



# Juvenile Crime, Graffiti and Gang Violence Task Force

Suggestions and  
Recommendations



Presented to  
Mayor & City Commission





## CAPITAL OF THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY

### Mission Statement:

"Ensure a business-friendly climate focused on economic growth, quality of life and efficient delivery of excellent services to our community."

September 8, 2009

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HCISD Administration Building

407 North 77 Sunshine Strip

Harlingen, Texas 78550

Re: Juvenile Crime, Graffiti and Gang Violence Task Force Final Report

Dear Board of Trustees, Superintendent and Assistants,

On July 3, 2008 Mayor Boswell announced the creation of the *Juvenile Crime, Graffiti and Gang Violence Task Force* in response to tragic events that transpired in our community. Since that time, Task Force Members have participated in several Town Hall meetings, community outreach events and work sessions. Working with the community leaders, the general public and our youth, the Task Force has completed the Final Report and we are submitting it to the HCISD Board of Trustees and staff.

The report makes several recommendations that will require funding and a strong commitment not just from the City but from the community as well. However, in order for these recommendations to affect change in our community, partnerships must be forged with Harlingen CISD, TSTC and other local organizations.

It has been my pleasure to serve as the Task Force's Chairman and former State Representative Jim Solis has also expressed his gratitude of serving as its Co-Chairman. Both Jim and I would like to thank members of the Task Force for their time and dedication spent on completing the Final Report. We would especially like to thank Judge Menton Murray and Dr. Susan Ritter for their insights and expertise.

Sincerely,

*George McShan*

George McShan  
Task Force Chairman

*Jim Solis*

Jim Solis  
Task Force Co-Chairman

*"Recipient Of Keep Texas Beautiful Governor's Achievement Award"*

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# Juvenile Crime, Graffiti and Gang Violence Task Force Suggestions and Recommendations

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

On June 25, 2008, Harlingen Police Officer Carlos Diaz was shot multiple times with an semi-automatic rifle at the corner of “F” Street and Buchanan by the Westside “A’s” gang leader during a routine traffic stop on the suspect. Officer Diaz spent several days in the hospital and recovered from his injuries. Seven days later, Mayor Chris Boswell issued a STATEMENT ON PUBLIC SAFETY (Exhibit I) and officially created the JUVENILE CRIME, GRAFFITI AND GANG VIOLENCE TASK FORCE. In his Statement, the Mayor stated, “We on the City Commission share the community’s outrage at these recent events. Enough is enough... Today we are here to announce steps toward ending this type of violence in our community.”

The Task Force was charged with the following:

- Prepare an honest and fair assessment of the trend of the level of juvenile and gang violence within the City over the last 5 years.
- Compare that assessment and trend in violence with other Valley Communities.
- Research and identify best practices for addressing Juvenile Crime, Graffiti and Gang Violence from Cities in the Valley and throughout the United States.
- Make recommendations to improve law enforcement, education and community efforts to reduce Juvenile Crime, Graffiti and Gang Violence within the City at Community Wide Forums and consider the response from the community.
- After considering the community’s response, make final recommendations to the City Commission, School District, Church Community, Youth Groups and other organizations on what can be done to reduce the violence.

The Task Force members appointed by the Mayor are: HCISD Board President George McShan as its Chairman, former state representative Jim Solis as its Co-Chairman, Harlingen Police Chief Danny Castillo, UT-RAHC Chief of Police Adam Trevino, Boys and Girls Club Director Gerald Gathright, Rio Grande Council Scout Executive Ernesto Carballo, City Commissioners Tom Hushen and Larry Galbreath, Loaves and Fishes Executive Director Dean Hall, State District Judge Migdalia Lopez and La Feria City Commissioner Lori Weaver. The Task Force also invited Dr. Susan Ritter a criminal justice professor at the University of Texas at Brownsville and Judge Menton Murray, Darrel Hester Juvenile Detention Center, to participate in the discussions with the Task Force.

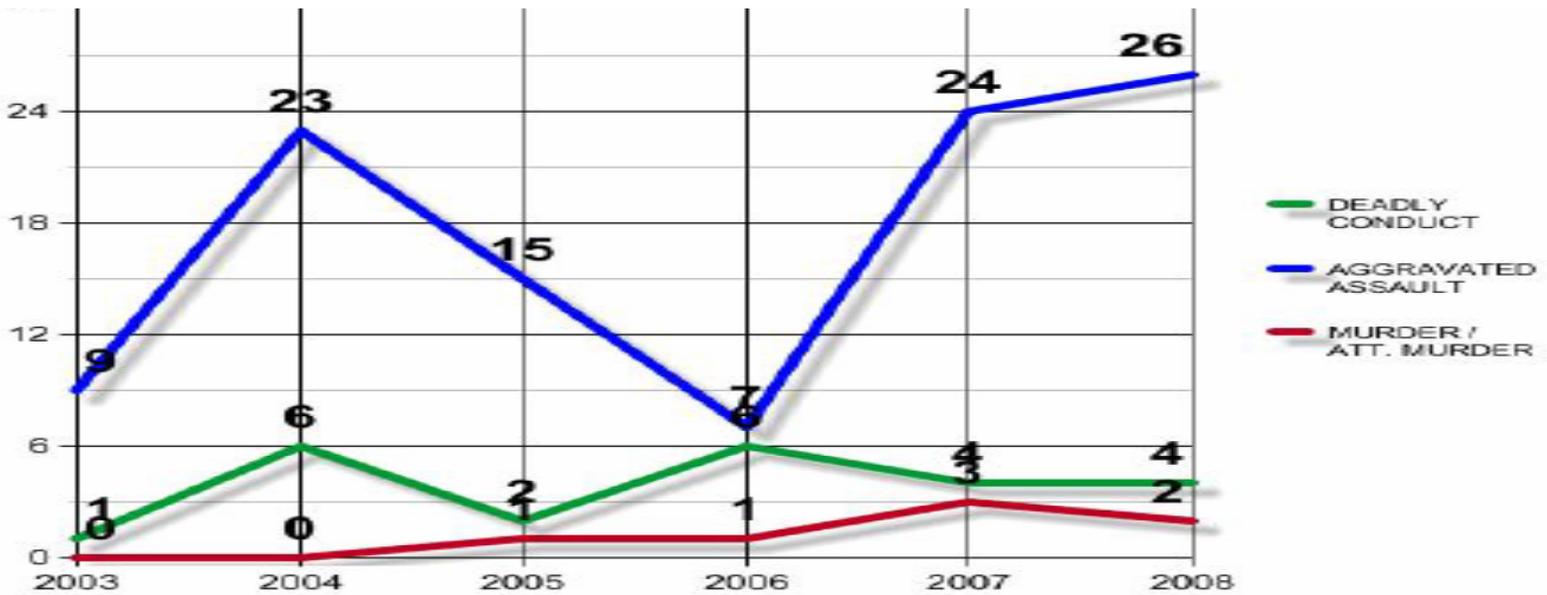
The challenges facing the City of Harlingen are significant but not insurmountable. Within a span of 22 months, there have been four gang related murders. Within the same time period, there have been five gang related stabbings and six separate gang shooting incidents resulting in multiple injuries. Additionally, Police Intelligence identified 201 street gang members and 160 prison gang members residing in the City of Harlingen. The Department has also identified gang members from Texas Syndicate, Mexican Mafia, Vallucos, Hermanos Pistoleros Latinos, Mara Salvatrucha a.k.a. MS-13 and Texas Chicano Brotherhood.

In an attempt to address this issue, on our nation's independence day, the Police Department created the Police Gang Unit comprised of four field officers, one intelligence officer and a sergeant. The Unit will be a permanent fixture within the Department.

**TRENDS**

Since 2003, gang related violent crime fluctuated to extremes. Aggravated assault went from a total of 9 in 2003, to 23 in 2004 and down to 7 in 2006 and most recently increased to 26 in 2008. Deadly conduct has averaged 3.8 per year since 2003 and murder has averaged 1.75 over the last four years.

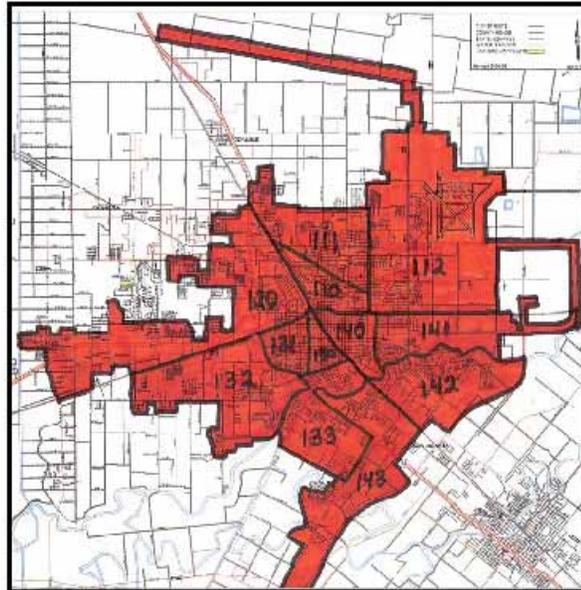
GANG RELATED VIOLENT CRIME



# VIOLENCE BY DISTRICT

## •2003 – 2008

•110	21 acts of gang violence
•111	5 acts of gang violence
•112	4 act of gang violence
•120	14 acts of gang violence
•130	28 acts of gang violence
•131	25 acts of gang violence
•132	1 act of gang violence
•133	17 acts of gang violence
•140	6 acts of gang violence
•141	5 acts of gang violence
•142	4 acts of gang violence
•143	1 act of gang violence



Gang violence has also been prevalent in certain sectors of the City. The graph depicted above illustrates gang violence activity since 2003 for the 12 districts. District 130 has had the highest degree of violence. This area is in close proximity to the original town site. “F” Street is the boundary between District 130 and 131. The attempted murder on Officer Diaz by Abraham Mar took place at the intersection of F Street and Buchanan.

The City measures crime in seven categories: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny/theft, and auto theft. The total number of crimes reported in these categories in 2007 was 4,837 and when compared to 2006 represents a 1% decrease overall in the seven crime indexes. Compared to our 2003 population, the city has experienced a 15.4% growth, up from 64,971 in 2003 to 74,950 in 2009. The crime index does not appear to have been influenced by our population growth.

For illustrative purposes, the Police Department created the Harlingen Index Crime Clock. It is intended to display the frequency of crime relative to a time index. According to the clock, one murder is committed every 3 months, one robbery every 5.8 days, one violent crime every 1.1 days, one aggravated assault every 1.5 days and one theft every 2.7 hours. See Exhibit II.

Additionally, in 2007 the Police Department processed 4,348 arrests, of that total 790 were juveniles. Seventy percent or 555 were male juveniles and thirty percent (235) were

female juveniles. Seventeen arrests were for aggravated assault, 39 for burglary and the majority of arrests (171) were for larceny/theft, and another seventeen were arrested for weapons possession. Ninety-nine were for drug abuse and another 219 were for other offenses. See Exhibit III.

#### JUVENILE ARRESTS IN 2007

OFFENSE	TOTAL	M=male F=female
Aggravated Assault	17	M=14 F=3
Burglary - Breaking & Entering	39	M=38 F=1
Larceny – Theft	171	M=90 F=81
Vandalism	83	M=79 F=4
Weapons possession	17	M=15 F=2
Drug Abuse	99	M=89 F=10
Disorderly Conduct	90	M=52 F=38
Runaways	55	M=20 F=35
All others	219	M=158 F=61
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>790</b>	

#### JUVENILE ARRESTS COMPARISON from 2003 to 2007

OFFENSE	% Change
Aggravated Assault	31%
Burglary - Breaking & Entering	(45%)
Larceny – Theft	71%
Vandalism	48%
Weapons possession	0%
Drug Abuse	24%
Disorderly Conduct	190%
Runaways	77%
All others	75%

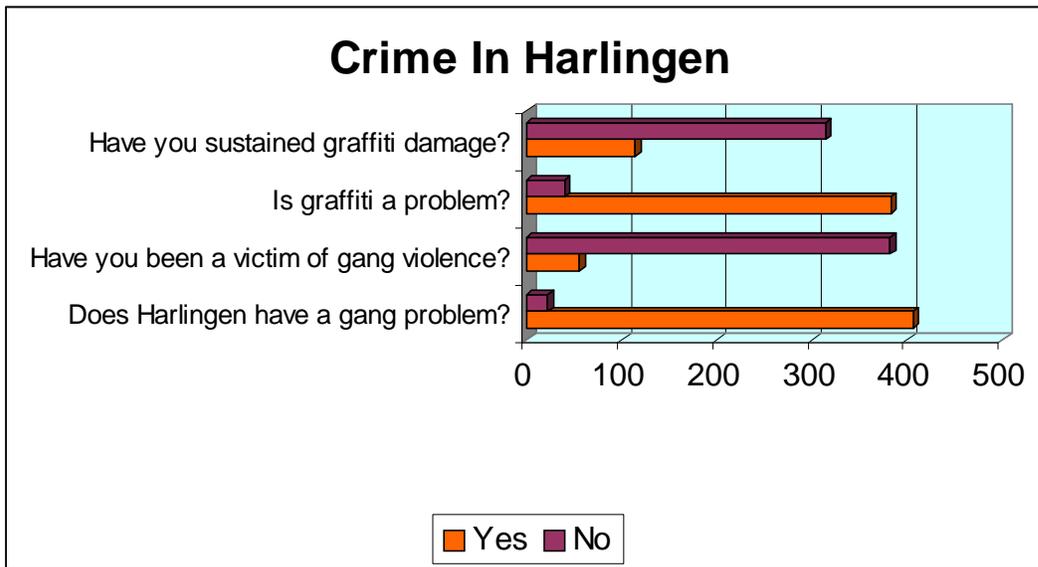
Comparing the identical arrest indexes from 2003 to 2007 we can point out significant patterns. The biggest percentage increase in arrests were in Disorderly Conduct resulting in a 190% increase followed by a 77 % increase in Runaways, 71% increase in Larceny-Theft and a 48% increase in Vandalism. Weapons possession remained unchanged and burglaries dropped by 45%. With Disorderly Conduct having the largest increase, this points out attitudes amongst our youth and the changes that have occurred over time. It seems our youth have become disenfranchised. Theft and vandalism have risen significantly amongst our youth as well giving rise to our graffiti problems being seen around our city and nation.

### **OUTREACH:**

The Task Force held its first meeting on July 17 and continued to meet thereafter on several occasions. A questionnaire was created by the Task Force to solicit public input in an attempt to gauge the public's perception of crime in the community (Exhibit IV). The questionnaire was first used at the PTA meetings held at Harlingen High School, and Harlingen High School South including the National Night Out at Fair Park. The Task Force then held a series of at the five Town Hall meetings to solicit public comments on juvenile crime, graffiti and gang violence. Detailed minutes were kept of the Task Force meetings and Town Hall meetings (Exhibit V). The questionnaire was also utilized at these meetings. A total of 445 responses were received. Of the persons who responded 91.2% felt Harlingen had a gang problem although 85.8% of those responding had not been a victim of gang violence. Similarly 86.1% of those responding believed Harlingen had a graffiti problem but an overwhelming 70.6% indicated they had not sustained any graffiti damage.

Town Hall meetings were held at the following locations:

- Jefferson Elementary – Thursday, October 16, 2008
- Zavalla Elementary – Thursday, November 6, 2008
- Ben Milam Elementary – Thursday, November 20, 2008
- Bowie Elementary – Thursday, December 9, 2008
- Bonham Elementary – Thursday, December 11, 2008



The questionnaire also asked participants “Rank the following options in order of priority that the City should focus its efforts on, with 1 being the most important and 4 being the least important”. The following represents the results of the questionnaire.

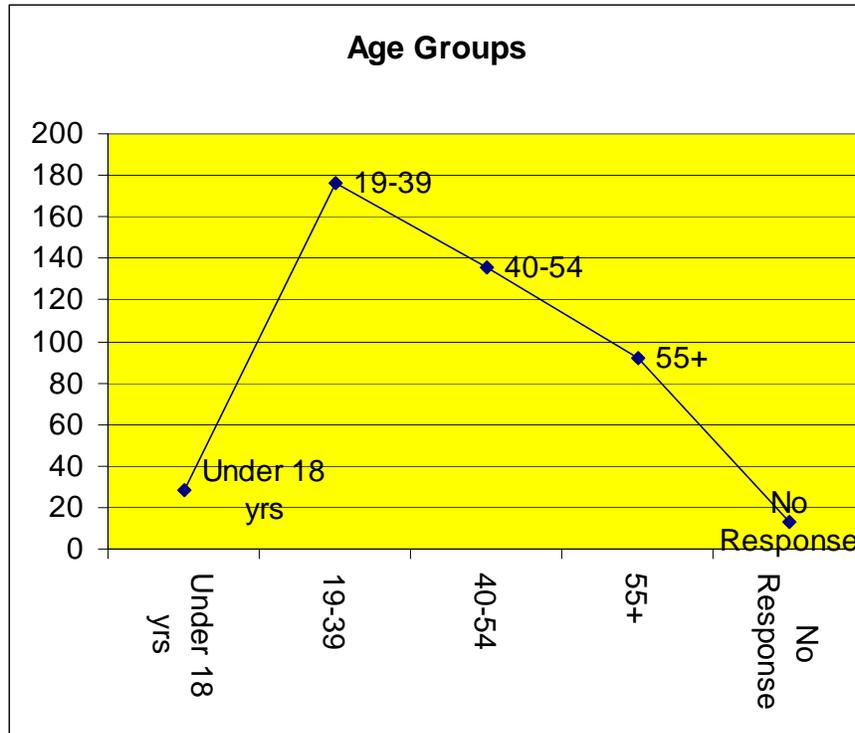
1. More police officers/neighborhood police officers
2. Hold parents more accountable
3. Stricter Curfew and Graffiti Implement Laws
4. More after school programs/In School Programs

Additionally, participants were asked to “Rank in order of severity (1-being the most severe) the crime problem in Harlingen.” That resulted in the following rank order:

1. Gang Violence
2. Burglaries (Break Ins)
3. Drug Offenses
4. Vandalism (Graffiti)
5. Assault (Bullying, Fighting)
6. Cruising or racing

The public’s perception that gang violence is the number 1 problem coincides with the 190% increase in disorderly conduct from 2003-2007. According to police records, juveniles are less likely to be disorderly when alone but more likely to display this unruly behavior when in groups. Although burglaries were ranked second, there was a decrease in juvenile burglaries by 45% from 2003 – 2007. Drug offenses were ranked third and correspond to the 24% increase in juvenile drug abuse. Vandalism was ranked fourth and also rose by 48% from 2003-2007. Assault was ranked fifth and it saw a 31% increase. Cruising or racing is not an arrest index measured by the Police Department.

Interestingly, the majority of respondents 39.6% were between the ages of 19-39 years of age and 30.6% were between 40-54 years of age, 20.7% were over 55 years of age and 6.3% were less than 18 years of age.



#### JUVENILE ARRESTS BY CITY 2003-2007

CITY	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Harlingen	790	688	848	711	524
Brownsville	1010	1055	1094	1131	1304
Weslaco	633	713	577	512	536
San Benito	213	248	274	256	294
Edinburg	359	300	378	244	224
McAllen	1045	928	1237	1210	1350

Percentage Increase from  
2003 – 2007

CITY	% INCREASE
Harlingen	50%
Brownsville	(23%)
Weslaco	18%
San Benito	(28%)
Edinburg	60%
McAllen	(23%)

2003-2007 Rank  
By Percentage Increase

CITY	RANK
Edinburg	1 - 60%
Harlingen	2 - 50%
Weslaco	3 - 18%
McAllen	4 –(23%)
Brownsville	5 –(23%)
San Benito	6 –(28%)

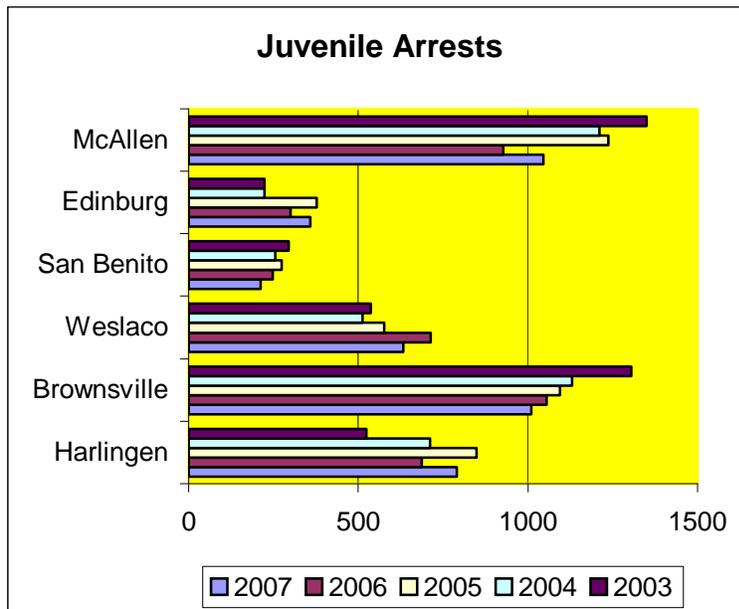
2007 Rank  
By Number of Arrests

CITY	No. of Arrests	
McAllen	1 – 1045	↔
Brownsville	2 – 1010	↔
Harlingen	3 – 790	↔
Weslaco	4 – 633	↔
Edinburg	5 – 359	↔
San Benito	6 – 213	↔

Ratio of Officers to Population

No. of Officers	Population	Ratio
274	130,831	477:1
221	172,400	780:1
127	74,950	590:1
68	32,092	471:1
114	55,297	485:1
47	26,000	553:1

Compared to McAllen, Brownsville, Weslaco, Edinburg and San Benito, Harlingen ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in number of juvenile arrests in 2007 with 790. See chart on previous page. When comparing to the same cities, from 2003 – 2007, Harlingen ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> overall with a 50% increase in arrests for that time period. San Benito ranked sixth with the least number of arrests with an overall 28% decrease and Edinburg was first with a 60% increase in number of juvenile arrests. McAllen and Brownsville both had a 23% decrease in juvenile arrests for the same time period. See Exhibit VII for Valley Cities Juvenile Arrest Data.



Additionally, the Task Force found the majority of juvenile crime occurs towards the end of the school day. In the “Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2006 National Report”, it graphically depicts that juvenile violent crime peaks at 3:00 p.m. on school days. On non school days, the occurrence of juvenile violent crime is significantly reduced and tends to peak at 8:00 p.m. Compare this to adult violent crime which peaks after 9:00 p.m. This fact highlights the need for collaborative partnerships between the City and School Districts. Activities and programs must be established to provide opportunities for our juveniles during these critical hours. Existing programs can be expanded and additional partnerships should be established with local community groups in order to ensure success. The programs do not have to be complex and could be as simple as providing boxing lessons, martial arts or learning to play musical instruments.

In addition to these measures, it is imperative upon the School District to develop a curriculum in our elementary schools to educate our children about the dangers of gang activity and juvenile crime. Parental Involvement groups must also accept the challenge and endeavor to engage themselves in the young student’s lives. The Task Force felt strongly that the School District should develop after school programs for its students.

A member of the Task Force, Dean Hall, wrote an independent report wherein he stated the fundamental risk factors associated with juvenile crime are: poverty; unstable family life and repeated exposure to family violence; drugs; and media violence. He also drew conclusions on how to address these issues. A copy of his report can be found in Exhibit VIII along with a copy of the Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2006 National Report.

## **BEST PRACTICES**

The Police Department contacted other departments and researched best practices on the web to gather best approaches to addressing juvenile crime, graffiti and gang violence. The following are approaches utilized by various law enforcement agencies that will be considered by the Harlingen Police. In most cases, the department has begun a hybrid form of the approaches mentioned.

- **CITY OF LOS ANGELES GANG INJUNCTION:** The Los Angeles City Attorney’s office utilized Gang Injunctions to address gang violence. As of 2009, there were 37 active injunctions in the city involving 57 gangs. A gang injunction is a restraining order against a group. It is a civil suit that seeks a court order declaring the gang’s public behavior a nuisance and asks for special rules directed toward its activity. Injunctions can address the neighborhood’s gang problem before it reaches the level of felony crime activity.

Gang injunctions have clearly demonstrable positive affect on the neighborhood area covered. Some have had a remarkable effect. In smaller areas, gang nuisance activity can be permanently removed. In larger areas, with gangs entrenched for years, the gang’s hold on the area can be reduced and maintained

with a small team of law enforcement officers. Anecdotal evidence is fully supportive, residents continue to ask for the period of peace a gang injunction can provide.

The City of El Paso has a similar program of gang injunctions. The following are a sample of just a few of the 35 restrictions that were used in the first injunction initiated in El Paso:

- Associating, standing, sitting, walking, driving, bicycling, gathering or appearing anywhere in public with any other defendants named in the injunction.
- Signaling to, or acting as a lookout for other persons to warn of the approach of police officers.
- Remaining in any one public place under circumstances that would warrant a reasonable person to believe that the purpose of that behavior is to control identifiable areas, intimidate others from entering those areas, or to conceal or engage in illegal activities.
- Remaining in a public place between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.
- Using or making works, phrases, physical gestures, or symbols commonly known as gang hand signs.
- Engaging in any conduct that violates the laws of the State of Texas or Ordinances of the City of El Paso.
- Banned from entering various business establishments known to be frequented by Barrio Azteca gang members for the purpose of trafficking narcotics.

The implementation of this injunction attributed to a 33% drop in burglary of businesses, 20 drop in robberies, and a 15% drop in burglary of autos. Overall crime since the gang injunction was greatly decreased by approximately 12% within the “Safe Community Zone”.

- **HIDALGO COUNTY GANG TASK FORCE:** The Gang Enforcement Unit (GEU) at the Hidalgo County Sheriff’s Office consist of five sworn investigators whose primary goals are to target individuals who are most criminally active within a “Criminal Gang” i.e., street gangs, security threat groups also known as prison gangs. GEU will conduct short-long term investigations that target Criminal Gangs by using all available resources, traditional and non-traditional techniques e.g., surveillance, confidential informants, etc., to identify, prosecute and dismantle criminal organizations in State and Federal Courts. Assist with its own jurisdictional criminal gang investigations and with outside agencies. There are currently no formal gang units in any of the Valley’s Police Departments other than the City of Harlingen.
- **GANG RESISTANCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING (GREAT) PROGRAM:** The program was designed by the US Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms and Tobacco in conjunction with the Phoenix, Arizona Police

Department. Taught in grades 3-4 and 5-6 by local, specially trained Police Officers, the GREAT Program provides nine hours of classroom instruction and student involvement on such issues as recognizing gangs and gang members, managing conflict, dealing positively with diversity and building self-esteem. The emphasis of the program is on anti-gang education. Cities currently using this approach include Philadelphia, Honolulu, Phoenix, Portland and the City of Houston has developed a similar program called GEAR (Gang Education And Resistance).

This program would be one implemented in joint partnership with the School District and the City. Programs that could have similar effects would be the DARE and SAFE programs which had been a part of the School District's curriculum in the past. These programs may be reconsidered and reimplemented.

- **HARLINGEN POLICE DEPARTMENT GANG ERADICATION TEAM:** The City's Gang Eradication Team is the most extensive and comprehensive example in the valley today. Since its creation in July 2009, HPD has sought to implement various nationally proven approaches and strategies in our efforts to combat and eradicate gangs from the City of Harlingen. Strategies implemented or in the process of being implemented include:
  - A dedicated Gang Eradication Team consisting of four investigators, one intelligence officer, one graffiti investigator, and one supervising sergeant.
  - HPD is actively working with the City Attorney's office in pursuing a Gang Injunction and establishing "Safe Community Zones".
  - HPD Gang Eradication Team currently sends Parental Notification letters to parents of gang members or suspected gang members informing the parent that the juvenile was associating with known or suspected gang members or was involved in activities related to gangs. Letters serve to educate, inform, and warn parents of at risk behavior and the consequences of such behavior.
  - HPD is actively developing a local gang intelligence database.
  - The Gang Eradication Team's Mission is to incorporate broad based strategic techniques and tactics to include various suppression, eradication, mentoring, faith-based outreach, community-based outreach, parental training efforts, after school activity programs, job opportunity programs, and citizen training/education techniques to effectively reduce the threat of gang activity, juvenile crime and graffiti.
  - HPD has already coordinated/held graffiti clean-up projects involving current gang members and is planning upcoming clean-up projects involving graffiti offenders in cooperation with various City and Community organization/partners.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

After listening to the citizen's comments and concerns regarding juvenile crime, graffiti and gang violence at the various Town Hall meetings, the Task Force compiled their suggestions and recommendations. The Task Force deliberated amongst themselves to compile and formulate strategies, action plans and policy recommendations that could help curb the increase in crime. One notable area of concern was the need for the Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District to become more involved in this process. The following are the recommendations presented by the Task Force to the Harlingen City Commission for consideration, adoption and implementation.

### PROACTIVE MEASURES

- Provide a Juvenile Division within the Police Department and staff it with at least one new Police Officer for the Division. HPD currently has a dedicated juvenile investigator who takes care of runaways and curfew violations.
- Develop collaborative partnerships between the City of Harlingen and Harlingen C.I.S.D. by providing after school programs, mentoring opportunities with the City to maximize participation of our youth in these programs.
- Provide additional Police Officers/Police Presence.
- Provide funding to demolish dilapidated structures (residential/commercial) especially in known gang hangouts. *The City must budget funds to be used on dilapidated structures. The current system takes too long and is not working. Property owners are reluctant to make improvements or demolish structures on their own. A list of dilapidated structures is found in Exhibit VI.*
- Improve lighting conditions in areas where graffiti and gang activities are prevalent. Lighting should be concentrated initially in Police Districts 130 & 131.
- Increase funding for added Code Enforcement activities to remove junked vehicles from neighborhoods.
- Increase funding for the graffiti abatement program and utilize juveniles to assist in the abatement.
- Need more Teen Centers and Community Involvement. Coordinate this activity with the School District.

- Research demonstrates that 4<sup>th</sup> quartile 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are likely to drop out of high school. A solution would be to develop a collaborative partnership between HCISD, the City of Harlingen, Tech Prep and TSTC targeting after school and/or summer job programs to keep these students on track for college and workforce readiness. *See Exhibit IX for a power point presentation from Dr. Steve Flores, HCISD Superintendent.*
- Provide additional basketball courts throughout the community and sponsor midnight basketball tournaments for teenagers. Open basketball courts on school campuses on weekends.
- Provide, on a periodic basis, a battle of the bands for teenagers. Allow kids to write plays and act them out on stage.
- Have a “Leadership Harlingen” for troubled youth in the community. Both Chambers should assist the City with this goal. This should include a Teen Court as well.
- Increase Police Officers and patrols in neighborhoods by redirecting existing Police Personnel towards this endeavor.
- Increase the use of hidden cameras in areas where graffiti is out of control.
- Encourage judges and police officers to give out maximum sentences to gang members.
- Reporting non-emergency calls to the Police Department is cumbersome. This process must be streamlined in order to encourage more community involvement.
- Increase Harlingen Proud’s budget.
- Establish programs for teenagers between the hours of 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., which is when the majority of juvenile crimes occur. Programs should include the Harlingen Independent School District and involve after school activities.
- Establish programs in the Elementary Schools to educate children about the dangers of gang activity and provide alternatives for the children to become involved with.
- Establish a Police Youth League run by Law Enforcement Officers to provide an outlet for teenagers from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Activities provided could be boxing, workouts, martial arts, etc.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Create a Youth Task Force comprised solely of teenagers to provide insight on activities and programs for the youth of our community. Involve ex-gang members in the Task Force. *See Exhibit VII.*
- Create a faith-based coalition to provide outreach for our youth to support the efforts of the Task Force.
- Establish a GREAT (Gang Resistance and Educational Awareness and Training) program as a partnership between the Police Department and the School District to train school personnel to recognize gang activity on school campuses and provide a mechanism to notify school personnel, police and parents when gang activity is identified.
- Establish a program whereby juvenile probationers clean up graffiti vandalized sites.
- Post gang insignias, gang colors and when practical, gang member photos on the City's web site.
- Create Overlay Districts in high crime areas and redirect all resources to the area until the crime is abated and repeat throughout the community until juvenile crime, gang violence and graffiti has been either substantially reduced or eradicated.
- Utilize Community groups to assist.
- Establish a Coordinator Position to assist the City in the implementation of these initiatives.
- The Police Department should develop a computerized gang geomapping and tracking system to identify the location of gangs and graffiti in the city and establish a gang database. The system will identify hotspots of gang related crime. *HPD will have this capability shortly.* Use RICO laws to go after gangs like organized crime.
- Coordinate activities with the Parental Involvement Centers at the various schools in our community to keep parents involved primarily at locations with graffiti and gang related crimes.
- Encourage the utilization of Neighborhood Watch Programs in neighborhoods experiencing elevated levels of juvenile crime and gang violence.

## **CONCLUSION:**

In order to address the increased gang activities, the City of Harlingen must increase funding for the demolition of dilapidated structures, graffiti abatement programs and increase police patrols in areas designated as hot spots. Our city ranks 3 in overall juvenile arrests and second in percentage increase from 2003 – 2007, ahead of Brownsville and McAllen. Serious measures must be taken to halt this pattern.

Law enforcement personnel cannot be expected to bring about change without participation from the community. During the Town Hall meetings, it was apparent the citizens are frustrated with the increase in juvenile criminal activity however, most individuals were also willing to participate in any process that would bring about change. This endeavor can only be successful if undertaken as a community. A collaborative effort must be undertaken with emphasis on inclusion with the public school system (Harlingen CISD) in order reach our youth and provide opportunities and alternatives. Additional resources may be available through collaborative partnerships with TSTC and Tech Prep and should be pursued by the City of Harlingen and the Task Force.

The recommendations made by this Task Force can only be successful if fully embraced by the City of Harlingen and adequate funding is made available. In an effort to continue the efforts of the Juvenile Crime, Graffiti and Gang Violence Task Force, the Task Force should continue to have meetings at regular intervals to track progress, identify solutions to barriers that may arise and provide additional recommendations to the local governing bodies as needed.