

Jefferson EDGE 2020

CRIME ABATEMENT

Status Report 3: October 2010

Prepared by JEDCO and GCR & Associates, Inc.

JEDCO
Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission



Crime Abatement

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

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

CP = Crime Prevention AB= Anti-Blight

Action ID #	Action Item	Progress as of August 2010		
		Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
CP1	Seek additional local resources to support the JPSO, District Attorney's Office, and municipal police departments	<i>No longer applicable and removed from crime abatement action items.</i>		
CP2	Work with the State to design and implement an overhaul of the corrections system			
CP3	Work with the State to provide additional funding for juvenile justice reform, after care programs, and truancy intervention			
CP4	Work with the State to secure additional resources for Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) for non-violent offenders and juveniles			
CP5	Initiate a major public outreach campaign to inform the public about new anti-crime initiatives and crime fighting successes			
AB1	Adopt the International Property Maintenance Code			
AB2	Adopt state legislation to enact more severe penalties for certain code violations			
AB3	Adopt state legislation to direct minor building code violations to administrative adjudication rather than to the court system			
AB4	Adopt stronger local ordinances to limit illegal activities in motels			
AB5	Appoint a conviction verification officer to assist apartment owners in obtaining background information on tenants			
AB6	Work with the Jefferson Parish Housing Authority to conduct more stringent pre-occupancy inspections of Section 8 housing units			
AB7	Secure additional administrative staff for the Parish Attorney's Office			
AB8	Develop a comprehensive redevelopment strategy and secure funding for the revitalization of certain areas			

Crime Abatement

Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Progress as of August 2010		
					Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
CP1	Seek additional local resources to support the JPSO, District Attorney's Office, and municipal police departments	Identify surplus resources or submit ballot proposal in 2008	<p>At the end of 2008, the Jefferson Parish Council approved a resolution authorizing placement of a one-fourth of one percent (.25%) sales and use tax on the April 4th special election ballot. However, in February 2009, the Council removed the sales tax increase referendum from the ballot due to an error in the ballot language.</p> <p>Demand for stable employment in a down economy has partially addressed JPSO's post-Katrina personnel shortages, resulting in fewer job vacancies. Additionally, the political/ economic climate is unfavorable for a new revenue source at this time.</p>	No further action at this time. Continue to monitor the personnel needs of local law enforcement agencies and evaluate the need for a revenue measure of this kind in the future.	<i>No longer applicable and removed from crime abatement action items.</i>		
CP2	Work with the State to design and implement an overhaul of the corrections system	Assemble State committee/task force in 2008; pass legislation in 2009	During the 2010 legislative session, the State Senate passed Senate Resolution 90 (SR 90), which establishes a special Senate committee to address the operation of the state's correctional system and the state's parole and probation system. This committee is obligated to complete a written report of its findings, recommendations, and specific legislative proposals prior to the 2011 Regular Session. Senator J.P. Morrell of Senate District 3 represents Jefferson Parish and sits on this committee.	Work with Senator Morrell to ensure that the SR90 committee recommends ambitious and actionable legislative recommendation to seek alternatives to incarceration, to reduce recidivism, and to improve prisoner re-entry to society.			
CP3	Work with the State to provide additional funding for juvenile justice reform, after care programs, and truancy intervention	Secure supplemental funding for TASC in 2008; secure increased funding and recurring State appropriation in 2009	In fiscal year 2010-2011, Jefferson Parish's truancy intervention program (the TASC initiative) received state funding of \$379,318. This amount will fund the program through June 30, 2011, but this total represents a 5% cut from the FY2010 appropriation, which itself was 23% lower than the FY2009 funding. Additionally, no secure, long-term funding for this program has been identified. In the interim, reductions in state funding have been partially offset by assistance from Jefferson Parish Public Schools.	Generate support for additional state funding for juvenile services and truancy reduction, in lieu of reduced annual appropriations. Work with Jefferson legislative delegation to identify a legislative "champion" for juvenile justice reform and juvenile services. The recommendation of the aforementioned SR 90 committee may be a vehicle to pursue permanent, expanded funding for TASC.			

Crime Abatement

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Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress	
CP4	Work with the State to secure additional resources for Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) for non-violent offenders and juveniles	Secure designation in 2008-2009	Action complete. For more information, refer to March, 2009 status update.	No further action required				
CP5	Initiate a major public outreach campaign to inform the public about new anti-crime initiatives and crime fighting successes	Unveil website and issue newsletter in 2008	<p>There are two major prongs of Jefferson Parish's ongoing quality of life outreach effort: Jefferson Life magazine and JEDCO's annual marketing budget (approximately \$200,000 for 2010-2011). Jefferson Life is already covering its production costs through advertising revenues and has increased production to six times per year. Twice per year, Jefferson Life will cover each of the quality of life issues addressed by Jefferson EDGE 2020 to update the public on progress underway. Within each Jefferson Life issue, the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office (JPSO) purchases editorial space to update the public on major developments and initiatives. Thus, crime is addressed in every issue.</p> <p>Additionally, JEDCO's annual marketing budget goes toward print advertisements, billboards, radio advertisements, and social media efforts. Collectively, these marketing efforts spread news about positive developments in all aspects of quality of life.</p>	Given the fact that Jefferson Life magazine is sustaining itself through advertising revenues and given its expanded production schedule, this action item is effectively complete. The health of Jefferson Life should continue to be monitored, and JEDCO should remain vigilant in pursuing additional marketing funds.				

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Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress	
AB1	Adopt the International Property Maintenance Code	Adopt code in 2008-2009 depending on enforcement capacity	Action complete. For more information, refer to March, 2009 status update.	No further action required				
AB2	Adopt state legislation to enact more severe penalties for certain code violations	Adopt legislation in 2008	Action complete. For more information, refer to October, 2009 status update.	No further action required.				
AB3	Adopt state legislation to direct minor building code violations to administrative adjudication rather than to the court system	Adopt legislation in 2008	Action complete. For more information, refer to March, 2009 status update.	No further action required				
AB4	Adopt stronger local ordinances to limit illegal activities in motels	Research best practices in 2008; adopt ordinance(s) in 2008-2009	Action complete. For more information, refer to October, 2009 status update.	No further action required.				
AB5	Appoint a conviction verification officer to assist apartment owners in obtaining background information on tenants	Create position and hire officer in 2008	<p>Through its "cop link" program, the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office continues to conduct customary criminal background checks for Section 8 tenants. This collaborative initiative has succeeded in identifying those prospective Section 8 tenants with criminal histories. Individuals are denied a Section 8 voucher if they have a criminal history.</p> <p>Additionally, for market rate landlords, Jefferson Parish's Crime Prevention and Quality of Life Coordinator has functioned as their information officer for the criminal history of prospective tenants. Privacy rules prevent the Parish from disclosing the complete criminal history of an individual applicant, but the Parish has been able to disclose limited information on one's criminal history, thereby helping landlords to make more informed decisions.</p>	Conduct outreach to additional market rate landlords in order to make them aware of the services available through the Crime Prevention and Quality of Life Coordinator. With a more extensive outreach effort, more landlords will be able to collect information on the criminal history of prospective tenants.				

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AB6	Work with the Jefferson Parish Housing Authority to conduct more stringent pre-occupancy inspections of Section 8 housing units	Improve inspection protocols and formalize relationship with Inspection and Code Enforcement in 2008-2009	<p>According to the Crime Prevention and Quality of Life Coordinator for Jefferson Parish, the Parish Department of Inspection and Code Enforcement has recently formalized an improved property inspection protocol for Section 8 units. The Jefferson Parish Housing Authority's Section 8 inspectors will provide the Parish Department of Inspection and Code Enforcement with a regularly updated list of those Section 8 units whose condition is especially poor. Parish Code Enforcement officers will then conduct follow up inspections and will be prepared to cite Section 8 landlords under the more rigorous standards of code inspections. Code violations will then be aggressively prosecuted by the Parish Attorney's Office.</p> <p>This greater level of cooperation between the Housing Authority and Parish government should result in higher quality Section 8 rental units and a reduction in blight.</p>	Monitor this collaboration between Code Enforcement and the Parish Housing Authority to determine its effectiveness in improving the condition of Section 8 units.				
AB7	Secure additional administrative staff for the Parish Attorney's Office	Hire additional staff in 2008	Action complete. For more information, refer to March, 2009 status update.	No further action required				
AB8	Develop a comprehensive redevelopment strategy and secure funding for the revitalization of certain areas	Issue pilot redevelopment plan RFP in 2008-2009; select developer in 2009-2010; initiate implementation in 2010	<p>In 2009, the Jefferson Community Development department applied for a \$10 million Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) grant. The purpose of this grant was to concentrate resources in a few target areas in order to generate substantial neighborhood improvements and additional investment in historically blighted areas. Unfortunately, the grant application was unsuccessful. There may be a third round of NSP funding, but no formal announcement has been provided by HUD.</p> <p>In the meantime, the Community Development Department continues to administer home repair and home ownership programs to low and moderate income households. The Department will be expanding its soft second mortgage program so that up to \$50,000 will be available to qualifying homebuyers. All Community Development programs are funded by federal CDBG and HOME funds.</p>	Monitor HUD funding programs for future grant opportunities. Examine the feasibility of locally driven mechanisms, such as the establishment of a redevelopment authority and potential local revenue sources to support redevelopment.				



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