. And are we going to sacrifice the privacy of our children on the altar of political correctness? That's the real question," said Michael Faber, an attorney with Pacific Justice Institute.

It's a new era in school diversity. Age-old standards are in the midst of a historic shift.

The school district has 43,000 students. Since 2010, they have helped 15 students to success without this policy.

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More Schools Opt For 'Positive Discipline' Instead Of Suspensions 05:18

June 10, 2014

By Robyn Gee

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Here's a dilemma that has puzzled educators and parents for a long time: When students act up and misbehave, schools often “punish” them by ... sending them home. Many schools are looking for alternatives to suspending kids. One idea that's gaining traction is called Positive Discipline. Its premise is fairly simple: when kids act up – they get *more* face time with educators, not less.

About 20,000 of the nation's schools have adopted it, and the federal government has invested in technical support for states and districts using this approach. But what does it look like?

At Floyd Elementary in Sacramento, when kids get in trouble, they end up on something called “check-in/check out.”

Second-grader Aubery Galloway got put on check-in/check out after being too disruptive in his second grade class.



Live: Here & Now

She said, “So yesterday in the very beginning of the day, you got all 2’s on your card-- perfect ... How do you get a two?”

“For being good... by working hard,” said Galloway.

Every day, Aubery gets rated by his teachers on different behaviors. He's got a little white paper card that he carries around. He can get a 0, 1, or 2 on his card — 2’s are the best. That’s how Aubery started off yesterday. But after lunch, his numbers started dropping.

Blanton said, “After lunch today I want to make sure you’re working really hard to make sure you’re getting all 2’s on your card — keeping your hands and feet to yourself and staying focused. So, I’ll take this back and I’ll put your points on your chart, and you come see me after school with your card and I’ll put the rest of your points on there.”

That meeting she’s talking about at the end of the day is the “check-out” part of this system. If students get enough points, they earn prizes and privileges. Aubery chose to be the principal’s helper for the day.

“I think they really like having somebody to check in,” said Blanton. “And so I tell them they can come see me and check in any time — come give me a hug, 'cause I know that’s what you want!”

That’s key in positive discipline — close attention from adults. A big reason suspending kids has fallen out of favor is research showing that it's a punishment handed out disproportionately to black and Latino students.

Positive discipline has been around for more than 20 years, and research

George Bear is a professor of Education at the University of Delaware who studies school discipline and self-discipline.

“Some students will tell you that those teachers or coaches who are constantly praising you — almost regardless of your performance or rewarding you regardless of your performance — then they don’t take those rewards and that praise that seriously,” said Bear.

Administrators at Floyd say rewards are tied to specific outcomes, and they still offer critique to kids along with the praise.

And the kids I met at Floyd say the program works for them. They say that in addition to the prizes, they also like the learning strategies it offers. And they’re quick to point out that there are still consequences for misbehaving. They can lose privileges like recess.

Fourth grader O’Shay Turner went on check-in/check-out last year, but this year, he hasn’t needed it. I asked him why he needed it last year.

“For actin’ up a little,” said Turner. “My attitude towards teachers,” he added.

Disrespecting teachers is a *big* no-no here at this school. Core expectations are reinforced everywhere on campus — in the cafeteria, the library, and even in the bathroom.

I watched as Blanton crammed into a boy’s bathroom with a dozen fidgety third grade boys, showing them how to use the urinal without making a mess. On the walls were signs about keeping your voice down, and throwing away your trash.

“I do not want to clean up pee from the floor, I’m telling you right now,” said Blanton, as kids laughed.

So with all this effort, is it working? Principal Billy Aydlett says it depends on what you're looking at. He can't say that using positive discipline has helped the school's test scores. In fact, they've gone down. But he says he sees a difference in his school every day in the way kids behave with each other.

“We cannot suspend our way out of the problems that exists at our school, and I don't think school districts can suspend their way into rising test scores or doing the right thing by kids,” said Aydlett.

The principal says it's a big change for this school: educators know they're responsible for helping all the children learn, not just those who already know how to behave.

This story was produced by Youth Radio.

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EDUCATION JUNE 9, 2015 5:36 PM

Sacramento City schools to establish ethnic studies as graduation requirement

BY LORETTA KALB

lkalb@sacbee.com

Trustees for the Sacramento City Unified School District have approved creating an ethnic studies course for high schools and implementing it as a graduation requirement by 2020.

The resolution that trustees approved unanimously Thursday night calls for ethnic studies as an elective course at a pilot group of high schools starting in fall 2016. Ethnic studies would expand to all 13 high schools in the district by fall 2019. It would become a graduation requirement a year later.

A committee of teachers, college professors, ethnic community group leaders, students and curricula specialists will organize to create and evaluate options for ethnic studies. The plan also calls for prospective teachers to receive training, professional development and certification to teach the course.

The district's Student Advisory Council worked in collaboration with California State University, University of California, Davis, trustees and district officials in developing the proposal.

Loretta Kalb: (916) 321-1073, @LorettaSacBee

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EDUCATION SEPTEMBER 29, 2015 4:50 PM

Sacramento-area schools make big push to identify low-income students

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Sacramento City Unified offers incentives to schools whose families fill out forms

Folsom Cordova Unified expects to find untapped eligibility among Folsom families

State funding formula directs more money to districts that serve low-income families



Video: Big push for school lunch sign-ups 0:25



1 of 4



BY LORETTA KALB
lkalb@sacbee.com

As the state directs more money to low-income students, some Sacramento-area schools are pushing harder to solicit family applications for subsidized meals, including campuses in affluent neighborhoods where a fraction of students have qualified in the past.

The incentives to verify more low-income families are big. For every percentage-point increase in eligible students, the Sacramento City Unified School District would receive approximately \$1.1 million in additional state funds, said spokesman Gabe Ross. He said even a small increase of 2 to 3 percentage points would have a huge revenue impact.

To spur participation, the city district is offering its campuses up to \$10,000 each if they raise application rates to 90 percent of enrollment. At last count, about 64 percent of students' families in the district had filled out the free-lunch application and qualified.

ADVERTISING

\$1.1 million

Amount the Sacramento City Unified School District can receive for each percentage point increase in low-income students.

The Folsom Cordova Unified School District is not offering incentives, but it plans to promote its campaign with phone calls and fliers sent home to parents, along with newsletters on its website.

“We’re doing a districtwide focus,” said Folsom Cordova spokesman Daniel Thigpen. “But in Folsom, where we have lower rates of poverty (than in neighboring Rancho Cordova), we suspect there may be families not applying who may be income-eligible.”

While that means more money for schools, it also helps many families reduce expenses for student meals, he said.

For years, school districts have routinely asked families to fill out applications to identify those whose children would benefit from free or lower-cost meals. The process is confidential so that students who don’t pay are indistinguishable from those who pay the full price to eat. The federal government covers those costs through its National School Lunch Program.

Since 2013, the state’s funding formula has directed more money to students who are low-income, foster youths or English learners. Gov. Jerry Brown and state lawmakers asserted that the state had to spend more classroom money on those students to compensate for their lack of education resources at home. The state relies on the income-based meal applications to help determine which districts qualify for low-income education funding.

The more individual students identified in one or more such categories, the higher the funding. Districts with a particularly high share of disadvantaged students, 55 percent, are eligible to receive even more money under the theory that schools with predominantly low-income students and English learners face acute challenges.

“

WE’RE DOING A DISTRICTWIDE FOCUS. BUT IN FOLSOM, WHERE WE HAVE LOWER RATES OF POVERTY, WE SUSPECT THERE MAY BE FAMILIES NOT APPLYING WHO MAY BE INCOME-ELIGIBLE.

Folsom Cordova Unified School District spokesman Daniel Thigpen

Schools in the Sacramento City Unified district are being urged to have 90 percent of their families return the applications for free lunches or, in the case of some high-poverty schools, income-verification forms. While not all families are expected to qualify, Ross said the plan is to consistently raise the volume of applications so that more families receive aid and the district leaves no state funding on the table year after year.

The district’s incentives apply to all 76 of its campuses, including those where few students have qualified based on income in the past. Crocker/Riverside Elementary School, where a district-low 11 percent of students qualified last school year, has made a strong push this month to have families return their forms.

“Help Crocker earn \$7,500 by filling out the free lunch form,” the Land Park school’s PTA website tells parents. “If 90 percent of our Crocker parents return this form, the district will give the school \$7,500.”

The idea is that even at Crocker, it’s unknown how many more families might qualify, Ross said.

Sacramento City Unified is providing different incentives based largely on enrollment size. Christina Allison, site instruction coordinator at Oak Ridge Elementary School in Oak Park, said her school expects to receive \$5,000 for participating in the program.

The additional money, she said, will “really benefit our schools and our community.” Oak Ridge last year had the highest percentage of qualified families in the district at 96 percent, according to state data.

Thigpen said the increased state funds already help the Folsom Cordova district pay for teachers that work with struggling students, academic coaches, marriage and family therapists, and English language development teachers. They also include support for teachers for literacy and math, efforts to foster a positive school climate, project and field trip learning efforts, and musical instruments for low-income students.

Loretta Kalb: 916-321-1073, @LorettaSacBee

QUALIFICATION FOR SUBSIDIZED MEALS

This list shows the percentage of students eligible for subsidized meals in Sacramento County districts, based on household income in 2014-15.

- Twin Rivers Unified School District, 82 percent
- Sacramento City Unified School District, 64 percent
- Elk Grove Unified School District, 55 percent
- San Juan Unified School District, 50 percent
- Folsom Cordova Unified School District, 34 percent

Source: California Department of Education

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EDUCATION DECEMBER 9, 2016 10:48 AM

Sacramento district declares itself 'safe haven' protecting students from deportation

BOOKMARK FOR LATER

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BY LORETTA KALB
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Sacramento City Unified School District trustees voted unanimously Thursday to declare district schools “safe havens” that protect students against deportation and hate speech.

The resolution is a response to the “intolerant rhetoric made over the course of the 2016 presidential race” and reports of increased hate speech at district schools, according to the document.

The three-page resolution specifies that immigration officials cannot enter campuses without written permission of the superintendent and that the district will restrict sharing of student files that could help determine the legal status of students. It also calls for activities on all campuses to promote tolerance and urges investments in programs to promote the “values of a multicultural society.”

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The district said it does not collect citizenship data. In 2015-16, nearly one-third of Sacramento City Unified students were English language learners or non-native speakers who can speak English fluently, according to state figures.

After Republican Donald Trump's presidential victory, Sacramento City Unified School District trustees began hearing from parents, teachers and administrators that children were terrified that they were going to be deported, board member Jessie Ryan said this week. She said that was accompanied by an upswing in hate speech in the district, which serves about 43,000 students at 76 schools.

The Sacramento City Teachers Association, Council on American-Islamic Relations, La Familia and the Black Parallel School Board supported the resolution, according to the district.

Loretta Kalb: 916-321-1073, @LorettaSacBee

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Jon Bromenschenkel

33 days ago

The INS could not care less about school kids. It is the adults that should be looked at and dealt with. The schools are watching their daily attendance monies dwindling as the scare tactics are keeping the kids at home. Follow the money. But we have to have some false feel good rational to hide behind.

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1 0



Ronald McCollum

33 days ago

Let's keep the kids and deport the trustees.....

Reply Share

3 0



Robert Dagner

34 days ago

fine let the school loose all federal money -grants -meals etc-no federal student loans to attend . last remove the school from federaly accredited school. now let the liberal azholes live with that choice

LOCAL DECEMBER 16, 2016 5:37 PM

Mayor Steinberg wins state support for idea of paid internships for Sacramento high schoolers

BOOKMARK FOR LATER

MY BOOKMARKS



Darrell Steinberg sworn in as Sacramento's 56th mayor 3:51



< 1 of 2 >



BY ANITA CHABRIA
achabria@sacbee.com

On his third day as Sacramento mayor, Darrell Steinberg made progress toward fulfilling his campaign promise to fund more internships for high school students in the city.

The state Employment Training Panel, a state agency that provides financial support for vocational training, voted Friday to conceptually approve a first-of-its-kind pilot program that could supply up to \$950,000 to train and pay as many as 500 kids from five city high schools with internships designed as pathways to long-term careers. A formal proposal still needs to be fleshed out by the city.

The money largely would go to reimbursing employees and trainers.

The state panel's quick support of Steinberg's idea is the first sign that his connections as the former leader of the state Senate could pay off with more money for Sacramento.

During his swearing-in speech Tuesday, Steinberg said he intended to provide paid internships to at least 50 percent of juniors and seniors in city schools within four years. The internships would aim to give hands-on vocational training to kids who may not be immediately bound for college.

Then, on Friday, Steinberg persuaded the training panel, which included one member he previously appointed, to act on his request.

"It is the beginning of our promise on our youth agenda," Steinberg said Thursday. "My view is that remediation is very important, but preventing dropouts and preventing unemployment and under-employment are more important ... This is a way for us to have a broader conversation and to develop a broader agenda that really links public education and the workforce."

The Employment Training Panel is a state agency funded through a payroll tax on employers. Steinberg's proposal would be the first time the agency has funded a program for teenagers still in school. Steinberg said the shift in focus from existing workforce members to those about to transition into the job market was crucial for changing outcomes for kids from neighborhoods where opportunities and expectations can be low, and where at-risk

teenagers often lack basic employment skills when they graduate from high school.

The suggested program would provide participating kids with two months of job and life-skills training during the summer between their junior and senior years, then a yearlong paid internship of at least 10 hours per week during their senior year. Steinberg said that of the initial group, about 350 kids would be guaranteed internship placement in their senior year, with the goal of finding spots for all participants.

The program would run at Hiram Johnson, Luther Burbank, Grant, Valley Hi and the Arthur A. Benjamin Heath Professions high schools.

“The idea would be that those experiences would then lead those students to either know better what they want to do when they graduate high school and or eventually lead to full-time employment,” said Steinberg.

Steinberg pitched the idea to the enthusiastic training panel board on Friday morning. The employment board voted unanimously to approve the “concept” and guidelines for the program, with specifics to be voted on when the city crafts a formal proposal in coming months.

“We’ve sent this message out that if you don’t go to college there is kind of something wrong with you, that you are already in your youth not meeting the mark ... That’s just wrong,” said training panel Chairman Barry Broad, a local attorney and lobbyist who was appointed by Steinberg as well as other Senate leaders before and after him.

Despite the potential funding, Steinberg will still need to find employers willing to commit to hiring the students.

Employment board member Janie Roberts, a PepsiCo executive who supported Steinberg’s plan, cautioned that many young adults have barriers that make it difficult for companies to hire them. She said PepsiCo had a hard time recruiting young adults in the Central Valley in the past because they could not pass drug screenings or did not meet other minimum qualifications.

“We wanted these people to come into our workforce. They just weren’t qualified,” Roberts said.

Steinberg said he envisioned outreach eventually happening for freshman and sophomores to address those issues and prepare kids at an early age to understand employers’ expectations.

“We want to include life skills and civic education and all of the other intangibles that are essential to someone to succeed in the workforce,” he said.

Broad also cautioned that funding would be tied to employer retention of the trained students. The panel would require employers to keep the kids on the payroll for at least 90 days after training or 500 hours in a 272-day period in order to qualify for reimbursement of costs. He said that finding employers willing to make those guarantees could be challenging.

“The link that’s always been most difficult in this issue is you have to have an employer that’s willing to make a commitment to a kid, and maybe a troubled kid, that there is a job, a paid job, waiting for you if you stay in school, if you dedicate yourself to do this training,” said Broad. “Employers are reticent to do that in this society.”

Seeking to address such concerns, Steinberg brought an entourage to Friday’s meeting that included representatives from the Sacramento-Sierra Building Trades, the Sacramento Central Labor Council, Kaiser Permanente, the California Restaurant Association and others. Many of these groups, particularly the Building Trades, already run extensive internship or apprenticeship programs, and Steinberg suggested they could facilitate employer participation.

Alycia Harshfield, executive director of the California Restaurant Association’s Educational Foundation, said Steinberg’s program could be a natural extension for its existing internship program, and it might be willing to try to “bring employers into the picture.”

SMUD is another of the public-sector partners Steinberg has already approached. The utilities company runs an internship program for about 25 kids each year, and receives up to 300 applications for those spots, said SMUD education relations strategist Susan Wheeler. Participants are paid a little more than minimum wage, and are assigned “meaningful” work meant to train them for future careers in areas including engineering and marketing, she said.

“We make sure they’re not just sitting in the corner scanning documents,” Wheeler said.

Devaughn Ogles is one of the students who participated in SMUD’s program in 2012. Now 22 and a senior in engineering and applied mathematics at University of California, Merced, he spent the summer between his junior and senior year of high school working as an assistant to Wheeler.

It was his “first job ever” and an “extremely valuable” experience, he said. The high school internship helped him win an engineering internship with SMUD later, and taught him that “people who make six figures ... are just everyday people who care about the community they live in.”

Ogles said that along with job skills, the internship changed how he thought.

“It kind of set me up for the rest of my life, honestly,” Ogles said. “I started looking at things from a different perspective.”

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LOCAL JUNE 16, 2015 7:35 PM

Sacramento County approves health care for undocumented immigrants

HIGHLIGHTS

Sacramento County thought to be first California county to resume the health services

Funding approved as part of 2015-16 budget

Advocates applaud funding for other new programs

BY BRAD BRANAN

bbranan@sacbee.com

Sacramento County supervisors on Tuesday approved health care for undocumented immigrants and other new social service programs as part of the county budget for the fiscal year starting July 1.

Supervisors voted 5-0 for the \$3.7 billion budget, capping two days of hearings that were a dramatic departure from past years, when deep funding cuts pitted department heads against one another over scarce dollars. This year's budget hearings, supervisors and department heads said, were marked by cooperation and innovation.

A major reason was an expected 4 percent increase in discretionary revenue. Supervisors approved funding for additional mental health services, programs aimed at reducing violent deaths of young black people and a trial program that will provide health insurance to 3,000 undocumented immigrants.

The board's chambers were full and adjacent rooms with TV monitors were also crowded with more than 300 people, most of whom gathered in support of the violence reduction or immigrant health care programs. Advocates for the violence reduction effort wore yellow T-shirts and health care advocates wore black T-shirts.

Board chair Phil Serna called the budget historic, a term advocates and other county officials used to describe the county's investment in new programs.

Sacramento was one of a handful of counties in the state that once provided health care to undocumented immigrants, all of which stopped during the recession, Serna said. Sacramento County appears to be the first in California to restore its health care for undocumented immigrants.

Supervisors budgeted more than \$5 million for the health care program and expect local hospitals to contribute more than a \$1 million worth of services.

"The whole state of California is watching," said Serna.

Health and Human Services Director Sherri Z. Heller said the funding will not cover the need for health care among the county's undocumented immigrants. However, she said the county needs a trial period to see what kind of system will work best.

The program will serve undocumented immigrants who are ages 19-64. Children are able to get some health services from other programs, and elderly care is far too expensive, Heller said.

The program will start next month and focus on prevention and primary care. It will provide limited specialty care and pharmacy services, she said.

The county will also increase spending for mental health care by \$13.4 million to try to reduce the spiraling cost of hospitalizing the mentally ill. The money will pay for three 15-bed crisis centers and expand the county's existing crisis stabilization center.

Officials at private psychiatric facilities who have been pressing the county for change praised the supervisors for the funding Tuesday. The county has been spending too much money on inpatient, psychiatric care, they have said.

Funding to reduce black youth deaths received the most attention Tuesday, with more than 200 people crowding the county's administrative building.

"The sheer magnitude of the number of community members present today shows that in Sacramento, black lives matter," said Chet Hewitt, Sierra Health Foundation president and CEO and co-chair of the Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths.

Serna formed the committee several years ago after another county committee reported that the death rate for black youth is twice that of other Sacramento County children.

The county will spend more than \$6 million on a variety of programs, which will also receive more than \$4 million in funding from First 5 Sacramento. The programs will focus on the leading causes of death for black children, including third-party homicides, child abuse and perinatal conditions. The programs will be targeted toward neighborhoods with high death rates.

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Bank of America awards \$200,000 grant to Soil Born Farms

Bank of America officials surprised the leaders of Sacramento's Soil Born Farms Wednesday evening with a \$200,000 Neighborhood Builders Award, a grant that local nonprofits view as something of a rainmaker because it seeds new projects or expands the impact of existing ones.





Soil Born Farms workers Jared Clark, left, and Jessica Sharkey pack beets and turnips for market in 2009. Soil Born Farms has a \$250,000 USDA grant to get a distribution network for local food from dozens of small local farms.

1 of 2

Soil Born Farms workers Jared Clark, left, and Jessica Sharkey pack beets and turnips for market in 2009. Soil Born Farms has a \$250,000 USDA grant to get a distribution network for local food from dozens of small local farms. Anne Chadwick Williams awilliams@sacbee.com



Bank of America officials surprised the leaders of Sacramento's [Soil Born Farms](#) Wednesday evening with a \$200,000 [Neighborhood Builders Award](#), a grant that local nonprofits view as something of a rainmaker because it seeds new projects or catapults existing ones to the next level.

"Soil Born Farms is really at a very critical juncture in our maturity," said **Sara Minnehan**, a Soil Born board member. "Not only are we feeding food-insecure populations in our region with fresh, organic, nutritious food, but we are also making huge inroads in combating significant health problems in our nation."

Soil Born Farms, which operates two urban farms on 55 acres in Sacramento and Rancho Cordova, runs a variety of programs. They include gleaning fruit from trees on local properties, educating schoolchildren about how to grow and prepare healthy food and bringing community gardens to the region's food deserts. The nonprofit also sells its produce to individuals and restaurants, in grocery stores and at farm stands.

The Bank of America funding will allow the nonprofit to raise its impact in the region, said Minnehan, who is the community engagement manager for [Aerojet Rocketdyne](#). She said the money could go toward stepping up Soil Born's work in local schools or launching a program that introduces military veterans to farming. Researchers have found that farming holds a therapeutic benefit for veterans uncomfortable with the restricted space and strict schedule of office jobs.

The Neighborhood Builders Award is what nonprofit industry veterans call a capacity-building grant, said [Tricia Rosenbaum](#), executive director of the [Nonprofit Resource Center](#), because it allows organizations to expand services or improve their quality. Many nonprofit leaders are consumed with just making payroll, Rosenbaum said, and they don't have time to think strategically, brainstorm new approaches or mine additional sources of revenue.

A capacity-building grant can allow an executive director to hire operational staff to run day-to-day operations, freeing up the executive director to identify and implement new strategies. That's how [Roberts Family Development Center](#) is using the Neighborhood Builders grant it won last year. The nonprofit partners with families who live in some of Sacramento's poorest neighborhoods, teaching children the skills they need to improve their academic performance.

At [Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services](#), executive director **Blake Young** wanted to reinvent both the type of food that his clients could expect and how it would be delivered. A Neighborhood Builders grant, awarded in 2009, allowed him to begin the transformation by buying two mobile food trucks to set up farmers market-style events, where clients choose fresh produce and dietitians show them how to prepare healthy recipes.

Gone were the long lines and processed foods that had become synonymous with food banks. The nonprofit's fresh approach was so innovative that it received national coverage in media ranging from **The Washington Post** to NBC's "Today" show.

Soon, Sacramento's homeless population also will benefit from a Neighborhood Builders Award. [Loaves & Fishes](#) used the grant over the last two years to demolish a building and make way for an expanded Friendship Park, a daily gathering place for roughly 700 homeless guests. Sister **Libby Fernandez**, the nonprofit's executive director, said she expects to begin construction of the new 4.1-acre park in early 2015. The project initially met resistance from nearby businesses, but Fernandez met with business owners and agreed on ways to ensure that the new park worked for everyone.

"We'll have gazebos where guests can sit and get out of the rain and the heat," Fernandez said, "and it will be wheelchair-accessible. Our guests can park their bikes here, lock up their personal items for the day and access services ... to help them get off the street and into resources or housing."

The new park, designed by architect **Jon Westphal**, will be disabled-accessible, something that the current 1.7-acre space lacks. Fernandez said she soon will embark on a capital campaign to fund the park's construction, and she feels better able to accomplish that goal because the Bank of America grant also provides training for nonprofit leaders.

Roughly 20 regional nonprofits are invited to apply each year for the Neighborhood Builders grant, said **Lori Rianda**, the Sacramento market manager for Bank of America. The awardee is selected by a committee composed of two bank employees and seven community leaders. The same process occurs in all the bank's U.S. markets, and the program has so far invested \$160 million in 800 nonprofits.

The award is paid in increments of \$100,000 over two years. That might not sound like much, but only nine of 21 local companies made donations totaling more than \$100,000 in 2013, according to **Sacramento Business Journal's** ranking of the top annual cash contributions to nonprofits. In total, Bank of America gave \$1.4 million to Sacramento-area charities last year.

Call The Bee's Cathie Anderson, (916) 321-1193. Follow her on Twitter [@CathieA_SacBee](#).

Carbon auctions help finance West Sac housing project – and lots more

California's 'cap and trade' auctions generate billions

Dollars go into mass transit, wetlands, even a sawmill

Auctions remain controversial, face legal challenge



California carbon emissions dollars to help fund infill projects 0:55

1 of 2

California's cap and trade program was expected to raise more than \$2 billion this year. But the money isn't materializing, putting projects into jeopardy. Dale Kasler The Sacramento Bee

By Dale Kasler

Christopher Cabaldon, the mayor of West Sacramento, showed up in style last week to help break ground on an affordable housing project in his city: He rode his bicycle.

His entrance fit the occasion. The housing project, known as West Gateway Place, wouldn't be getting built without money generated by California's multibillion-dollar crusade against climate change.



Construction gets underway Monday on the West Gateway Place development in West Sacramento. Lezlie Sterlingsterling@sacbee.com

Located in the city's fast-growing Bridge District, West Gateway is one of 28 affordable housing or sustainable communities projects that have recently been awarded funds from the state's "cap and trade" carbon emissions auction program. The West Sacramento project is the first of the 28 to break ground.

Proponents of the West Sacramento project called it the perfect example of how the state should invest money generated by the cap-and-trade program. "High-density, smart developments ... make it more attractive to get around and bike and walk," Cabaldon said as he locked up his bike. "The climate benefits from projects just like this."

California's cap-and-trade program, in its fourth year, remains [controversial as a tool](#) to fight greenhouse gases, angering motorists and business interests alike. But it is unquestionably a financial success.

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The state expects to take in more than \$2 billion this year alone by auctioning carbon-emissions allowances, with proceeds being funneled into ride-sharing programs, carbon "digesting" machines for dairy farms and a slew of other programs. Some experts on affordable housing say cap-and-trade money could essentially replace local redevelopment agencies, which Gov. Jerry Brown and the Legislature eliminated in 2011.

By state law, 60 percent of the carbon proceeds are split between the high-speed rail project and the state's affordable housing and sustainable communities program – the pot of cash that helped fund the West Sacramento housing complex. The rest is allocated annually by the Legislature, and the question of [how to divide this year's revenue](#) is one of the issues confronting lawmakers as they close out the session.

The expenditures so far represent a broad spectrum of programs designed, one way or another, to reduce carbon emissions.

Last month, the state Department of Transportation awarded grants totaling \$22 million to 86 projects, including the extension of Muni service in San Francisco, construction of new bus shelters in El Cajon and installation of

bike racks on Los Angeles buses. Millions have been earmarked to restore the wetlands of Sherman Island in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Recycling programs up and down the state have received grants.

And then there's the Sacramento sawmill.

In June, the Sacramento Tree Foundation was awarded a \$500,000 grant to buy a portable sawmill. It will be installed at Commerce Business Park in North Sacramento and will be used to carve up diseased and dying trees, said foundation executive director Ray Tretheway.

A sawmill to prevent climate change? Turning dead trees into usable products is better than letting them decompose in a landfill, where they would gradually release naturally occurring carbon into the atmosphere, Tretheway said.

Tretheway said the foundation will partner with woodworkers and craftsmen to build all manner of products, "from picket fences to banquet tables and such." The foundation also was awarded \$1 million to plant trees throughout south Sacramento. Both projects are among 33 grants awarded by Cal Fire last month through a program dedicated to fire prevention and urban forestry.

The virtues of the projects don't convince critics of cap and trade, who are pursuing a legal challenge to stop the California Air Resources Board, or CARB, to halt its quarterly auctions of carbon-emissions allowances. In a lawsuit, they argue that the auctions are unconstitutional because Assembly Bill 32, the 2006 law that established the cap-and-trade program, passed the Legislature with only a simple majority. Under Proposition 13, the Legislature needs a two-thirds vote to approve any tax increases.

"CARB making billions of dollars for the state of California is unconstitutional," said attorney Ted Hadzi-Antich of the Pacific Legal Foundation, which is spearheading the lawsuit. A judge [dismissed the suit in 2013](#), but the ruling is being appealed in state court.

The program imposes a statewide ceiling, or cap, on carbon emissions and requires hundreds of food processors, cement manufacturers and other industrial firms to obtain allowances for every ton of carbon they emit. The ceiling declines slightly each year in an effort to reduce overall emissions.

Most of the allowances are given out for free. But to cover all of their carbon emissions, most affected companies have to buy additional allowances, either on the open market or through the state-run auctions. It's those auctions, the latest of which was held Tuesday, that are generating billions in revenue for the state.

Some \$6.7 million found its way to West Sacramento in late June. The Strategic Growth Council, one of several state agencies handing out cap-and-trade money, awarded the city about \$4.1 million for bike and pedestrian infrastructure improvements on what is known as the Grand Gateway, the urban infill area adjacent to the riverfront. Another \$2.6 million went toward West Gateway Place, the affordable housing complex at the edge of the Bridge District, the fast-growing high-density residential project near Raley Field.

"Here's this site that's proximate to tens of thousands of jobs," said Susan Riggs, acting director of the state Department of Housing and Community Development, which works with the growth council. "Folks can get out of their cars and drive less."

West Gateway will be built in two phases, with Phase One consisting of 77 affordable units. The cap-and-trade dollars will represent just more than 9 percent of the \$28.8 million cost, said developer Jamboree Housing Corp. of Irvine.

Without those state funds, it's doubtful the project would get built, said Terce Sandifer, senior vice president at Union Bank, the project's lender.

"That's how thin the margins are," he said.

Sandifer said cap and trade could replace redevelopment as an ongoing financing vehicle for affordable housing. Under the old redevelopment program, local agencies issued bonds to finance projects in blighted areas, and then used the resulting tax windfalls to pay off the bonds. The state was required to send money to school districts to compensate for the lost tax revenue. The Legislature killed off the program in 2011 to address the huge budget deficit that existed at the time.

"Words like 'cap and trade' may not mean a lot" to most people, Sandifer said at last week's groundbreaking. "In the affordable housing world, it's a really big deal."

USDA gives \$560,000 to boost access to Sacramento-area farmers markets

About 500 California farmers markets let low-income families use federal debit cards

USDA wants to expand that access for CalFRESH recipients

Aim is more access to healthier foods and more revenue to small farmers



A federal grant is helping people use their CalFRESH benefits cards to buy produce at area farmers markets. Renée C. Byer/Sacramento Bee file

By Claudia Buck

Every Saturday at the Oak Park Farmers Market in Sacramento, low-income shoppers can swipe their federal assistance debit cards to pay for fresh fruits, vegetables and other edibles. That electronic access is part of a nationwide effort to make farmers markets as accessible as the local grocery store and boost sales for America's small growers.

This week, the U.S. Department of Food and Agriculture announced about \$21.4 million in federal grants to support farmers markets, including about \$560,000 for Sacramento-area groups. Part of that funding will help expand the use of SNAP electronic food stamp cards at farmers markets. (SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition

Assistance Program, is called CalFresh in California.) Currently, about 519 farmers markets and farm stands in California accept CalFresh debit cards, the USDA said.

“Our goal is to increase the number of access points (for SNAP),” said Kevin Concannon, USDA undersecretary for food, nutrition and consumer services, in a conference call with reporters. “It provides access to healthier eating for low-income families ... and puts those dollars back into the local economy to support local farmers and ranchers.”

Citing California’s “creativity” in expanding low-income families’ access to farmers markets, the USDA earmarked about \$1 million to help reach an estimated 350 farmers markets that do not accept CalFresh debit cards.

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In the past five years, Concannon said, the number of U.S. farmers markets and farm stands accepting SNAP debit cards has climbed from 900 to 6,400.

One of the USDA grant recipients is NeighborWorks Sacramento, which oversees the Oak Park Farmers Market and received about \$52,000 to expand its programs for low-income families. Opened in 2010, the market lets CalFresh recipients use their debit cards to buy a range of fresh produce and other foods.

“It’s definitely working,” said Sharon Eghigian, NeighborWorks community impact manager, who said the number of families as well as dollars spent using EBT debit cards has increased 15 percent every year.

At the Oak Park market, which runs May through October, an average of 50 families a week swipe their CalFresh card at a central location and receive tokens that can be spent at local growers’ booths on eligible purchases (no hot or prepared foods). As an incentive, Rabobank N.A. matches the CalFresh withdrawals dollar for dollar, up to \$20 per week. Farmers turn in the tokens and are reimbursed in cash.

“It translates into greater purchasing power for these families. And they have locally grown, healthy foods that are at their peak of freshness and nutritional quality,” said Eghigian. She said the grant money will be used to encourage more low-income families to use the market and add more meet-the-farmer events and healthy cooking demonstrations.

Other regional recipients of the USDA funding are the CSU Chico Foundation (\$250,000), the Health Education Council in West Sacramento (\$240,000) and the El Dorado County Trails Farm Association in Placerville (\$16,000).

The Berkeley-based Ecology Center, a pioneer in expanding electronic food stamp access at California farmers markets, received about \$243,000. Its ecologycenter.org website maintains a [Farmers’ Market Finder](#), which lists California farmers markets that honor CalFresh cards.

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Sacramento News & Review - Sacramento Police fight gang violence with empathy - Greenlight - Opinions

This article was published on [01.05.12](#).



Learn how operations like Ceasefire have reduced homicide rates in other communities www.sacact.org. Jeff vonKaenel is the president, CEO and majority owner of the News & Review newspapers in Sacramento, Chico and Reno. His column, Greenlight, appears weekly in this space.

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Do you consider cops friend or foe? While most people I know believe we need a police force in our society, there are many people who are not “bad guys” who are afraid of the police. In recent months, this fear has been intensified by the Twin Rivers Police Department selling “U raise ‘em, we cage ‘em” T-shirts, and then by the incident at UC Davis, where a police officer appeared to casually use pepper spray on peaceful demonstrators. Can we have effective law enforcement when many members of the community are afraid of the police?

Recently, I saw a very different side of law enforcement. Several ministers, a police officer and a leader of the nonprofit interfaith Area Congregations Together came by the News & Review to discuss Ceasefire, their effort to prevent gang violence.

The Ceasefire approach identifies young people whose previous actions suggest they are likely to commit violence. They then ask them to come by for a “call in” where they meet with police officers, religious leaders and employers. There they are offered a real choice. They can turn around their life or face the consequences of continuing down a wayward path. The members of the Ceasefire delegation presented data on the

effectiveness of this approach, showing that it reduced both gang violence and recidivism of the targeted gang members.

By happenstance, while driving around recently, I had been listening to *Tattoos on the Heart*, a book by Father Gregory Boyle who has been working with gang members for many decades in Los Angeles. His organization, Homeboy Industries, offered them jobs. This book was very moving. Rather than portraying gang members as thugs, they were presented as people who have had horrific youth experiences that led them into gang violence. This approach, like the Ceasefire approach, reflects greater understanding and empathy for them as humans, and is a much more effective approach.

This question, police as friend or foe, recently became very personal for me. My daughter Natasha, who is a freshman at UC Berkeley, told me about her experiences at the UC Berkeley Occupy demonstrations. She was at the frontlines, with a clear view of some of the inappropriate behavior by out-of-town law-enforcement officers, as well as the reactions of the UC Berkeley officers.

She told me that the UC Berkeley cops are the kind of people that walk you to class at night and are concerned for student safety. She saw tears in some of their eyes as they watched the violent interactions. Clearly, many of the Berkeley police officers view themselves as friends, not as foes. This is the same approach the Sacramento cops take with Ceasefire. They see their role as working with the community as friends, rather than as foes.

Sacramento unveils new community policing initiative

Program is called Officer Next Door

City's goal is to keep crime down, improve public trust in police

Idea came out of recent incidents of use of force against blacks by white police officers

By Marissa Langmlang@sacbee.com



Sacramento is taking a new approach to policing that focuses on what police Chief Sam Somers Jr. called one of the biggest challenges facing the department: bettering law enforcement's relationship with the community.

The Police Department's most recent data revealed a decrease in violent crime and low rate of diversity in the department. The stated goal of a new program unveiled Thursday – called Officer Next Door – was to keep crime down while increasing department-wide diversity and community engagement.

Mayor Kevin Johnson, Somers and several members of City Council highlighted key parts of the initiative at a news conference.

Among them:

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- Engaging churches and community leaders in collaborative programs that promote cooperation between police and citizens.
- The creation of a gang task force.
- Instituting a diversity pipeline program that would recruit future officers at younger ages by partnering with local high schools and the department's Cadet Program.
- Creating a new commission to oversee the city's implementation of these programs.

To attract a more diverse applicant pool, Somers said, officers will be more positive forces in minority communities as the department works with schools to bring students interested in a career in law enforcement into their new pipeline program.

The idea that Sacramento must “get out in front” of the wave of mistrust of law enforcement came less than two weeks after a black man was shot and killed by a white police officer in Ferguson, Mo., Johnson said. Since then, protests in Sacramento and cities across the nation have called for greater transparency and accountability among police.

This, officials said, is Sacramento's answer.

“We didn’t have a Ferguson issue here,” Councilwoman Angelique Ashby said. “What we had was a response to an issue in another part of the country where we said, ‘We don’t want that to happen to Sacramento.’ ”

Several of the program’s components – a use-of-force simulator, the diversity pipeline, a gang-prevention task force, and a body camera pilot program – were included in the City Council’s additions to the 2015-16 budget approved earlier this month, along with 15 new police officers.

All told, the council approved nearly \$5.4 million on Officer Next Door initiatives.

By July, a plan for the proposed Sacramento Community Policing Commission will be brought to the City Council for approval, officials said. In four months, the commission is expected to begin its work gathering “input from communities across the city to develop recommendations for police practices that reflect the values of our diverse residents and present those recommendations to the chief of police and the city,” according to an overview produced by city staff.

Members for the commission will be appointed. The city’s goal is to have 11 members total, with at least one representative from a faith-based organization, civil rights organization, local business or philanthropy group, an organization that represents the interests of racial minorities, an advocacy group, youth or student bodies, academia and those who offer services to homeless and mentally ill people.

The city’s Racial Profiling Commission, whose ability to make recommendations beyond its original scope of examining traffic stop data, will be repurposed and folded into the new commission, officials said.

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MY BOOKMARKS



Immigration hotline launches in Sacramento 1:00



LOCAL

MAY 04, 2017 9:54 PM

Sacramento will pay to help immigrants ‘prepare for the worst’ from Trump

BY ANITA CHABRIA

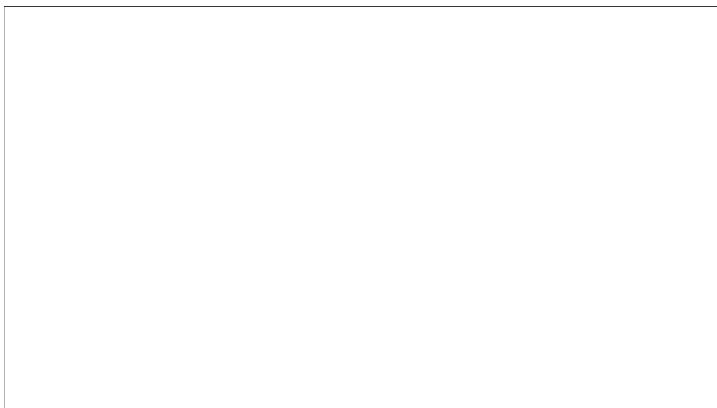
achabria@sacbee.com

Undocumented immigrants in Sacramento will have city-funded legal services as soon as next month to fight deportation and “prepare for the worst” as their fears grow about federal immigration enforcement.

Sacramento City Council members voted unanimously late Thursday to set aside up to \$300,000 for a network of legal, educational and faith-based nonprofit groups that will help residents with immediate immigration problems and advise them how to protect children and assets if parents are deported.

The network also would educate them on their rights.

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“The reality is there is a lot of fear,” said Councilman Eric Guerra. “We can alleviate that fear.”

Washington Elementary School Principal Gema Godina testified she has been asked multiple times by frightened undocumented families to take their children if parents are detained. She said she was unprepared for the requests but has agreed to be the legal guardian for five of her students.

Blake Nordahl, a professor at Sacramento’s McGeorge School of Law, said the school’s immigration clinic, which will likely receive part of the city funding, has been overwhelmed in recent months.

“We are strained. We are beyond capacity,” said Nordahl, who added that clients are “afraid to bring kids to school” or report crimes.

Councilman Steve Hansen called the situation an “emergency” that required immediate action.

Guerra said much of the legal aid would focus on creating legal guardianships for kids and powers of attorney to protect homes and bank accounts. The city will begin work on a contract immediately and could have money available within about a month, he said.

Mayor Darrell Steinberg said before the meeting he knew “there will be people that oppose this,” but “we are not a city that will exchange people’s civil rights for money.”

Only one person present at Tuesday night’s council meeting spoke against the proposal, but Councilman Jeff Harris said his office had received calls against the measure.

“I think it’s disgusting,” said Jennifer Garets, a board member of Sacramento Republican Women Federated, a countywide group, on Wednesday. “I don’t think that taxpayer money should be used to support this. I’d rather it be given to the homeless.”

Garets, a Fair Oaks resident, said she refuses to shop in Sacramento because of its liberal policies.

Guerra, who headed the task force that created the proposal, said undocumented immigrants should have access to city-funded aid because they contribute to the local economy and often pay property and sales tax to the county.

Steinberg cited a recent report from the California Endowment that estimated undocumented Sacramento County residents contribute \$58.9 million to government coffers each year.

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Do California’s undocumented immigrants cost – or save – taxpayer dollars?

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Sacramento may start paying for legal defense of undocumented immigrants

He wants more public money to fight Trump for California

About 49,000 Sacramento residents are not U.S. citizens, including about 4,100 children, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That's about 10 percent of city's residents. How many are here illegally is unknown. The census bureau does not ask about legal status.

Steinberg said immigrants with violent criminal records would not be eligible for aid, but those with minor offenses such as DUIs or possession of marijuana would.

"The line, to me, is people who are a threat," Steinberg said.

The City Council also strengthened its sanctuary city status Thursday by making it illegal for city employees, including police, to inquire unnecessarily about immigration status. That prohibition wouldn't stop police from investigating crimes or working with federal law enforcement on joint investigations.

The city money would be part of next year's budget and come from the general fund, which also supports core services such as police and fire.

The immigration network also will likely seek grants from other nonprofit agencies, city staff said. The city has applied to join a nationwide network of cities including Los Angeles and Chicago that are providing similar funding for legal services.

The Mexican consulate in Sacramento said this week it has received \$250,000 from its government to help Mexican nationals in the region with legal costs and educational outreach. The money is part of a \$50 million fund that is being divided amongst the 50 Mexican consulates in the U.S., said consular official Rodrigo Baez.

Guerra said the Mexican consulate would work in partnership with the city's nonprofit network, helping steer Mexican nationals to consular funds.

Santa Clara County in January voted to spend \$1.5 million over two years to help defend undocumented immigrants. San Francisco recently set aside \$200,000 for legal aid, and Oakland has allocated \$300,000 for a similar effort. A public-private fund that could hold up to \$10 million has also been proposed for Los Angeles city and county.

Sacramento was one of several local governments that filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration seeking to block plans to cut federal funding from sanctuary jurisdictions. Recently, a federal judge in San Francisco issued a temporary restraining order prohibiting the

administration from going through with its plans.

Steinberg said Tuesday’s action could be perceived as “doubling down” on Sacramento’s controversial sanctuary city stance, but he believed it was the right course of action.

“This is in fact a moral issue,” the mayor said. “What’s more important than ensuring that people who are threatened, people who are scared, people who just want to be part of us, that we provide them the legal protection they need?”

BEE STAFF WRITERS RYAN LILLIS AND PHILLIP REESE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT.

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Mayor Darrell Steinberg, seen here in February, said before a City Council meeting Thursday: “We are not a city that will exchange people’s civil rights for money.” The city voted to set aside up to \$300,000 for education and legal defense for undocumented immigrants. **Paul Kitagaki Jr.** - pkitagaki@sacbee.com

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Immigration hotline launches in Sacramento 1:00



LOCAL

MAY 06, 2017 7:00 AM

Mexican government spends \$250,000 in Sacramento to defend immigrants living here

BY ANITA CHABRIA
achabria@sacbee.com

The Mexican consulate in Sacramento will spend about a quarter-million dollars to help its nationals in the area fight deportations, part of a \$50 million effort across the United States by the Mexican government as fears of immigration crackdowns grow.

Rodrigo Baez, consul for protection and legal affairs in Sacramento, said this week that his consul has received about \$250,000 to help Mexican nationals who are currently detained or fear detention, and to help educate immigrants in the area about their rights.

Baez said the increased funding is new this year, based on President Donald Trump's immigration policies. Ten consulates in California and 50 nationwide have split \$50 million in funding, he said.

"The consulates are getting ready and strengthening our partner networks to be ready, to defend the rights of Mexican nationals," Baez said.

Baez said the money is a major increase; the Sacramento consulate received about \$50,000 last year, he said. Baez said Mexican consulates have provided Mexican nationals with legal aid and education outreach "for many, many years."

Baez said he has not seen increased immigration actions in Sacramento but the consulate is receiving more requests for help. Baez said Mexican nationals are showing great interest in becoming citizens. Many have been here for years without attempting to gain citizenship but now

are rushing to try and need legal guidance, he said.

“There is a lot of anxiety in the community. A lot of people want to know if they are at greater risk now,” Baez said.

Baez said a recent meeting to discuss immigration drew about 500 people.

“We’ve never had one like that before,” he said.

Baez said consular employees also regularly visit those who have been detained by immigration authorities at two local jails that contract with the federal government for space, in Yolo County and and the Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center in Sacramento County. Because consular employees have diplomatic status, they are able to enter ICE detention centers, said Baez, often becoming the only point of contact between detainees and their families.

Baez said there are up to 60 Mexican nationals in each of those facilities at any given time.

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Mozzy breaks down Oak Park slang 1:05



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CRIME - SACTO 911

Deadly online rap battle prompts Sacramento to move forward on controversial gang program

BY ANITA CHABRIA AND RYAN LILLIS
achabria@sacbee.com

AUGUST 29, 2017 11:55 AM

A deadly shooting in Meadowview over the weekend related to a trio of local rappers and the gangs who support them pushed the Sacramento City Council to immediately approve a controversial gun-violence prevention program that targets the handful of young men suspected of being behind most of the violence.

In front of a packed City Council Chambers, the council voted 9-0 on Tuesday to adopt a three-year, \$1.5 million contract for Advance Peace, a mentoring and intervention approach to gun violence. Pioneered in Richmond, the program is credited by city leaders there for significantly reducing gun crime, but has been criticized for giving cash stipends to participants for reaching goals such as earning a high school diploma.

The Advance Peace program in Sacramento would target about 50 young men, mostly black and Latino, who are thought by police and city leaders to be responsible for most gun violence in the city, especially gang-related crimes that are often retaliatory and personal. City police are currently investigating five homicides this year that are possibly gang related, said police spokesman Officer Eddie Macaulay. In total, 13 people in the city have

died this year from gunshot wounds.

“We don’t have a moment to wait here,” said Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg. “It’s another shooting on Sunday in Meadowview involving this feud over who gets credit for writing music. On the one hand it’s baffling, but on the other hand it’s real.”

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Councilman Rick Jennings, one of the chief advocates of bringing Advance Peace to Sacramento, said the program is “investing in the most at-risk population.”

“This population that we’re talking about now, we have not been able to touch this population,” Jennings said. “There’s too many people dying from senseless violence. There’s too many people dying. We need (Advance Peace) now.”

Councilwoman Angelique Ashby expressed a list of concerns with the agreement. She said the proposal was “sorely lacking (in details) and in my opinion leaves the city of Sacramento completely vulnerable to being taken advantage of.”

Ashby said there was nothing in the contract requiring Advance Peace to work directly with any of the local activists who packed the Council Chambers on Tuesday, or with the police department and local school districts. She said the contract also did not explicitly state that outreach will occur in Oak Park, Del Paso Heights and Meadowview – three city neighborhoods heavily impacted by violent crime.

Ashby also expressed concerns that the contract does not require Advance Peace to match the city’s financial investment in the program with its own money. The mayor and others countered that Advance Peace intends to match the city dollars. The council directed City Manager Howard Chan to address Ashby’s concerns in the contract, and Ashby ultimately supported the proposal.

“Yes, (the contract) is a little bit messy, but no more messy than what’s going on in the Oak Park and Meadowview neighborhoods,” Steinberg said.

In recent months, the increase in gun violence has been mirrored by acrimonious social media exchanges between three local rappers who go by the names Mozzy, C-Bo and Lavish D. The three men have exchanged numerous barbs and “diss” songs that city leaders and law enforcement believe could be spurring supporters to take revenge offline.

The Meadowview shooting took place at a popular neighborhood park Sunday afternoon during a video shoot for C-Bo, whose given name is Shawn Thomas. Four people were injured and one man, 49-year-old Ernie Jessey Cadena, was killed.

Thomas promoted the video shoot on Instagram. In his post, viewed by more than 17,000 people, Thomas wrote, “let’s go sactown OG’s will be outside.” Cadena, a father with one daughter and second child due in coming weeks, was at the park to attend a barbeque and the filming of the music video, according to community activist Les Simmons.

The promotion of the video shoot, also billed as a unity barbeque in the wake of the escalating violence, may have drawn the notice of supporters of rival rappers, said community activist Berry Accius.

“Yesterday’s shooting definitely did not happen because it was a random act of violence. This is something that has definitely been a build-up,” said Simmons, a pastor who supports Advance Peace.

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Sacramento Police Chief Daniel Hahn said the department is aware of the ongoing social media feud between the rival rappers and expects that it is not over. Hahn said there is “a decent likelihood that more shootings will come from (the Meadowview) shooting.”

Hahn said that he supports the Advance Peace program as another “tool” in fighting gun crime, but that current police enforcement and community intervention programs are also necessary.

“Sunday is a perfect example of why we need to attack violence in our communities in many different ways,” Hahn said. He added that he believed monitoring the program and requiring proof of results would be essential to evaluating its success.

“Measurement is a huge part of this,” Hahn said.

Simmons called Sunday’s shooting a “defining moment” for the city to take action, similar to the 2011 shooting of Monique Nelson, 30, who was a bystander killed during a shootout in the parking lot of Fly Cuts & Styles on Stockton Boulevard while draping her body over her then 2-year-old son to protect him from the flying bullets. Simmons was one of more than a dozen activists who spoke in favor of the council proposal Tuesday night.

The Meadowview Park shooting is also part of a larger trend of increased violence in the city. Firearms were used in 280 assaults last year, a 12 percent increase over 2015. There has been an uptick in homicides this year, officials said, and police have increased patrols in Oak Park throughout the summer.

“Do we have a problem?” said Khaalid Muttaqi, the city’s gang prevention task force director. “The statistics and the data tell us that we do.”

The Advance Peace program targets “the most lethal young men walking the streets,” according to its founder, DeVone Boggan. Boggan’s program recruits streetwise ex-gang members and convicted gun felons who have reformed into stable lives but still have the neighborhood credibility to speak to younger generations of gang members.

Those mentors help recruit “fellows” into an 18-month program that uses one-on-one cognitive behavioral therapy and life coaching — along with a stipend of up to \$1,000 a month for nine months — to help participants move away from violence.

Because the vote at City Council involves a contract and has not had the required 10-day notice, a two-thirds approval will be required by Council members.



Innovative program to curb gun violence could be on its way to Sacramento

DeVone Boggan with Richmond, Calif's Office of Neighborhood Safety explains how Advance Peace disrupts the cycle of gun violence in communities. The program could be coming to Sacramento in the near future if it makes it past a city council vote.

Hector Amezcua - The Sacramento Bee

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News, insight and discussion on Sacramento and its neighborhoods

April 4, 2012

Amid tough times, two Sacramento parks get a boost

Of all the city services hammered by the economic downturn, parks may have taken the biggest hit. But two neighborhoods got a big boost this week that will help ease that cycle.

The city received \$5.6 million in state grants to build a new park in the Fruitridge Manor neighborhood of south Sacramento and to renovate McClatchy Park in Oak Park.

The news in Fruitridge Manor was particularly sweet. It's one of the few neighborhoods in the city without a park and residents have been fighting hard for years.

Three years ago, the city was able to purchase the former Manor Recreation and Swim Club with plans of eventually building a park. Now, with \$2.8 million in Prop. 84 funds, "dreams of 'one-day' having a park in the neighborhood became a reality this week," said the area's council member, Kevin McCarty.

The park will include a children's playground, skate park, BBQ grills, a half basketball court, soccer field and fitness stations.

Across town, McClatchy Park's renovation got a boost from \$2.8 million in Prop. 84 funds. The park that will soon be the site of a revamped farmer's market is also getting a children's play structure, basketball court, jogging track, tennis court and skate park.

"This is a very exciting time to live in Oak Park," said Councilman Jay Schenirer, who represents the area. "The new facilities will bring many more families and kids into the park."

Categories: City Council, Neighborhoods

Posted by **Ryan Lillis**

2:32 PM | [Comments](#)

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LOCAL NOVEMBER 17, 2014 1:46 PM

Sacramento County completes Franklin Boulevard improvements

HIGHLIGHTS

Sacramento County officials celebrated the completion of a Franklin Boulevard revitalization project this morning.

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BY BRAD BRANAN

bbranan@sacbee.com

Sacramento County officials celebrated the completion of a Franklin Boulevard revitalization project this morning.

The \$2.1 million project started in April, adding curbs, sidewalks, landscaped medians and other improvements on the boulevard along the seven blocks lining the former Campbell Soup Co. plant.

The 2013 closure of the plant was a big blow to an area that was already struggling, taking with it 700 well-paying jobs.

A consortium is turning the plant into a mixed-used development. County officials hope the street-scape improvements will attract further development to the area.

The project was done by the county's Transportation Department and the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency. The project is the second part of broader redevelopment plan conceived over a decade ago for Franklin Boulevard. Several years ago, improvements on Franklin Boulevard were added to the section between 47th Avenue and Turnbridge Drive.

Business leaders complain that not enough has been done to carry out the plan. Redevelopment officials say the state's ending of redevelopment funds in 2011 made it more difficult to carry out the work.

Call The Bee's Brad Branan, (916) 321-1065. Follow him on Twitter @BradB_at_SacBee.

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MORE LOCAL

Sacramento Kings recruiting low-income workers for arena construction

Sacramento Kings officials held a training and outreach session Wednesday morning with community and faith-based groups to begin recruiting workers from “high-need backgrounds and neighborhoods” for the construction of the new arena.

By Ryan Lillis - rlillis@sacbee.com



Sacramento Kings officials held a training and outreach session Wednesday morning with community and faith-based groups to begin recruiting workers from “high-need backgrounds and neighborhoods” for the construction of the new arena.

The Kings’ Priority Apprenticeship Program will focus on recruiting and training at least 70 workers from around the city to help build the \$477 million project at Downtown Plaza.

“The Kings are proud to lead this extraordinary coalition of business, labor, government, community and faith leaders working to create quality jobs,” Kings President Chris Granger said in a news release. “Today is a great example of why this project is bigger than basketball. We are honored to be in a position to provide what could become a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for deserving individuals to launch a new career and pathway to the middle class.”

The Kings, arena builder Turner Construction, the building trades unions, city officials and the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency are working on the plan. The Urban League, Sacramento Area Congregations Together, the Center for Employment Training, the Asian Resource Center and La Familia are part of the program as well.

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To qualify for the apprenticeship program, workers must meet some criteria. It is open to city residents who meet two or more of the following: They are low-income, receive food stamps or public assistance, or are a former foster youth, homeless, veteran or ex-offender, according to a Kings news release.

The program is also open to residents of the following ZIP codes: 95652, 95660, 95811, 95814, 95815, 95817, 95820, 95823, 95824, 95832 and 95838.

Those who qualify will enter either a union apprenticeship program or a job training program.

To apply for the positions, workers should call the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency’s arena jobs hotline, (916) 274-1019.

Sacramento News & Review - Taken for a ride: On the future of Regional Transit in Sacramento - Feature Story - Local Stories

The region's business elite want to rebrand bus and light rail as hip and attractive—but they could leave behind RT's best customers



ILLUSTRATION BY HAWK KRALL

Advertisement

Avondale Glen Elder, on the southeast edge of Sacramento, is a diverse community, but not a wealthy one. It's a neighborhood of smallish 1950s tract houses, and a lot of residents rely on public transit. Otherwise, without a car, it's a long walk to anywhere in particular.

Brenda Bean used to take the Route 8 bus into Glen Elder in order to visit her parents. But in 2010, the Sacramento Regional Transit District cut the No. 8 to save money.

With no other bus in the area, Bean had to make a 45-minute walk from the Power Inn light-rail station to her parents' house. Later, when they got sick, "I walked it three times a week," she says. Every quarter mile or so, she'd pass one of RT's blue bus-stop signs, stenciled over with the words "NO BUS."

Route 8 wasn't the only bus cut in 2010. Hammered by economic downturn, falling sales-tax revenue and cuts in state funding, RT slashed bus service from 92 routes down to 62. Light-rail service was cut, too, especially at night.

Fares went up the year before, but worse was the elimination of transfers, which riders could use to connect from one bus to another, and from rail to bus. And RT got rid of the popular central city fare of \$1 inside the downtown-Midtown grid.

And so, ridership plummeted. RT quickly lost 7 million riders per year. About 3 million riders have been lured back. But RT is at something of a crossroads now, as it tries to decide the best way forward.

Local electeds and business leaders want RT to focus more on those commuters who normally drive cars but might choose transit to avoid parking costs downtown, or to feel they are being a bit more green.

“We really have an opportunity to influence ‘choice riders,’” says RT board member and Sacramento County Supervisor Phil Serna.

The business group is also keen to get these choice riders to take light rail and a proposed new streetcar system to the Kings arena, under construction, and spend money in the surrounding sports bar and restaurant district that is planned.

Advocates for the poor and “transit dependent” worry that the downtown business group has hijacked RT’s policy agenda, and are trying shift resources away from the people who need transit most.

“What we’re doing is building a special system for special people,” says Michelle Pariset, with Capital Region Organizing Project, a nonprofit that helps low-income communities organize to change public policy. “And proposing to fund its operation on the backs of families who need the bus to get to work, school and the grocery store,” she adds.

Waiting for the buses

The good news is that Avondale Glen Elder will finally get bus service back, sometime in September. “It has taken us five years to get this one bus route back,” says Pariset, who helped neighbors agitate for the return of their bus. “Eventually we just created enough noise that they had to negotiate with us.”

The bad news is RT isn’t anywhere close to restoring bus services elsewhere.

In fact, RT staff recently announced, somewhat quietly, that bus service won’t return to 2008 levels until sometime in 2023. That’s a lost decade-and-a-half for Sacramento bus riders.

RT is not just stuck. It’s falling further behind every year.

“We have not responded to growth,” explains RT general manager Mike Wiley. “When you have new development on the periphery, that takes new service to address it.”

In 2012, RT began the first phase of its Transit Renewal plan. Despite the hopeful name, Transit Renewal doesn’t mean anyone is getting a bus route back.

Instead, RT has mostly returned night service, and shortened “headways”—or the time between buses—on some routes. Even so, a full third of RT’s weekday buses run on 60-minute headways.

Wiley says RT targeted the routes with the lowest ridership for elimination. When—and if—a particular neighborhood’s bus service is restored, Wiley says, it won’t be the old route, but rather a new and more efficient route.

In September, Avondale Glen Elder’s new bus will be called Route 65. And it will have a slightly different alignment, and hopefully a higher ridership, than the old No. 8.

However, the 65 still won’t connect to the Power Inn light-rail station. And the station will still only have one bus connection, where it used to have three.

Comparing the RT system map of 2014 to the map just a few years ago, you see just how much connectivity was lost. The Fruitridge light-rail station had five bus connections; now it has one. Meadowview station went from six feeder buses to three. The 65th Street station, serving Sacramento State, dropped from nine buses to five. And so on.

And even though RT eliminated the “least productive” routes, the cuts are having a deep and lasting impact on ridership. Bus ridership dropped from 17.6 million to 13.6 in the space of a year, from 2009 to 2010. It’s not expected to recover until the early 2020s.

Ironically, RT’s operating budget has recovered, sort of. State and federal funding have remained flat, while sales-tax revenue has rebounded after the Great Recession. For the 2014-15 fiscal year, the budget was \$147 million. That’s actually a little higher than the 2009 budget, right before the big cuts. But costs have gone up, too. So RT is spending more money to provide less service. And improving bus service in one area means making cuts somewhere else.

For example, RT planners recently proposed rerouting the Route 80 and 84 buses away from La Riviera Drive in order to provide a faster commuter service along Watt Avenue. But that change meant eliminating service through a neighborhood dense with houses and apartments.

Pariset went into action, handing out fliers and asking bus riders to come to an RT board meeting and speak out against the cut. On the day that SN&R joined her, there were no visible notices letting riders know their service was about to be eliminated.

Still, over several weeks, Pariset whipped up enough interest to convince the RT board of directors to keep one bus running on La Riviera. Bus service in the neighborhood will be reduced from every half-hour to every hour, but it’s better than nothing.

The lack of funds creates a zero-sum game for neighborhood bus service. “I expect we’ll see more of these kinds of cuts, as RT robs Peter to pay Paul,” says Pariset.

Chasing choice riders

Light-rail service, on the other hand, was restored comparatively quickly. RT projects that light-rail ridership will recover and surpass bus ridership for the first time sometime in 2016. RT is extending its “Blue Line” south to Cosumnes River College. It’s also looking for funds to extend a “Green Line” through Natomas and on to the Sacramento airport.

The shift to rail is partly due to RT's effort to protect its "backbone" service. But RT policy is also being driven by a desire to appeal to more affluent choice riders.

It's a shift that's happening all over the country, says UC Los Angeles urban-planning professor Brian Taylor. In a 2014 paper, Taylor explains that transit agencies have seen their mission change over time.

For many decades, public transit was an important part of life for working- and middle-class people. As the automobile took over, and private bus and streetcar systems folded, mass transit became more of a social program for those who couldn't drive.

Today, mass transit has a more complicated and more expansive mandate. It's supposed to get people to work and school and the doctor's office. But it's also enlisted to fight air pollution and climate change, accommodate and encourage new development, and even produce an urban aesthetic (as with streetcars).

Taylor says a two-tiered system has developed. Bus riders as a group, Taylor says, tend to be more poor and more nonwhite compared to rail riders, who on the whole are more affluent and more white. Poor people are happy to ride rail, of course. The split has more to do with light rail's usefulness for downtown commuters, and the aversion that choice riders have to buses.

So perhaps it's not surprising that light rail and streetcars tend to have more political support than buses. A related issue is that there is more federal funding for capital projects—building things—than there is for operations, and this favors high-cost rail systems, too.

As a result, "transit spending priorities have been shifted away from bus service, and toward commuter oriented rail service, favored by the wealthier general voting public, although most members of this group rarely, if ever, ride transit," Taylor writes.

A group of Sacramento business leaders is trying to steer RT hard in the direction of choice riders. This group includes folks like downtown developer David Taylor; Warren Smith, president of the Sacramento Republic Football Club; and Mark Friedman, the developer of the downtown arena.

At the invitation of county supervisor and RT board member Serna, the business group recently submitted a five-part list of recommended changes. And they were invited to join Serna and three other RT board members on a special "ad hoc" committee to consider system improvements.

Some of the changes they are asking for include tighter security, a crackdown on fare jumpers and more frequent cleaning of bus shelters and light-rail stations.

These are not so surprising. Most regular RT riders have at some point encountered intoxicated or mentally ill passengers. As with transit systems in most cities, there is sometimes raucous behavior, sometimes crime. Sometimes even serious violence; there were two separate fatal shooting incidents on RT trains last year.

But the business group is also asking RT to get more focused on serving the new downtown Kings arena, and to consider special fares for arena events.

They want a ban on “large bags of recyclables.” They are even calling for a “zero tolerance policy for civil disobedience” on RT property. (Ironically, this was included in the same January RT staff report that commemorated a “Season of Civil Rights” and the importance of public transit in the civil rights movement. That movement, you may recall, made effective use of civil disobedience.)

In their letter to the RT board, the business group also suggest “rebranding” RT to make it “more hip/cool, targeting the urban downtown residential market,” and adding, “RT is often thought of as a social service and not relevant to choice riders.”

The RT board and staff have been accommodating to the business folks. Wiley agreed to dedicate a full-time employee to serve as a liaison.



Michelle Pariset says it took five years to get just one bus route to Avondale Glen Elder, a poorer Sacramento neighborhood. “Eventually, we just created enough noise that they had to negotiate with us.”

PHOTOS BY LAURAN FAYNE WORTHY

Outside groups are skeptical. “To me, this sounds like a lot of folks who don’t ride transit getting upset that they see poor people on the train,” says Veronica Beaty with the Sacramento Housing Alliance.

The RT board is made up of a collection of city council people from area cities, along with county supervisors. They are not, for the most part, RT riders. Neither are the business folks on the ad hoc committee.

And while RT’s rules say the quarterly meetings of that ad hoc committee must be open to the public, RT board chairman and city councilman Jay Schenirer announced that the committee’s main work would be done in “working groups” that would not be open to the public.

Several transit advocates asked for representation on the committee, but they were refused.

“We need to have a very clear business focus,” says RT board member and city councilman Steve Hansen. “The one group we don’t usually hear from are choice riders.”

This left transit advocates shaking their heads. “It’s clear that riders and members of organizations will not be allowed to sit at the working group’s table,” laments Barbara Stanton, who has for years watchdogged RT for her group, RiderShip for the Masses.

Stanton says no one is opposed to cleaner or safer stations. Those are the kinds of problems she has been focused on for years. But she also wants to know where the money will come from to accommodate the business group.

It’s important to note some changes were already in the works. Wiley is negotiating a new contract for bus shelters to include more regular maintenance and refurbishment. The agency has already ordered 96 new buses. Wiley is talking with the Sacramento Downtown Partnership about contracting out the cleaning of downtown bus and rail.

But Wiley acknowledged the business group’s wish list will further strain the budget. Where will the money come from?

“Right now, I don’t know. They haven’t had that conversation yet.”

Is RT neglecting its best customers?

In a lot of ways, Sacramento’s streetcar plan encapsulates the tension between choice riders and the transit dependent.

City Councilman Hansen, a streetcar supporter, pitched the project to downtown business owners as appealing to “people who would not ride a bus.”

Streetcars fit in with the business community’s RT rebranding plan, too. But there are important trade-offs. If voters approve construction of the line in May, it’s likely RT will be asked to operate it and pick up a large portion of its operating costs. The agency could be on the hook for as much \$2 million a year to run the streetcar, money that could be spent elsewhere. (The agency scraped together \$685,000 in next year’s budget to run a bus to Avondale Glen Elder.)

“RT’s operations budget is extremely tight,” says Pariset. “Ultimately, what we’re talking about is diverting money from neighborhood buses and the transit-dependent to a streetcar for choice riders.”

Wiley argues that the streetcar will increase business activity downtown, thus increasing RT’s share of sales taxes. And he says he’s also considering funding the streetcar with new money that will be allocated under California’s cap-and-trade system for new transit service.

That doesn’t sit well with Pariset, who says that cap-and-trade money should go to shore up basic transit service. “I don’t think the community will stand for it. Not when there’s so much need in the neighborhoods for

public transportation.”

Serna argues that appealing to choice riders will increase revenue for the RT system. “If you had the ability to attract more choice riders and reduce fare evasions, now we’d have more money to restore service,” says Serna. “I think what is going to be good for choice riders is going to be equally good for those who depend on the system.”

But Taylor at UCLA told SN&R that the emphasis on choice riders may do more harm than good in the long run.

“I worry that we’ll start to see these stories about the empty streetcars. There’s going to be a backlash from voters. And that’s going to hurt the people who need transit.”

And while RT may attract new riders with streetcars and light rail, it may lose more of its best customers because of cuts to bus service and high fares.

His paper concludes that “increasing bus frequencies, expanding center-city bus networks, and in particular cutting bus fares have been shown to be powerful stimuli for increasing ridership.”



Regional Transit general manager Mike Wiley has seen ridership numbers fall dramatically in recent years. He hopes to turn around the bus—and expand light rail to places like Citrus Heights, Elk Grove and the airport. Cutting bus fares is Pam Haney’s No. 1 mission. She works with Wellspring Women’s Center, an Oak Park nonprofit that provides services to low-income women. “One of the biggest issues I hear about at Wellspring is transportation, transportation, transportation,” Haney says. So every week, the center hands out a limited number of free bus passes to clients, first come, first serve.

Haney has been campaigning for a more affordable transit system, organizing groups of women to testify to before the RT board.

RT offers half-price fares to seniors, students and the disabled. But Haney is also asking for the return of bus transfers, for free transit for all riders under 18 and for fare-free zones downtown.

The cuts to service and the higher fares have hit Sacramento's most vulnerable the hardest, Haney says. "It's created this box, where people are stuck and they can't access the things they need."

She is also pushing for a "means-tested" fare for RT. This is an idea that is about to be tried out in Seattle, where riders with household incomes less than 200 percent of the poverty level pay half-price to ride.

Haney says some board members have been supportive. But helping more poor people to ride RT may run counter to the idea of rebranding RT as less social service and more hip, cool and relevant to choice riders.

Destination unknown

The word "rebranding" can sound a little phony. But RT is up to some genuinely interesting things.

For example, the Seattle fare experiment is possible in part because of new smart-card technology. And RT is about to introduce something similar, called the Connect Card, which it plans to roll out this summer.

It could be used to create more discount fares, and distance-based fares, too. "We lost a lot of riders with the elimination of the central city fare," says Wiley. "I see some real opportunity with the Connect Card for the short-hop rides." And Wiley says distance-based fares could work anywhere, not just in the central city.

RT is also experimenting with dedicated bus lanes and traffic signals which allow buses to "queue jump" ahead of cars at some intersections.

These innovations are a little futuristic, but Wiley's vision for RT is grander still. For many years now, he has been pitching a system that offers "full access and full mobility for all."

It's called the Transit Action Plan. It's ambitious—and expensive. It includes extension of light rail to the airport, Citrus Heights and Elk Grove. It features circulator streetcars downtown and around Sacramento State, Cal Expo and Rancho Cordova. And it proposes a network of "Hi Bus," or high-frequency buses and Bus Rapid Transit systems, running up major roads like Bradshaw and Watt Avenue. And it includes more neighborhood buses and shuttles, too.

Much of Transit Action could become reality with the passage of a one-half-cent sales tax dedicated to transit.

That's what the Bay Area spends on transit. In Los Angeles it's a full cent. In Sacramento, just one-sixth of a cent is dedicated to RT.

Wiley had hope for a ballot measure to increase funding. But the recession dragged on and Gov. Jerry Brown's Proposition 30, and the city of Sacramento's Measure U, beat RT to the punch.

And Wiley says internal polling also showed that a transit-only sales tax was unlikely to hit the two-thirds voters approval threshold necessary for passage. Voters tend to be more supportive of measures that mix transit with money for road construction and maintenance.

So now, RT is supporting a new proposal by Sacramento Transportation Authority—a coalition of local governments—for a half-cent sales tax to fund an array of transportation projects in Sacramento County.

Much of the money would go to build and maintain streets and roads. That includes construction of the Capital Southeast Connector highway linking the suburbs of Elk Grove and Rancho Cordova. Some money would also be put into the construction of Sacramento's intermodal transit station downtown.

Some fraction of the half-cent—it's not clear how much—would be available to RT.

Can RT find the funding to grow? Who benefits from the agency's scarce resources? There are even more existential questions on the horizon for RT.

New technologies like ride share, and eventually self-driving cars, may one day—perhaps not too far away—eat into RT's market share. "Choice riders in particular may have a more appealing alternative to public transit. And that may reduce demand," says Nidhi Kalra, a researcher with the RAND Corporation who has been studying the possible impacts of autonomous vehicles, or AVs.

For example, long commutes in the car might be a lot more appealing if you can read or surf the Internet while your Google-powered personal vehicle does the driving for you.

On the other hand, AVs will likely be expensive, at least for a while. She thinks it's not too soon for transit agencies to start thinking about how they might introduce AVs and "on demand" technology into their systems.

"I can imagine a transit service that picks you up at your door, without any additional cost," Kalra says.

These technologies have tremendous implications for transportation, for land use and for the ability to provide transit to those who need it most. "But agencies may need to rethink what public transit means."

The American Planning Association Provides Funding to 17 Additional Local Coalitions to Combat Chronic Disease

November 18, 2015 09:00 AM Eastern Standard Time

WASHINGTON--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--The American Planning Association (APA) has provided \$2.25 million in funding to 17 new local coalitions around the United States through its [Plan4Health](#) initiative to combat two determinants of chronic disease—lack of physical activity and lack of access to nutritious foods. This is the second year funding was made available through the Plan4Health initiative.

Plan4Health is a multi-year effort that strengthens the connection between planning and public health. Seventy-five percent of the program's funding supports local and state coalitions working to advance public health through better planning and partnerships, specifically through leveraging skills and evidence-based strategies. Funding for Plan4Health was provided through an award from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC).

"We are pleased to offer a second year of funding to local coalitions working to improve their community's health," said Anna Ricklin, AICP, manager of APA's Planning and Community Health Center, which manages the Plan4Health program. "The funding provides fuel to address existing health concerns to create communities of lasting value that are equitable and healthy for all."

Local coalition recipients were selected after a competitive review process. The program is implemented in partnership with the [American Public Health Association](#) (APHA) and represents a major new collaboration between planners and public health professionals. APA chapters and APHA affiliates are the foundation for the local coalitions that will help identify and implement innovative tactics to address lack of physical activity and the lack of readily available nutritious foods.

The following local coalitions comprise the second group to receive financial support through Plan4Health:

- *Nutri-Bike-Ajo Coalition*, Ajo, Ariz.
- *Design 4 Active Sacramento*, Sacramento County, Calif.
- *Healthy Communities Coalition of Eagle County*, Eagle County, Colo.
- *Delaware Coalition for Healthy Eating and Active Living*, Kent County, Del.
- *Jackson County Healthy Communities Coalition*, Jackson County, Ill.
- *Thomas County Coalition*, Thomas County, Kan.
- *Kentucky Rural Health Coalition*, Bullitt, Henry, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer & Trimble Counties, Ky.
- *Baltimore Greenway Trails Coalition*, Baltimore, Md.
- *Healthy Communities Coalitions*, City of Helena, City of East Helena and Helena Valley in Lewis and Clark County, Mont.
- *Centralina Health Solutions Coalition*, Mecklenburg County, N.C.
- *ACHIEVE Wellness Lake County*, Lake County, Ohio

- *Pathways to Health*, Tulsa County, Okla.
- *Umatilla County Plan 4 Health Initiative*, Umatilla County, Ore.
- *Mount Hope Coalition to Increase Food Security*, Mt. Hope Neighborhood in East Side of Providence, R.I.
- *Plan4Health Tarrant County*, Southeast Fort Worth, Texas
- *Active Transportation Community of Interest*, Puyallup Watershed in Pierce County, Wash.
- *Shawano and Menominee Counties Health in Planning Coalition*, Shawano & Menominee Counties, Wis.

This is the second year of funding for the Plan4Health program, bringing the total number of coalitions working to improve community health to 35. Last year, 18 coalitions received funding for the program's first year. Visit www.plan4health.us to learn more or follow the hashtag #Plan4Health on Twitter.

Plan4Health is being administered through APA's Planning and Community Health Center that is dedicated to integrating community health issues into local and regional planning practices by advancing research, outreach, education and policy.

The American Planning Association is an independent, not-for-profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities. APA and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, are dedicated to advancing the art, science and profession of good planning -- physical, economic and social -- so as to create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live. Members of APA help create communities of lasting value and encourage civic leaders, business interests and citizens to play a meaningful role in creating communities that enrich people's lives. APA has offices in Washington, D.C., and Chicago. For more information, visit www.planning.org.

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Sacramento Hopes "Promise Zone" Leads To Promised Land

 [Bob Moffitt](#)

Tuesday, April 28, 2015 | Sacramento, CA | [Permalink](#)

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0:11



Part of the City of Sacramento is one of eight new "Promise Zones" created by the Obama Administration.

The "Promise Zone" designation gives Sacramento its own liaison to help local public/private partnerships apply for federal funds.

Ophelia Basgal (bass GAL) is a HUD Regional Administrator. She says the designation will also make it easier for Sacramento to secure federal grants.

"Points are assigned for the various factors in the application, whatever it might be. When you're a Promise Zone you get additional points."

Sacramento could also have the services of as many as five Americorps volunteers. They would assist programs designed to improve education, create jobs, and improve community health.

The City's zone encompasses about a quarter of the population and includes Del Paso, downtown, and the Fruitridge areas.

The Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency says it tried to include a portion of South Sacramento's District 8 in the zone, but was unable to.

A Promise Zone must be contiguous and a band of relative economic prosperity separates District 8 from the rest of the City.

This is the second wave of "Promise Zone" cities. HUD says high school graduation rates in the San Antonio district improved from 45 percent to 80 percent. Hud also says safe drinking water will be available for the first time to about 700 households in a rural section of Oklahoma previously selected for a promise zone.

[Sacramento Promise Zone](#)



SACRAMENTO PROMISE ZONE

FACT SHEET

The application was submitted by the Housing Authority of Sacramento County and will be administered by the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency and implemented with, the City of Sacramento, County of Sacramento and over 30 partners actively engaged in supporting the goals of the Promise Zone.

Goal of the Promise Zones Initiative

To revitalize high-poverty communities across the country by

- creating jobs
- increasing economic activity
- improving educational opportunities
- reducing serious and violent crime
- leveraging private capital
- assisting local leaders in navigating federal programs and cutting through red tape.

Statistics

- Total population is 127,893
- Poverty rate is 34%
- Unemployment is 18.84%
- Life expectancy for residents in the Promise Zone is 72 years versus 79 outside the zone

Promise Zone 10-Year Strategy

Accelerate Job Creation

1. Invest in a sector approach to occupational skills training that prepares jobseekers for career pathways to middle skilled jobs that ensure self-sufficiency.
2. Improve economic growth by addressing economic impediments that prevent business growth in the Promise Zone area.
3. Diversify the economy through growth and support of the core business clusters.

Economic Development

1. Revitalize commercial corridors as vital assets that offer tremendous revitalization opportunities for retail, commercial, and housing.
2. Focus resources on key infill and major development projects to create jobs, improve quality of life and build a sustainable local economy.
3. Diversify the economy through growth and support of the core business clusters

Health

1. Increase adoption of comprehensive approaches to improve community design that supports physical activity by influencing City and County general and specific plans that impact the Promise Zone
2. Increase opportunities for physical activity through shared use agreements between municipalities, school districts and community based organizations by targeting schools in the Promise Zone.
3. Implement strategies to translate and integrate known community health interventions into usual clinical care approaches to address high blood pressure and high cholesterol for Promise Zone residents.

Sustainable Community Revitalization

1. Strengthen community capacity to address gang involvement and create safe neighborhoods, especially for boys and men of color residing in the Promise Zone.
2. Increase housing stock and transit growth to promote



Bob Moffitt
Sacramento Region Reporter



Comments



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Active Design Needs Active Communities, Part I: Sacramento



This post is the first in a two-part series highlighting two exceptional Plan4Health projects: one in Sacramento, California, and one in Pierce County, Washington (</blog/blogpost/9113619/>). These communities may be more than 700 miles apart, but they are united in the shared goal of building healthy communities through principles of active design. Each project has unlocked the secret to successful planning for public health: civic engagement.

“Active design is an approach to the design of communities that promotes physical activity,” explains Kirin Kumar, project manager at [WALKSacramento](http://www.walksacramento.org/) (<http://www.walksacramento.org/>). The non-profit community organization spearheads [Design 4 Active Sacramento \(D4AS\)](http://www.plan4health.us/plan4health-coalitions/sacramento-county-ca-design-for-active-sacramento-coalition/) (<http://www.plan4health.us/plan4health-coalitions/sacramento-county-ca-design-for-active-sacramento-coalition/>), a Plan4Health grantee which brings together engineers, planners, and public health professionals to create safer, more active communities. The program recently won an [excellence award from the Center for Active Design](https://awards.centerforactivedesign.org/winners/design-4-active-sacramento) (<https://awards.centerforactivedesign.org/winners/design-4-active-sacramento>) for successfully incorporating active design-oriented language into the county’s zoning code and design guidelines.

As they were working through the Plan4Health grant, WALKSacramento was contacted by the [Center for Cities + Schools at UC Berkeley](http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/about) (<http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/about>), which works to involve local school leaders and students in the city planning process. One of CC+S’s programs, [Y-PLAN](http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/y-plan) (<http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/y-plan>) (Youth-Plan, Learn, Act, Now!), engages high school

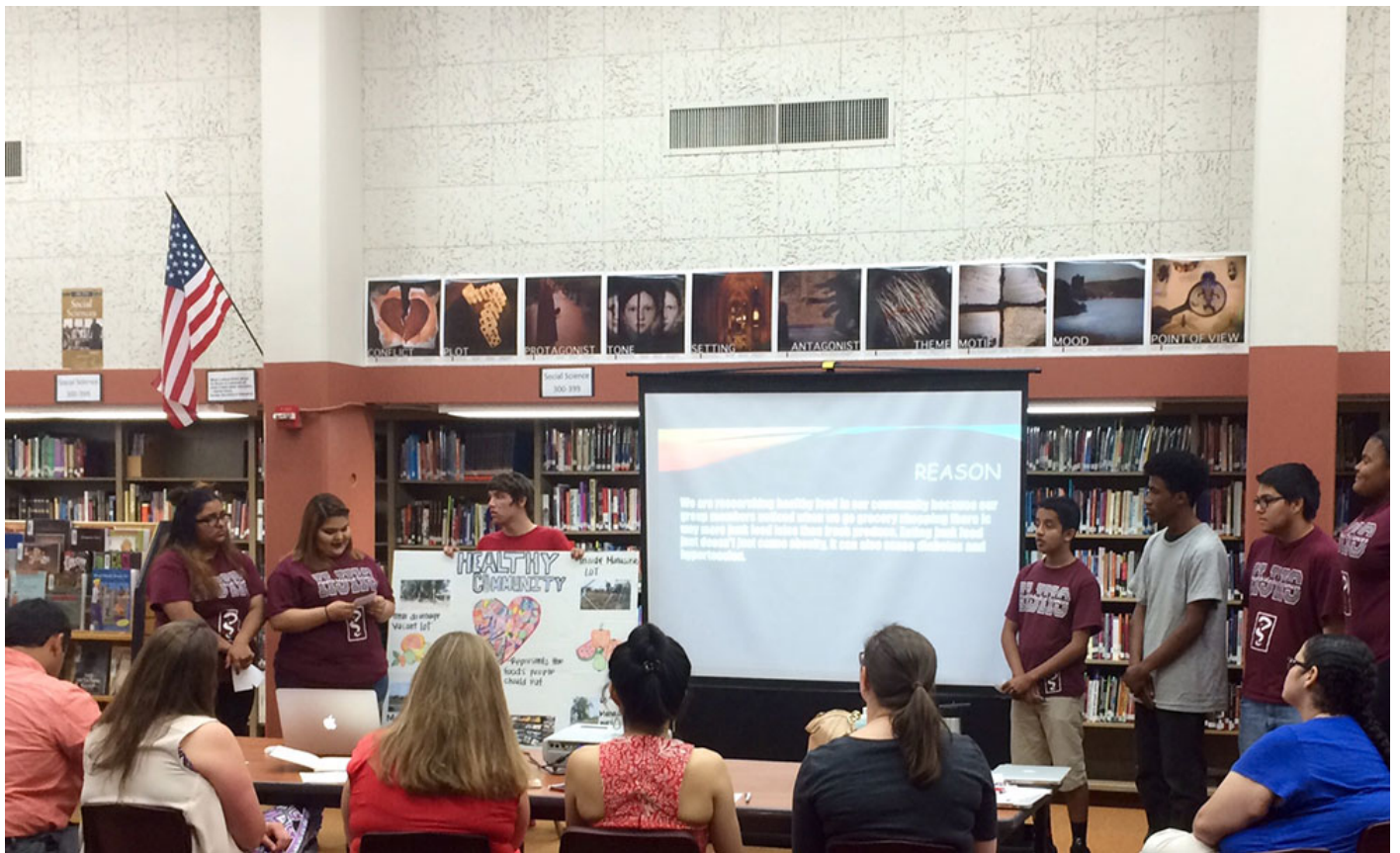
students in the planning process by providing teachers with planning-themed curricula and then allowing students to identify problems and solutions where they live. It culminates with students working with local leaders to fix these problems through consulting projects.



Students conducting a walk audit. Photo by Kirin Kumar, WALKSacramento.

WALKSacramento had never worked with high-school aged youth in this manner before, but they decided to pilot the program in two regional high schools with public health tracks. At first, the students seemed caught up in traditional public health approaches focused on food and exercise, but WALKSacramento encouraged the Y-PLAN participants to explore the influences of the built environment. The students performed walk audits and evaluated how the negative perceptions of safety and lack of infrastructure in their neighborhoods could impact public health.

The projects were so successful that some of them continued even after the school year was done. One group presented their project to the Sacramento Bike Advisory Coalition. Another contacted Regional Transit officials with their ideas on how to improve bus stops in the area. Hours later, wheels were in motion to provide new seating and clear the growth at bus stops in the area.



Students sharing their final project. Photo by Kirin Kumar, WALKSacramento.

Students also often build powerful relationships with the adults they meet through their efforts, which helps them develop into the next generations of community leaders. “Between 75 and 80 percent of the students [in Y-PLAN] who graduate will stay in their communities,” Kumar explains. “It is important that they feel comfortable reaching out about the projects that are important to them.”

D4AS’s civic outreach extends across multiple generations. In another attempt to engage with a broader swath of community members, the D4AS coalition partnered with AARP and other built environment advocates including the Sacramento Housing Alliance, the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates, and Breathe California, Emigrant Trails to hold an open forum during a mayoral election year to discuss ways to advance livability in Sacramento. The forum had special focus on the issues that face elderly people in city planning, including access to transportation and homelessness.



Sacramento mayoral candidates presenting at the AARP conference. Photo by AARP.

Citizens who fall to the wayside in the planning process often know their communities best — their needs, their resources, and their visions for the future. “Intentional civic engagement gives a voice to those who otherwise might not have been heard,” Kumar concludes. Everyone’s voice is important when it comes to planning healthier communities — young and old.

Top image: Students on a walk audit. Photo by Kirin Kumar, WALKSacramento.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Samantha Schipani is APA’s Great Places in America communications intern.

OCTOBER 21, 2016

By Samantha Schipani

Tags: Planning Methods and Tools, (/blog/?tags=103) Health, (/blog/?tags=108) Health (/blog/?tags=1519)

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Sacramento Gets \$400K Grant For North Franklin Boulevard Facelift

January 31, 2016 10:39 PM

Filed Under: [Franklin Boulevard](#), [Sacramento](#)

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SACRAMENTO (CBS13) – It's been long overdue, but Franklin Boulevard is ready for an upgrade.



“I think it's great. Franklin Boulevard has the potential to be a street where people walk versus a street they just drive by,” said Jorge Plasencia, owner of La Esperanza bakery.

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments presented the City of Sacramento with a check for a \$433,000 grant to get the ball rolling to turn North Franklin Boulevard into a destination place.

“I've been very involved, I've worked very hard to get this grant,” Plasencia said.

The funding will be used to revitalize the streetscape along the boulevard, which is rich with family-owned businesses – many that have been there for over 50 years.

And while upgrades are welcome, there are some major concerns.

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California Prison Smuggling: Meth In Soap, Heroin On Stamps

“It’s just gonna cause too much traffic and it’s gonna affect all the neighborhoods here,” said resident Joel Sandoval. “I’m just concerned about the congestion of traffic, it making harder for people to go in and out of stores.

“Even parking, it’s already tight,” Sandoval added.

More trees, [bike](#) lanes, and other ideas for the project are meant to make Franklin Boulevard a safer corridor for walking and biking.

And while this is just the first step, the community’s been working on this for two years. The grant [money](#) will help take planners through the next 12 months.



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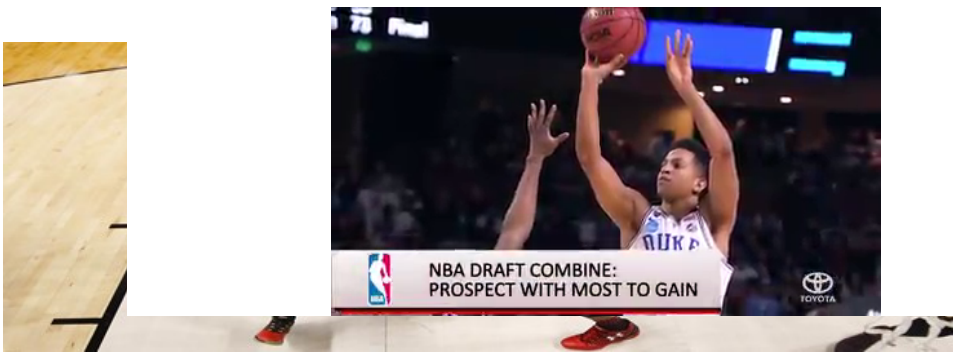


Nuclear Concerns Have Sacramento Man In Spotlight



Snake Interrupts Play During Sunday's Game At Raley Field [VIDEO]

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Sacramento Awarded \$64 Million Grant For Homeless

June 13, 2017 11:53 PM By Macy Jenkins

Filed Under: [Sacramento](#)



SACRAMENTO (CBS13) — Sacramento city leaders voted to accept a \$64 million state grant on Tuesday to help end homelessness. Sacramento is the only city in California to get these funds.



"I think it's really important that the public understands exactly what this is," said Mayor Darrell Steinberg.

Steinberg applied for the money earlier this year as a part of his commitment to get an estimated 2,000 people off the streets. He announced on Tuesday that the city has been accepted into the Whole Person Care (WPC) Program.

"If you feel like this is a great day in Sacramento, let me hear it," said Vice Mayor Rick Jennings, after the announcement. "And I want everybody in Sacramento to hear it!"

The cheers marked the excitement of city council members celebrating \$64 million coming to the city of Sacramento.

"Our systems here in Sacramento are putting together the \$64 million to help people who most frequently access emergency room services and



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similar services,” Steinberg said.

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Many of those people are from Sacramento’s homeless population. Steinberg says this money will support more than 3,200 hundred people over the next three years in a broad approach to addressing health issues.

So, how will the city use the money? First, they’ll combine data from local hospitals to identify frequent ER visitors. They’ll hire more clinically trained outreach workers, expand current on-the-ground outreach efforts, and develop a more comprehensive case management system.

Steinberg says it’ll reduce homeless visits to the ER and reduce pressure on often overcrowded local hospitals.

“We’re going to have people at the emergency rooms, we’re going to have people at the shelters, we’re going to have mobile crisis teams,” he said.

After 4 years of living on the street, Tammy Flores says she sees enough outreach workers around. She says efforts should focus on finding people a place to live.

“He’s wasting his money,” Flores said. “Get them into housing and then start getting them to the doctors.”

But Steinberg says housing alone is not enough.

The money will start coming in this July. The city will collect \$32 million from 13 local hospitals and health care centers, then send the money to the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). In return, the city will receive twice as much money back from the state: \$64 million in total.

The services will start in January 2018. Next up, the city plans to hire a consulting firm to figure out how to hire the additional outreach workers they need.

Macy Jenkins

[Follow @MacyJenkins](#)

Macy joined the CBS 13 team as a reporter in February 2016. Born in West Palm Beach, Florida and raised in Los Angeles, California, she’s excited to be back home in the Golden State. Prior to joining CBS13, Macy worked as a multimedia journalist...

More from Macy Jenkins

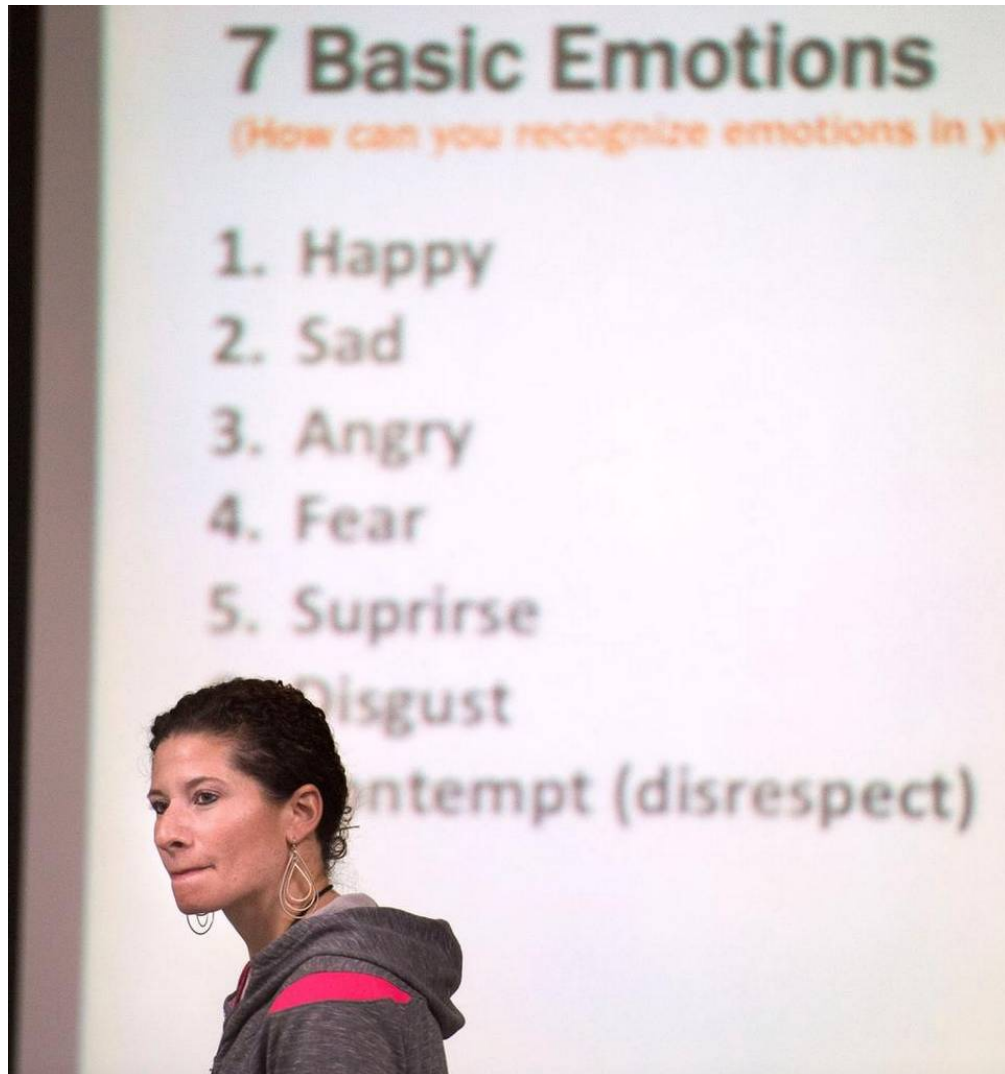
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Regional initiative helps students pursue education, life goals

Students 'Get Focused' then 'Stay Focused' to get ahead

A 10-year plan revisited each year helps students map transition to college

Performance can help freshmen accrue Sacramento City College credits





Ninth-graders at Health Professions High School in Sacramento get an educational boost from the Get Focused Stay Focused program, which teaches students to create and nurture their own road maps for education, career and, ultimately, life.

Ninth-graders, from left, Araceli Romero, Natasha Moody and Alexis Tarleton match a written list of emotions with the appropriate facial expressions during class at Health Professions High School last month in Sacramento.

1 of 3

Ninth-graders, from left, Araceli Romero, Natasha Moody and Alexis Tarleton match a written list of emotions with the appropriate facial expressions during class at Health Professions High School last month in Sacramento. Randy Pench rpench@sacbee.com

By Loretta Kalb

Alexis Jean Tarleton wants to be a fashion designer. Lauren Aleaja Bean wants to be a general surgeon.

Those may seem like distant dreams for the 14-year-old students at Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School. But this year, the small Sacramento school is showing students how to get it done.

The formula: teach students to create and nurture their own road maps for education, career and, ultimately, life.

The program, [Get Focused Stay Focused](#), began in the fall for all 54 freshmen at Health Professions and all 70 at New Technology High School, funded in part by a state grant administered through the Los Rios Community College District. The students learn college and career planning early in high school, hone those strategies in later high school years and earn Sacramento City College credits for earning A or B grades.

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Health Professions Principal Marla Clayton Johnson said the school is combining the new program with social and emotional learning. The resulting year-long Foundations for Success includes work-based learning, life skills and “all the things that high school students don’t get in core subject areas,” she said. The program will grow in scope each year until Get Focused Stay Focused exists at all grade levels.

In early March, Health Professions freshmen were well into social and emotional learning. But several told how Get Focused Stay Focused gave them new perspective.

Lauren said the program pushed her to think more seriously about her future. “I have a different mindset,” she said. “I’ve been really researching what I want to do and I am more engaged into my career.”

My sense as a teacher is there have been a lot of ‘aha’ moments in terms of budgets.

Health Professions teacher Jennifer Clemens

Alexis, the future fashion designer, said work on creating a budget opened her eyes to the cost of living and gave her an incentive to push her grades higher. “It really changed me,” she said.

She also learned to recognize the value of a backup plan. That meant researching jobs and making first, second and third job choices part of a 10-year plan that will be revised each year of high school.

Alexis was recently accepted into a six-week fashion and arts program at the Academy of Arts in San Francisco, thanks in part to a letter of recommendation from teacher Jennifer Clemens.

Jamisha Broomfield, another 14-year-old freshman at the school, said her three career choices involve the medical profession. Pediatrician is her preferred path, she said, since she likes working with children. Her fallback interests? Becoming a surgeon or, barring that, a general practitioner.

Health Professions and New Technology are designated as small schools, which means their enrollments stay below 500. Each has about 240 students. Each student must choose the campus through the district's open enrollment process. The majority of students at each school come from economically disadvantaged families. And each integrates its respective field of study into core offerings.

At Health Professions, for example, the medical career theme extends to English and science classes that include medical English and medical science. Biology and chemistry have medical components. U.S. history classes explore medical history, and so on.

Clemens said students have been enthusiastic about the program. "The first part of the year, students learn who they are as a person, what do they value, what do they want in their lives, what kind of lifestyle and careers," she said. Then based on those values, they explore costs of their lifestyle choices and career incomes.

"My sense as a teacher is there have been a lot of 'aha' moments in terms of budgets" and what lifestyle is possible on a \$30,000 salary, Clemens said.

Santa Barbara area schools and Santa Barbara City College launched Get Focused Stay Focused in 2009 in partnership with the publisher Academic Innovations of Utah, said Diane Hollems, a co-founder of the program. More than 130 high schools in California use the program, as well as another 25 in Oregon, Kansas and Arizona.

In Sacramento County, six other high schools have employed Get Focused Stay Focused.

Folsom High School is in its first year. At Highlands High School in North Highlands, teachers use the Get Focused Stay Focused curriculum in the freshman skills class. In the northeast Sacramento County suburbs, Casa Roble, Mesa Verde and Mira Loma high schools use it. The program also operates at Cosumnes Oaks High School in Elk Grove.

At New Technology, Principal Kenneth Durham Jr. said when he learned of the program and the partnership with Los Rios, he moved quickly to incorporate it for the fall 2015 semester. "We really think it's important to have this course taught and offered in the fall so that on Day One of high school students are thinking about, 'What is my purpose? Where am I trying to go?' so we can help them get there," he said.

Principals at other high schools show plenty of interest when he talks about it, he said.

“Anything we can do to shorten the path to a two- or four-year degree, we should be doing it,” Durham said.

“We want to make sure that if a student wants to achieve a four-year degree that we’re helping them get there.”

Sacramento school to get 2.5-acre farm, food literacy classes

Farm will serve students at Leataata Floyd Elementary School

Money coming from new development next to public housing projects



A first-grader holds cherry tomatoes she picked in a school garden in El Dorado Hills in 2011. Lezlie Sterling/Sacramento Bee file

By Jessica Hicejhice@sacbee.com



Sacramento City Unified School District is moving forward with plans to construct a 2.5-acre student garden and food literacy center at Leataata Floyd Elementary School in northwest Land Park.

The Food Literacy Center, a nonprofit based in Sacramento, was selected Thursday to serve as program manager for the Leataata Floyd Farms, a project conceived in 2012.

While other schools in the Sacramento district have community gardens, the complex planned for Leataata Floyd school – south of Broadway off Third Street – will be the largest. It is to include a student garden, plus a

half-acre plot for use by the surrounding neighborhood. The plan also calls for a two-story “Broccoli Headquarters” with a large kitchen-classroom and learning center.

Funding for the project is coming from the developers of The Mill at Broadway, a 32-acre residential project that will bring 825 homes priced from the \$200,000s to the \$400,000s to land near the Floyd school, whose economically disadvantaged student population comes largely from the adjacent housing projects.

ADVERTISING

Developer Northwest Land Park LLC will provide \$100,000 for startup. . The Setzer Family Foundation is also providing \$100,000. The land being converted into housing was formerly industrial property owned by the Setzer family, which still operates a sawmill on part of its land along Interstate 5.

Initially, backers said they expected the garden to be open by this spring, but that has been pushed back to fall 2017.

Leataata offers after-school food literacy programs that continue to be funded by Raley’s supermarkets. Additional funding for the project will come from donations from individuals and businesses.

In addition to the garden, the Floyd school will add food-literacy programs to its curriculum. Amber Stott, founding executive director of the Food Literacy Center, says the classes will include cooking, nutrition, food culture and cuisine. Students also will learn how to make compost and identify beneficial insects.

Students next door at Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School will be invited over to teach after-school programs. Thirty high school students will be trained and certified to become volunteer “Food Geniuses,” Stott said.

Sacramento City Unified board member Jay Hansen has spearheaded the project.

“As the farm-to-fork capital, Sacramento can put itself on the map by spearheading this unique project to teach students about healthy eating,” he said.

Hansen says the project will expose students to potential careers in the food industry. Both the student and community gardens will grow vegetables and fruit trees.

“Our mission is to inspire kids,” Stott said.

Mayor launches campaign to apply for Oak Park grant

Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson plans to apply for a federal grant for Oak Park

Department of Education money would make area a Promise Neighborhood

Dozens of community and business partners involved



Pamela A. Eibeck (left), president of the University of the Pacific, pledged to fund two scholarships for Oak Park residents. One will supply full tuition to four years of undergraduate education at the school's Stockton campus and one will pay for a student to attend law school at McGeorge School of Law. Anita Chabriaachabria@sacbee.com

By Anita Chabria

Mayor Kevin Johnson announced an ambitious proposal on Thursday to apply for a federal grant for Sacramento's Oak Park neighborhood that could fund education, health, employment and housing programs.

During a nearly two-hour presentation at the Guild Theater, Johnson detailed his vision for helping win a U.S. Department of Education grant that could provide \$20 million to \$30 million over a five-year period for a 50-block area that spans two square miles.

It's an area of the city where only 18 percent of third-graders can read at grade level.

"If you get a bad education when you're young, in those early childhood days, it affects the rest of your life," said Johnson, who grew up in long-struggling Oak Park.

Called Promise Neighborhood grants, the federal money is designed to create not only better educational opportunities for children, but also to spur community improvements like access to health care and home improvements that make it easier for families to be successful.

The goal of the program is to ensure that children educated in the neighborhood are prepared for a job or college.

More than 20 organizations representing schools, health facilities and community groups – including UC Davis, California State University, Sacramento, and the Sierra Health Foundation – spoke at the event about how they could use the money if it were received.

But two organizations took immediate action to help the area.

The University of the Pacific, a major presence in the neighborhood, announced it will fund two scholarships for Oak Park residents. It will offer one full-tuition slot for an undergraduate to attend four years at its Stockton campus, and another for a resident to go to its McGeorge School of Law in Oak Park. Both scholarships will be available for applications immediately.

The school will also implement a program by 2017 to assist local community college students to transfer to its Oak Park campus to finish their four-year degrees. That campus used to focus on law but now includes 12 other areas of study including a degree-completion program in organizational behavior.

SMUD also announced that it will move forward with plans to provide energy upgrades for area residents, including programs for appliance upgrades and weatherproofing designed to lower energy bills. It will also fund up to \$50,000 in community grants and scholarships for students studying science, technology, engineering and math.

UC Davis also announced that it had used federal and other funds to expand staff at a nearby Sacramento County clinic that provides primary care services to those without insurance and other vulnerable groups.

"We're going to be working to increase the access to patients," said Dr. Julie Freischlag, vice chancellor of human health sciences and dean of the school of medicine at UC Davis.

Freischlag said that UC Davis planned further staffing increases at the site to serve Sacramento County residents, but that if the promise grant money comes through, "we're hoping that grant would allow us to see more Oak Park patients."

United Way California Capital Region will apply for the grant and would administer the funds, said local United Way president Stephanie Bray. Applications are due in September and funds will be awarded by the end of the year.

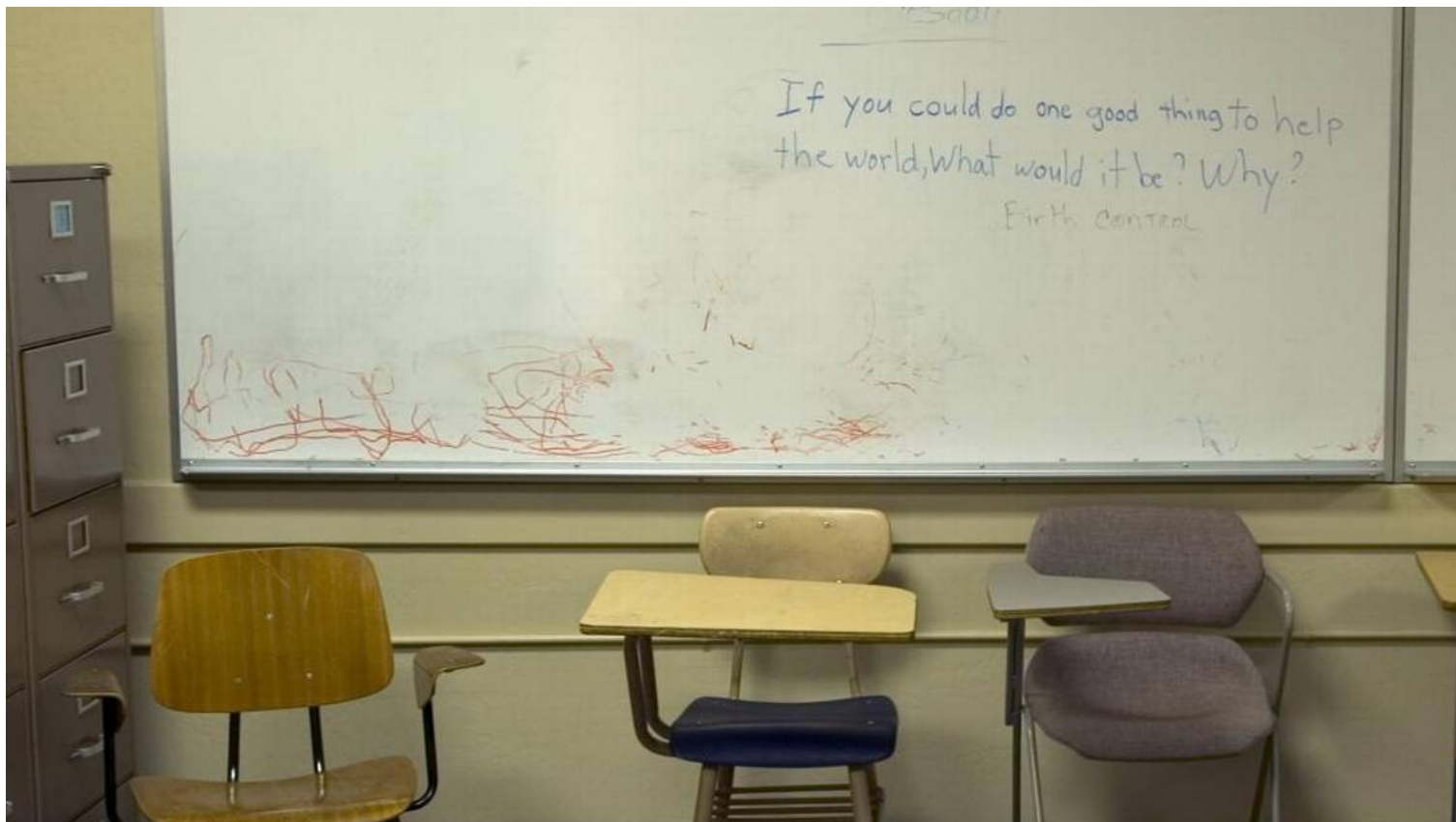
“We’re going to transform 50 blocks in 15 years,” if the grant is received, she said.

The Promise Neighborhood program is an Obama initiative based on an area in Harlem that instituted the comprehensive approach with demonstrable success. It was expanded to a federal program in 2010 but discontinued in 2012.

Funding for \$150 million in grants is now available for the 2016 year, with plans to award it to up to five communities nationwide, Johnson said.

Johnson, a former NBA player, described the grant as like a basketball assist that could help Oak Park increase access to health care, improve and expand housing options and provide jobs and training.

“For the sake of the children, it would definitely be a plus to have it, but it’s a shame it didn’t happen sooner,” said Tyson Silva, 41, an Oak Park resident who has lived in the area since 1978.



EDUCATION

Sacramento County students are among the most absent in California

BY DIANA LAMBERT AND PHILLIP REESE
dlambert@sacbee.com

DECEMBER 18, 2017 03:55 AM

UPDATED DECEMBER 18, 2017 03:55 AM

Sacramento County students have the worst chronic absentee rate in the region and a higher rate than all but two of the other 20 largest counties in California – Sonoma and San Joaquin.

According to new state data, 14.8 percent of Sacramento County students missed one-tenth of their classes last school year. By comparison, 10.8 percent of students statewide missed that many classes.

The new numbers were released this month as the state Department of Education launched a new information “dashboard” designed to give families and educators a new way to track school performance.

Officials at Twin Rivers Unified and Sacramento City Unified said they weren’t surprised by the numbers. Both districts have been monitoring chronic absenteeism and have tried to reduce absences. They had among the highest absentee rates in the county, along with San Juan Unified in the northeast county suburbs.

“We embrace and support the state making absenteeism and attendance part of its dashboard,” said Doug Huscher, assistant superintendent of student support services at Sacramento City Unified. “It allows us to really stay on top of it.”

Chronic absenteeism is correlated with poverty. Schools with many economically disadvantaged students tend to have more chronic absenteeism, state data show. Nearly 60 percent of students in Sacramento County last year qualified as low income, according to the data.

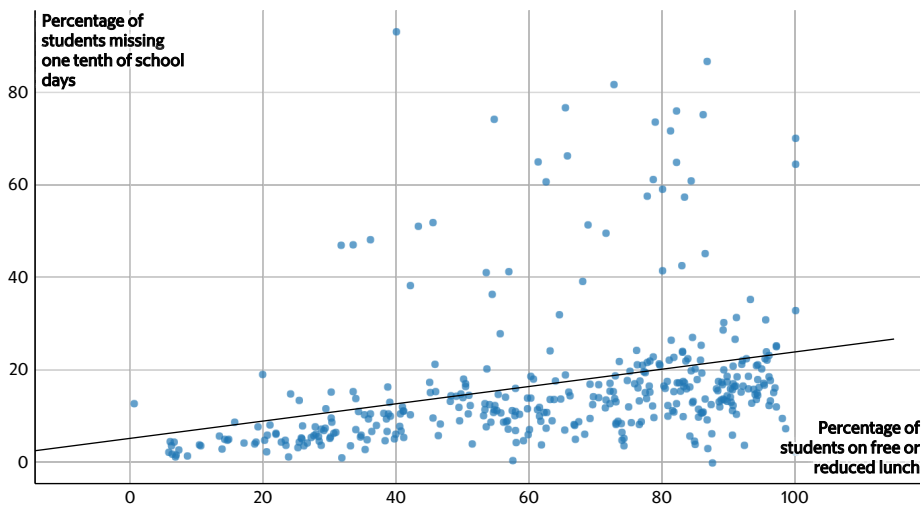
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ABSENTEEISM AND POVERTY

High-poverty schools tend to have more chronic absenteeism. How the two factors compare at schools in Sacramento County, which has the highest absenteeism rate in the region:



Source: California Department of Education • [Get the data](#)

Sacramento City Unified had a chronic absenteeism rate of 15.4 percent. Although alternative and continuation schools had the highest rates, 30 percent of students at Luther Burbank High, 27 percent of students at Hiram Johnson High and 25 percent of students at Leataata Floyd Elementary missed at least one-tenth of classes.

The district last school year had 68 percent of students qualify for subsidized meals based on low household income.

Huscher said the urban district has many challenges, but won't use external issues like poverty as an excuse. "We need to take responsibility to make sure we do anything we can," he said.

Both Twin Rivers Unified and Sacramento City Unified are working to remove the barriers that keep students from attending school.

Data on school attendance is used to reach out to students and to offer them support, said Victoria Flores, director of student support and health services at Sacramento City Unified.

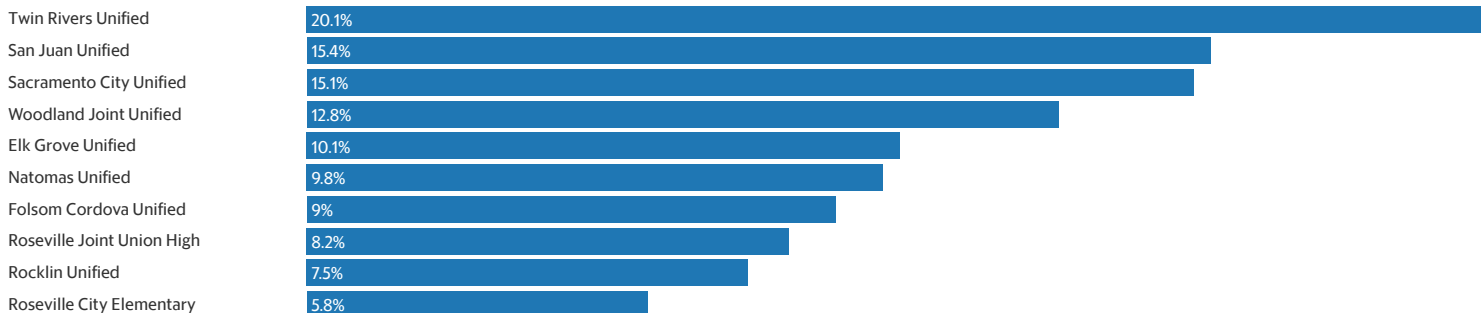
The district has opened student support centers at 24 schools to provide food, clothes, backpacks, umbrellas, bus passes and whatever else is necessary to get kids to school, said Ken McPeters, director of enrollment and attendance for the district.

Sacramento City Unified has worked on its attendance problem for five years with the help of a UC Davis research team and recently won a Safe Neighborhoods and Schools grant that will pay for two new hires in its attendance center.

Flores said attendance rates began improving at targeted schools, but fell again last fall. She attributed the slump to bad weather, a reduction in staff at support centers because of medical leaves and a fear among some immigrants about returning to school after the 2016 presidential election.

SCHOOL DISTRICT ABSENTEE RATES

The percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of their classes in the Sacramento region’s largest school districts:



Source: California Department of Education • [Get the data](#)

In Twin Rivers Unified, staff members called “attendance leads” offer resources to families of chronically absent students, sometimes making home visits. The north Sacramento area district has even more poverty than Sacramento City Unified, with 83 percent of students last year qualifying for subsidized meals.

“Sometimes we don’t know what the barriers are, so we work hard to meet with students and parents so they can talk to us a little bit about what is going on in the home,” said Rudy Puente, director of Student Services at Twin Rivers.

Twin Rivers Unified saw 20 percent of its students miss at least one tenth of classes last school year, roughly double the statewide average. Highlands Community Charter had the highest chronic absentee rate in the district – 77 percent of its students missed at least one tenth of classes.

Highlands Community Charter School, an independent adult school chartered through the district but not run by it, increases the district’s numbers significantly, Puente said.

“When we include the charter data, our overall number is at 20.1 percent; when we exclude it is 15.5 percent,” he said.

Puente said the district is still not satisfied with the 15.5 percent chronic absentee rate of its schools and has been working to reduce it.

Highlands Community Charter Executive Director Murdock Smith said the school’s absence rate is low for an adult charter. The adult school, which operates as a K-12, must follow the same rules as other schools, but its 1,800 students can’t be penalized for not attending school because they are adults, he said.

“There is no way they can hold adults to the same number (of days) as children,” he said.

On the other end of the spectrum, Eureka Union, a K-8 district serving Granite Bay and Roseville, had the lowest chronic absenteeism rate among large districts in the four-county region. About 4.2 percent of its students missed at least one-tenth of classes.

California has had a truancy law since 1874. School districts are bound by state law, which offers a short list of reasons student absences can be excused: illness, quarantine, jury duty, court appearances, religious observances, attendance at employment or educational conferences and working at an election precinct.

Diana Lambert: 916-321-1090, @dianalambert

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COMMENTS

LEVERAGED
RESOURCES:
HEALTH HAPPENS
WITH PREVENTION

Walk-up kiosk points Oak Park residents to health care, social services

Kiosk staffed at Oak Park Community Center to link residents with services

Joint project of WayUp Sacramento, Dignity Health, WellSpace Health and Sacramento Covered

Part of efforts to revitalize Oak Park, one of the county's most underserved neighborhoods



Jennifer Yang, a Sacramento Covered navigator, writes a list of services on the chalkboard of the new WayUp kiosk in the Oak Park Community Center. Sammy Caiolascaiola@sacbee.com

By Sammy Caiola

Starting this week, visitors to the Oak Park Community Center need go only as far as the lobby to get referrals for health, wellness, nutrition, mental health and other social services.

That's where the community center has set up a locally-designed kiosk, equipped with a pullout table, two chairs and a spread of free pamphlets and brochures. Intended as a human phone book of sorts, it will be

staffed at least three days a week to direct people to available services, such as food banks, urgent care clinics and affordable housing programs.

People do not need to provide an ID card or even their name to receive guidance, just a ZIP code, said Jennifer Yang, a “health navigator” who staffed the kiosk this week.

Yang, a bilingual staffer with Sacramento Covered, one of the program’s sponsors, is especially focused on reaching Spanish-speaking families who may be wary of seeking help elsewhere.

ADVERTISING

“Anyone should feel comfortable approaching us,” Yang said.

Sandy Richardson, a mother of four who frequently visits the center, said the kiosk will help Oak Park’s low-income residents, many of whom do not own vehicles, to get the services they need.

“A lot of people are on welfare, and they don’t know how to get child care or how to deal with PG&E,” Richardson said. “There’s a lot going on in the community that people don’t know about and they should.”

The kiosk is a project of [WayUp Sacramento](#), a community wellness initiative begun in 2011 by Sacramento City Councilman Jay Schenirer. It primarily serves south Sacramento residents, many of whom are “underrepresented for the whole gamut of social services,” said Steve Kempster, executive director.

“Our hope is that through this sort of specialized referral system, people are more apt to connect with service providers in the community,” Kempster said. “Community members are wary of approaching different services providers. We’re hoping to break through that ice and promote healthy communities in Oak Park.”

The birch-and-redwood kiosk, crafted by local wood sculptor Douglas Adam Bradley, was constructed in two months, though the idea has been in the works for about two years. It officially opened Monday and will be staffed about 10-20 hours a week by an employee of [Sacramento Covered](#), a local nonprofit focused on enrolling families in health insurance.

Also partnering in the project is [WellSpace Health](#) (formerly The Effort), which will provide access to health care and housing. Dignity Health provided a \$150,000 grant, which will keep the kiosk running through this year, Kempster said.

Similar health care navigator programs are in place in Sacramento-area hospital [emergency departments](#), providing caseworkers who help patients get access to preventive care.

It’s part of a wider movement to revitalize Oak Park, which was identified in 2012 as one of 15 ZIP codes in Sacramento County experiencing the most significant health disparities, according to a survey by the [Sierra Health Foundation](#). It found that 43 percent of the community’s mostly black residents lack health insurance and about one-third lack a high school diploma. Single mothers living in poverty make up 46 percent of households.

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HEALTH & MEDICINE JANUARY 6, 2017 2:57 PM

Community nursing corps to amp up health education in low-income areas

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MY BOOKMARKS →



BY SAMMY CAIOLA
scaiola@sacbee.com

Nurses are working with local health leaders to bring free health education directly to a city-designated “promise zone” of Sacramento’s most impoverished neighborhoods, officials announced Friday during a kickoff of the community nursing program.

The corridor of struggling neighborhoods stretching from Del Paso Heights down to Florin Road will receive federal funding over the next 10 years to improve health, schooling and employment opportunities. Starting this month, they’ll also receive education on diabetes, prenatal care and healthy life choices from a new community nursing corps.

Kortney Lucero, an assistant nurse manager, found out Friday that she’ll be paired with La Familia Counseling Center, an organization providing health counseling and insurance assistance to low-income families. She said she’s excited to share her knowledge about pregnancy care and breastfeeding with families who might not be getting the information because they aren’t well connected to the health system.

ADVERTISING

“This is the place to be for people on Medi-Cal,” Lucero said. “They need the preventative care and the education. Education is the key.”

The 12 nurses participating in the program are all Kaiser Permanente employees and students at Samuel Merritt University, an Oakland-based school with a Sacramento satellite site. As part of their coursework this year, they’ll spend 45 hours per semester assisting nonprofit organizations such as La Familia, the Health Education Council, WellSpace Health and Urban Strategies as they reach out to the city’s most vulnerable populations at clinics, schools and housing complexes.

At the Health Education Council, a group that brings fitness and nutrition programming to low-income school districts, nurses Ramon Mata and Jennifer Dunning will work with children and parents on obesity education and healthy meal planning.

Mata spends most of his work time on the phone counseling adult diabetes patients. He said he’s ready to nip the problem early in children.

“I can show them what a healthy plate looks like, how to read labels properly, and prevent them from becoming my patients down the line,” he said.

In Sacramento, diabetes mortality and hypertension prevalence are highest in the low-income and largely nonwhite neighborhoods of Meadowview, Parkway and Florin in south Sacramento, according to a 2014 county health department report. Much of that area falls within the promise zone boundaries.

The 22-mile area received the competitive federal “promise zone” designation in April 2015, after then-mayor Kevin Johnson pushed the city to apply for it. The designation did not come with funding, but it does give organizations within the area an advantage when applying for federal community-building grants.

So far, organizations within the zone have received roughly \$50 million in federal funding to expand job programs, anti-gang initiatives, farmers markets, academic programs and more. The Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency works with more than 30 groups to coordinate the resources.

Samuel Merritt University has been working with the agency for months now to get the nurse corps together, said Alice Vestergaard, instructor and public health coordinator for the school.

“It’s a natural collaboration to join with the promise zone and their community partners so we can better the health and welfare of the Sacramento region in general,” Vestergaard said.

Sammy Caiola: 916-321-1636, @SammyCaiola

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EDUCATION

Sac City schools approves venture with La Familia, community collaborative at former school sites

BY LORETTA KALB
lkalb@sacbee.com

JULY 17, 2015 09:39 AM

UPDATED JULY 17, 2015 09:05 PM

Sacramento City school trustees gave thumbs up Thursday night to joint ventures with community groups to operate in two former elementary schools the district closed in 2013 due to falling enrollment.

La Familia Counseling Center won its bid to begin operations in the former Maple Elementary campus on 37th Avenue in south Sacramento. The counseling center had proposed offering mental and behavioral health counseling, parent classes, a writers' workshop and recreational programs.

The vote was 5-1, with Trustee Diana Rodriguez opposed. Board member Jay Hansen was absent.

Trustees in a separate, unanimous vote approved a joint venture with a community group collaborative, the Social Good Fund Inc., to use the former Fruit Ridge Elementary on 44th Street in south Sacramento.

Breaking News

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Social Good Fund of Richmond is extending its nonprofit services the Fruit Ridge Community Collaborative. Groups in the collaborative are offering a range of community services, including health and wellness, yoga, meditation, cooking classes and daytime activities for adults and seniors, said Judy Smith of Tao Holistics.

In February 2014, a group of educators, parents and community group members meeting as the 7-11 Committee recommended that all closed campuses be used for district programs and by community groups, with priority given to ideas and requests from neighborhood residents.

Seven elementary schools were closed in mid-2013. Besides Maple and Fruit Ridge, the district closed Clayton B. Wire, Washington, Collis P. Huntington, Joseph Bonnheim and Mark Hopkins. All but one, Mark Hopkins, is either being used or is being prepared for reuse.

In June 2014, the trustees in a split vote approved the New Joseph Bonnheim Community Charter School to take the place of Bonnheim Elementary. The campus on Marin Avenue in south Sacramento opened last fall and has about 260 students.

The board is expected to consider whether to reopen Washington Elementary in fall 2016. The school at 18th and E streets in midtown Sacramento will seek to attract students with a focus on STEAM instruction, or science, technology, engineering, arts and math.

A portion of the former Huntington school is used for a district-run preschool program. The district's nutrition staff is using the former Wire campus for staging and preparation of student meals. The district also uses that site for storage.

Loretta Kalb: 916-321-1073, @LorettaSacBee

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OPINION

Commentary from staff & contributors

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DO YOU THINK CALIFORNIA IS REALLY THE WORST STATE FOR BUSINESS?

69% YES

25% NO

6% I'M NOT SURE

HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT A BANK BRANCH?

32% ONCE EVERY FEW MONTHS

29% MONTHLY

ANOTHER VOICE

Prevention, support should be priority

More than two decades ago, I had a patient with asthma who was homeless. In the winter, her asthma was uncontrollable because of the weather and her need to walk long distances for food. She had to spend the night outdoors because there were no shelter beds available. I remember asking her, at one point, if she had any warrants out for her arrest and recommended that if there were, she try herself in so she could have a warm, dry place to sleep.

I had another patient who wanted to stop using heroin. He was having a very difficult time doing so and had been on a waiting list for treatment for over two weeks. It was frustrating for him, and also for me as his physician, because I knew that when an addict is ready to quit, treatment should be available immediately. Although the withdrawal would be painful, he suggested that if he was arrested, he would be able to stop while in jail. I knew that without real treatment, jail time would probably just lead to relapse.

Looking back, I am horrified that I would even think of jail as a solution for the health problems of my patients. Incarceration is not a social safety net, jailing those who are sick or homeless is inhumane. It is the most expen-



Dr. Glennah Trocher is a community health consultant and served as Sacramento County health officer from 1999 through 2011.

sive way to address a problem that we should be able to solve in the community. For too long, we in California have incarcerated people with mental health conditions and drug abuse problems instead of offering them treatment or implementing programs to prevent "acting-out" behavior in the first place. When Proposition 47 passed in 2014, the hope was that prison spending would be focused on those who have committed violent and serious offenses, while the money saved by releasing many who had been incarcerated for non-serious crimes could be invested in prevention and support programs. Eighteen months after the implementation of this proposition, what has happened in Sacramento County? As of October 2015, the number of people held in Sacramento jails on

Proposition 47 eligible offenses has decreased by 42 percent. According to a recent study released by the Building Healthy Communities collaborative, this translates into a savings of at least \$22,992,080.

Where are these expected savings in Sacramento County and how are savings being invested? Has the jail population decreased in Sacramento County?

If it has, then the saved money should be spent on mental health and drug treatment and prevention programs. The most expensive way to treat mental health and drug abuse problems is through the criminal justice system. It is more humane and cost effective to do so by investing in community-based organizations that can address these problems effectively.

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors will be approving the new fiscal year's budget in June. It is time to learn where these savings are and how Sacramento County will invest in supporting services that aim to address the various community health issues instead of continuing to consent to jail time as a temporary solution. We need to stop using our main jail as the largest mental health and detoxification ward in the county.

Time to act on Sacramento school kitchen to feed students' brains

Some parents want bond money to be spent to fix athletic fields

School district plan to spend remaining proceeds on a central kitchen

Kitchen will help provide nutritious meals that students need



Esparto Unified School District food service supervisor Stacie Velazquez shows off some of her fresh produce in 2013. Some want Sacramento City Unified Schools to build a central kitchen to increase local, fresh food. Randy Pench/Sacramento Bee file

By Patrick Kennedy and Jessie Ryan/Special to The Bee



Sacramento City Unified School District trustees have before them a tremendous opportunity to adhere to the will of their voters, and model a gold standard for student health and nutrition.

In 2012, district voters overwhelmingly supported Measure R, a bond measure that, among other things, called for a central kitchen that can provide locally sourced, nutritious meals in a cost-effective way. It is time to make good on this commitment and break ground on a central kitchen.

The importance of proper nutrition for learning is scientifically proven. Children simply cannot absorb and retain information without basic brain food; research going back to the 1950s proves that children who eat breakfast consistently perform better than those that don't. Unfortunately, many children who attend Sacramento city schools still have limited access to the essential fuel for their brains.

Locally, the problem is especially dire. According to a study funded by the California Endowment, 23 percent of south Sacramento residents are considered woefully underserved. Research has shown that food disparities and resulting health complications disproportionately afflict low-income communities of color. Limited access to healthy, affordable food is an unfortunate recipe for lower student achievement.

ADVERTISING

A \$40 million central kitchen provides an opportunity to buck this troubling trend. Measure R included a specific list of projects to improve students' health, including the kitchen. Almost four years later, the district has made little progress toward accomplishing this mandate.

The Elk Grove Unified School District boasts a central kitchen that makes 55,000 meals a day to feed students at 63 schools. At Natomas Unified School District, the central kitchen serves 7,000 to 8,000 meals a day. Twin Rivers Unified School District is creating one as well.

Our district serves almost 50,000 meals a day. More than 70 percent of students qualify for free and reduced-price meals, and almost 70 percent eat as many as three meals a day at school.

A central kitchen has the potential to transform school nutrition for decades. We must make it a priority. Our communities are waiting and our children are hungry for leadership to turn this vision into reality.

Patrick Kennedy, co-chairman of the Measure R campaign committee, is a Sacramento County supervisor and can be contacted at kennedyp@saccounty.net. Jessie Ryan is a Sacramento City Unified School District trustee and can be contacted at jessie-ryan@scusd.edu.

SOAPBOX FEBRUARY 6, 2017 4:47 AM

It's time for Sacramento to do more for its youths

 BOOKMARK FOR LATER

 MY BOOKMARKS 

 BY JAY SCHENIRER
Special to The Bee

On Feb. 7, the City Council will take up a discussion about how we can best support the successful futures of our young people in Sacramento.

OPINION

We have some critical questions to answer during this discussion. What is our vision of success for our city's children? How do we best ensure that all students graduate from high school with maximum options for success in college and career? How do we provide them the tools to be civically engaged? How do we work with and support nonprofit partner organizations that for years have been providing the bulk of support services for our young people? How do we effectively work with our schools? How do we ensure that every program funded by the city includes metrics for success and is properly evaluated? What type of infrastructure and resources will be needed to reach our goals?

Why is this discussion so important? If we look at the status of Sacramento's children, data over the past few years paints a dismal picture. For example, 29 percent of children under 18 live in poverty. Only 27 percent of Sacramento City Unified School District and 21 percent of Twin Rivers Unified School District third-graders are meeting or exceeding grade-level standards in English language arts. Approximately 40 percent of SCUSD students are overweight or obese. Finally, 15 percent of the city's homeless population is between the ages of 18 and 24.

What is the city currently doing? According to a recent study looking at 2013-14 data, the city spent 1 to 2 percent, less than \$4 million, of its general fund and Measure U dollars specifically on programs for children and youths, compared with 80 percent of its discretionary general fund to support our police and fire departments.

The council has increased youth funding over the past few years, but it is still woefully below what is needed and what others do. For example, in the current fiscal year, San Francisco has \$69 million in a dedicated fund for children and youth services, and in Oakland, nearly \$15 million of dedicated revenue was granted to community-based organizations that provide high-quality programming for youths.

We need to increase our investments in prevention and intervention programs that will not only keep kids out of trouble, but put them on a pathway to success and to being contributing members of our community.

So what do we do? First, we need to set goals for our young people. What are the skills and competencies they should have by the time they graduate from high school and how should we measure and evaluate that success? Second, we should:

- Adopt a whole-child strategic plan identifying a set of cradle-to-career outcomes for youths that is based on a youth-development framework and includes a mechanism to monitor progress over time.
- Build a city infrastructure necessary to oversee current and new programs that is efficient and effective, and includes metrics for success and ongoing evaluation.
- Cultivate partnerships with schools and community-based organizations to meet the needs of our youths and work in concert to achieve shared goals around youth success.

Mayor Darrell Steinberg is proposing to vastly expand the number of internships for high school students in Sacramento, not only teaching them the soft skills necessary for success in the workplace and in college, but also allowing them to earn funds toward their own futures. I applaud this plan.

Our budget decisions over the next few months will demonstrate how we value our young people. Politicians always say children are our future. It's time we back the rhetoric with real action and resources. Sacramento's future depends on it.


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Jay Schenirer is the Sacramento City Council member for District 5. He can be contacted at jschenirer@cityofsacramento.org.

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SOAPBOX

What Sacramento County supervisors can do on criminal justice reform

BY DEE EMMERT
AND DANIEL SILVA
Special to The Bee

June 12, 2017 01:00 PM

Updated June 12, 2017 01:00 PM

When California voters passed Proposition 47 in 2014, they made it clear what they wanted – a criminal justice system that focuses on meaningful alternatives to incarceration with ample resources for rehabilitation and preventive services to help keep people out of jail in the first place.

OPINION

This month, our Board of Supervisors has the opportunity to make this vision a reality in Sacramento County. Whether they succeed depends on the priorities they set in the county's budget, with hearings starting


Tuesday.

As members of the Sacramento Community Reinvestment Coalition, a broad-based group of community organizations, we urge supervisors to reject the old model of public safety based on incarceration and punishment. This model fills our prisons while doing next to nothing to either prevent individuals from getting caught up in the criminal justice system or to rehabilitate those that do. It's a waste of taxpayer money, and out of touch with the values of our community.

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Instead, supervisors must support better schools, affordable housing, access to health care (including mental health services) and broader access to economic opportunities. These are investments that will truly make our community safer by giving all our residents the chance to thrive. To be truly effective, these services must be community-based rather than provided through the law enforcement system.

We come to this position through hard-won experience with California's criminal justice system.

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Daniel Silva was raised in an abusive household, landed in juvenile hall at 12, was in prison by 18 and spent 39 years there. Those years might have been saved if I had access to community services to help discover the source of my anger and resentment. That's why I founded Self-Awareness and Recovery, which works in several California prisons and communities to guide young people toward a path that doesn't trap them in the criminal justice system.

Dee Emmert has a stepson who struggled with addiction and mental illness since his teenage years, and saw him cycle in and out of prison and struggle to find the stability he needs.

With these experiences in mind our message is clear: Investment in community works. When individuals are economically and socially stable, they are less likely to commit crime. When people are diverted from prosecution and incarceration into community-based mental health treatment and given shorter probation and job training, they have the opportunity to rehabilitate themselves and help their communities thrive.

Sacramento County voters get it. In a recent poll, 64 percent favored community investment over incarceration. Like us, voters know the path to a safe community does not lead to the jail house door.

Now it's supervisors' turn to show they understand, too, and pass a budget that meets our community's needs.



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Dee Emmert is a retired Lutheran pastor who is a member of the Sacramento Community Reinvestment Coalition and Sacramento Area Congregations Together and can be contacted at DeeSacACT@gmail.com. Daniel Silva is founder of Self Awareness & Recovery and can be contacted at selfawarenessandrecovery@gmail.com.

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CALIFORNIA FORUM

Want equity, Sacramento? Invest your cannabis taxes in Stephon Clark's neighborhood

BY MALAKI SEKU AMEN
Special to The Sacramento Bee

April 24, 2018 09:00 AM
Updated April 26, 2018 04:43 PM

Senseless tragedy has a way of shining a light on what needs to change, whether that was the murder of Emmett Till, the Parkland massacre or the unwarranted death of Stephon Clark.

What needs to change in Sacramento is disinvestment in black and brown communities. Over the last several years, we've witnessed a massive effort to create amenities for the wealthy, including millions of public dollars invested in a basketball arena and the building of upscale housing in downtown and midtown.


SACRAMENTO HAS TREATED MARIJUANA AS IF IT WERE SOMETHING NEUTRAL, WITHOUT A PAST, LIKE A NEW GRANOLA BAR BOOM. MARIJUANA IS NOT GRANOLA BARS; IT HAS A TRAGIC, RACIALIZED HISTORY IN OUR COMMUNITY.

The reverse has been true in the Meadowview neighborhood of Stephon Clark, and in Del Paso Heights, the same neighborhoods I lived in as a child and a teenager.

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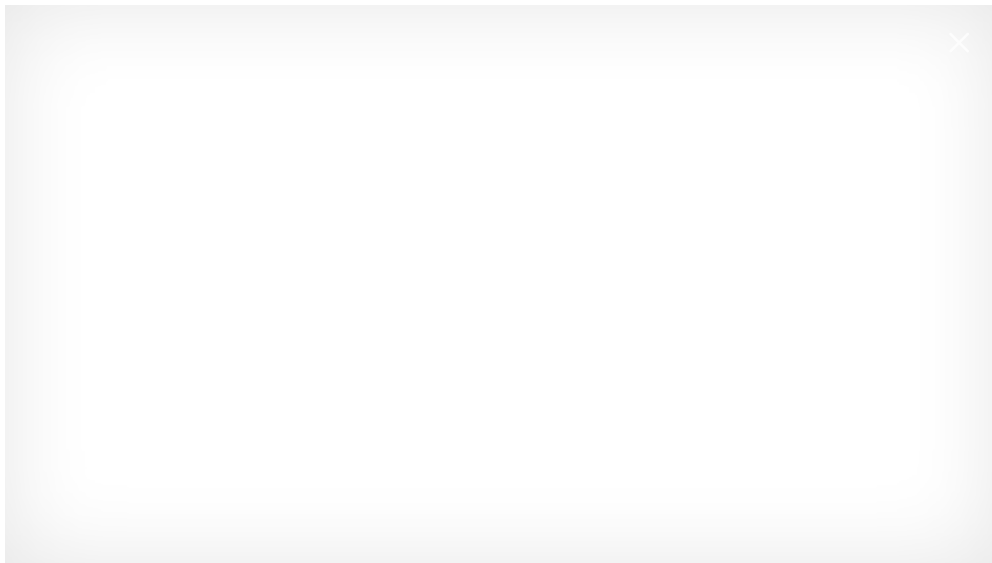
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For decades the Sacramento Police Department targeted young people and adults in these neighborhoods and sent thousands of people to prison for minor offenses such as marijuana possession. Last year the department shared data showing that from 2012 to 2016, African Americans accounted for 43 percent of marijuana arrests while making up only 15 percent of the population. Drug war policies since the 1930s Reefer Madness era have caused severe damage to communities of color, right up to the present day.

As a result of these policies, parents went to prison. They suffered joblessness and were blocked from accessing affordable housing and education benefits. In many cases, traumatized children went into the foster care system. The actions of our city drove up poverty rates in our black and brown neighborhoods, resulting in economic blight.

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Now the City Council is aggressively promoting a legal marijuana industry that is enriching white entrepreneurs and investors. Over the past two years, they have treated marijuana as if it were something neutral, without a past, like a new granola bar boom. Marijuana is not granola bars; it has a tragic, racialized history in our community.

To repair some of the damage caused by criminalization, the city should set aside the millions of dollars it expects to bring in over the coming years from marijuana taxes and invest that money in children and youth services, and in economic development in those neighborhoods most impacted by the decades-long war on drugs.

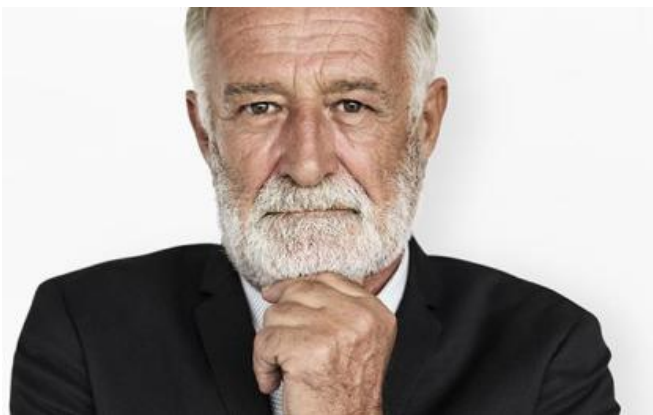
It should create a public planning process on how to use those revenues to build economic health and well being in Stephon Clark's neighborhood and in neighborhoods like it. It should strengthen and accelerate the economic equity program for the cannabis industry it approved last November, which is being implemented at a snail's pace.

As long as marijuana tax revenues flow to the city's general fund, we know the dollars will go to fund our police department. Using marijuana tax revenues to expand our police force is simply wrong.

We don't have to raise taxes to invest in our city's impoverished black and brown communities. We already have the dollars in hand. It's time for the City Council to fix a huge wrong, and do what's right.

MALAKI SEKU AMEN IS THE CEO OF THE CALIFORNIA URBAN PARTNERSHIP, AN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO BUILDING ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITIES. REACH HIM AT MALAKI@CALIFORNIAUP.ORG.

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CATHIE ANDERSON SEPTEMBER 25, 2015 2:21 PM

College Track keeps freshmen on path to be university grads

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HIGHLIGHTS

Nonprofit helps students of color overcome obstacles to degrees

Local site will relocate in 2016 as it expands number of students

BY CATHIE ANDERSON
canderson@sacbee.com

Students of color are gaining entry into the nation's colleges and universities in increasing numbers, but they aren't graduating at the same rate as their peers.

While the reasons for this vary for each person, an underlying issue for most is that none of their relatives is a graduate. They don't have one person to consult or lean upon when they encounter financial obstacles, academic challenges or, occasionally, discouragement from faculty.

Since 1997, a nonprofit known as **College Track** has been filling that gap. Founded in the Bay Area, it opened a Sacramento site in Oak Park last year. Every year, College Track invites high school freshmen to apply for its tutoring and mentoring services, and it chooses 60 of the applicants to support until they get through college.

"A lot of organizations working on college access are now beginning to understand that the conversation had stopped there, assuming that if students get into college, they would persist," said **Shasta Weiss**, the development director for College Track Sacramento. "That's just not true. What we've shown is that with continued commitment, a long-term commitment of eight years, they actually do graduate. Our students graduate at a rate of 2.5 times their peers."

And, if they get that college degree, they have a better shot at achieving financial success. On average, college graduates earn \$1 million more than those who have only a high school diploma over a lifetime.

Geronimo Moreno, a 15-year-old sophomore at **Sacramento High School**, told me that he wasn't sure what to expect when he joined College Track, but he thought maybe the experience would be good for his résumé some day. He has been both surprised and motivated by the degree of encouragement and the academic support he's received from the staff.

"All the staff, they're so, like, into your life," Moreno said. "They always want to know what you're up to, so they can get you on track and make sure you stay on track. They make sure you're always productive. That's what surprised me; like, sometimes even teachers aren't always like that."

Asked to name one College Track staffer who has been a key influence, Moreno points to **Thomas Muñoz**, director of the organization's Sacramento site, because he helped him develop his communication skills and to understand how to seek help.

Sac High sophomore **Tori Nichols**, 15, told me that the staff has been instrumental with helping her learn how to balance her extracurricular activities and homework. They closely monitor her grades, she said, and they hold her accountable for doing what it takes to improve them.

That is the real gift of this program, accountability, said 38-year-old parent **Akosia Robinson**. Teens feel like they're not only letting the staff down, but they're letting each other down if they don't bring their "A" game.

Robinson, who is African American, tried but failed to get an engineering degree from **Morgan State University** in Baltimore, Md., so she's intimately aware of the academic challenges awaiting her children. Her son, **Cameron Thomas**, and her niece, **Seffani Robinson**, both began participating as freshmen in College Track this year.

Robinson also praises College Track for pulling its instructors, known as fellows, from the ranks of local college students. Because these young people are so close in age to the teens, she said, her son can see someone who has made the leap to college and who wants to reach back and give others a hand.

One fellow, **Nelson Sagastume**, started off as a College Track student back in 2008. He's now a senior mechanical engineering student at the **University of California, Davis**. He heard that College Track was launching a Sacramento site while attending a College Track graduation ceremony in his hometown of East Palo Alto.

"I wanted to be a math tutor, because I had a great experience in College Track and I had great tutors," the 21-year-old Sagastume said. "I especially remembered my history tutor. ... I was in their shoes many years ago, and now I'm here trying to help them out, so they can be in my shoes one day."

“ WE TRY TO MAKE OUR TIME HERE NOT ABOUT DOING HOMEWORK BUT ABOUT ADDRESSING GAPS IN LEARNING AND UNDERSTANDING THAT HAVE OCCURRED PREVIOUSLY.

Thomas Muñoz, director of College Track's Sacramento site

At the College Track site in Oak Park, just around the corner from **Old Soul** and **The Guild Theater**, students participate in what Muñoz calls study squads. As much as possible, Muñoz said, each squad is composed of a teaching fellow working with students from the same academic class taught by the same teacher in the same period.

“We try to make our time here not about doing homework but about addressing gaps in learning and understanding that have occurred previously,” Muñoz said. “The fellows also work closely with teaching faculty at the high school to discover what’s coming down the pike.”

Muñoz said College Track focuses on the whole student, encouraging them to pursue extracurricular interests such as the arts or sports and to volunteer their time in community service. The teens, he said, have done a lot of work in the clothes closet run by **Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services**.

Freshmen in College Track will apply for their first scholarship before their first year in the program ends, Moreno and Nichols said, and they will get their first run at taking a practice college entrance exam. It’s all part of preparing students for college, Muñoz said, and they will receive many more lessons in how to prepare academically and financially for school.

Muñoz, a Watsonville native, left a job as a middle school teacher last year to run College Track’s Sacramento site. He has degrees in political science and psychology from UC Davis and a law degree from the **University of San Francisco**.

“I started out really excited about this idea of going to law school,” Muñoz said. “I wanted to be an advocate for employees. ... I got into my third year of law school, and I realized this was not what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I went back to what gave me the most joy in my life.”

That was his work tutoring children in an after-school program while he was attending UC Davis, he said. He will start accepting applications for the next class of College Track students later this fall – and he will be relocating his program to a larger home at Broadway and Alhambra as it welcomes a third class next year. For more information, call 916-287-8624.

Cathie Anderson: 916-321-1193, canderson@sacbee.com, @CathieA_SacBee

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