

**Gang Resistance is Paramount (GRIP)
Program Evaluation:
Final Report
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**Prepared for
The City of Paramount**

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I. Executive Summary

In 1981, the City of Paramount recognized that it faced a severe gang problem. For more than twenty years, the City has funded a school-based gang prevention program. With a staff that now consists of a program manager, four full-time instructors, and one part-time instructor, the Gang Resistance is Paramount (GRIP) program is administered and supervised by the City's Recreation Department. The GRIP program incorporates many of the characteristics that are consistently mentioned in national studies of gang programs as vital to having a potentially successful gang prevention strategy, such as having an early start and a long-term commitment, providing links between school and opportunities in the community, and providing facilities and staff time during school hours to the program. Over the years, the City has added gang intervention and suppression programs to build what is now a comprehensive approach to gang deterrence. The purpose of this report is to communicate the findings of the evaluation conducted of the City of Paramount's Gang Resistance Is Paramount (GRIP) program within the context of the other gang deterrence activities in Paramount.

Trends in gang activity in Paramount have been positive, with a reduction in numbers of gangs and gang members. The more the City and nearby jurisdictions implement approaches that have been effective in other communities, the more success can be expected of the City's gang prevention efforts.

This report contains background material including information about the gang prevention and related gang deterrence activities of the City, findings from past studies of the GRIP program, evaluation questions used, and a description of the study methodology. This is followed by a description of GRIP program inputs, activities, outputs, intended outcomes, and assumed causal linkages among inputs, activities, and outcomes. The next section of the report describes program outcomes using four sources of information: (1) semi-structured interviews with small samples of community members, parents, school teachers and administrators; (2) law enforcement statistics; (3) semi-structured interviews with law enforcement personnel; and (4) a survey of 735 current ninth grade students in Paramount. The final section of the report offers several options for strengthening the GRIP program and related gang deterrence efforts in Paramount and nearby jurisdictions.

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the GRIP program. However, the evaluators were unable to quantify the contributions of the GRIP program to observed outcomes. This is due to the number of complementary programs addressing gang activity in the City of Paramount and the lack of consistent data on program activities and gang-related outcomes in California and throughout the country. The complementary programs designed to produce outcomes similar to GRIP program outcomes and lack of needed data made it impossible to determine which program contributed which part of the results. In addition, there are several external factors affecting program outcomes such as the transient nature of the population and the presence of gang members in surrounding cities. Finally, data available from law

enforcement agencies was inconsistent over time and between agencies – limiting the value of comparison across cities.

Evaluation Findings

Community members and parents of GRIP participants believe that there have been many favorable changes in the City of Paramount in regards to gangs, crime and graffiti. All respondents thought the GRIP program essential to gang prevention in the City, however they also cite additional efforts by the City as reasons for the reduction in gang activity and graffiti. Most parents whose children have participated in the GRIP program reported changes in their children's attitudes towards gangs and an increased awareness of the dangers of gang involvement. Unfortunately, low attendance at GRIP-sponsored parent meetings appears likely to be due to the parents' lack of time.

Interviews conducted with Paramount Unified School District teachers and administrators found that the program was spoken of positively by one hundred percent of the interviewees, and all mentioned that their students have a high enthusiasm for the GRIP program. Many cited vandalism and graffiti as continuing gang-related problems in the schools. There were four aspects of GRIP that were consistently mentioned as highlights of the program: 1) the involved staff; 2) information presented to students about the consequences of gang involvement; 3) referrals offered by the GRIP staff to teachers, students, and parents for additional assistance and resources; and 4) the young age at which GRIP starts its curriculum.

The following are major findings from the crime data and statistics:

- There has been a significant decrease in the activity of major gangs, gang members, and the ratio¹ of gang members to residents in Paramount since 1982.
- Paramount has a lower ratio of gang members to residents than Compton, Lynwood, and South Gate but a higher ratio than Bellflower and Long Beach. However, comparisons with Long Beach and South Gate should be made with caution because their criteria for defining gang members is different from those of cities that contract with Los Angeles County for law enforcement services.
- Overall Part I crime rates (gang-related and non-gang-related crimes) in Paramount show a steady decline starting in the early 1990s. Between 1981 and 2001, the Part I crime rate in Paramount followed roughly the same pattern as rates in neighboring cities. During these years, Paramount experienced a 48% decrease in Part I crimes. Decreases in surrounding cities ranged from 37% to 60%.
- Per capita gang-related crimes in Paramount from 1994 to 2002 show a fluctuating pattern. However, while the overall gang crime rate is 2 % higher in 2002 than in

¹ All ratios and per capita calculations were created using population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau and the California State Department of Finance. <http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/DEMOGRAP>

1994, gang-related Part I² crimes show a decrease of approximately 25% during this period.

- Gang-related homicides in Paramount have decreased against the increasing regional trend since 1998. Between 1995 and 2000, the three-year moving average for per-capita gang-related homicides decreased approximately 19% in Paramount and approximately 37% in Los Angeles County overall.
- Since 1997 Paramount has experienced a dramatic increase in the percentage of gang-related crimes linked to narcotics. In the 2003 survey discussed below, however, 28% of Paramount ninth graders disagreed with or were undecided about the statement that drugs were a big part of gang life.

Interviews with law enforcement revealed that law enforcement personnel believe that the gang/crime situation in Paramount has improved dramatically over the past ten years. Most deputies attribute the change in Paramount gang and crime activity to increased support and resources the city has given to law enforcement, which allows officers to be more proactive. Nearly all interviewees praised the City of Paramount for acknowledging its gang problem and being proactive in addressing it. Many respondents said that they had never seen another city make such extensive efforts in this area. Additionally, many deputies believe that there is a noticeable difference between Paramount and some of its neighboring communities, particularly Compton. Interviewees cite more graffiti, obvious gang members, and a more run-down look to other cities. Overall, law enforcement personnel believe that city programs such as GRIP and revitalization have contributed to reductions in crime rates and gang activity.

To compare gang participation rates and attitudes between GRIP participants and students who have not experienced GRIP, a survey was administered to 735 current ninth grade students in Paramount. Highlights of the survey follow.

- Students who experience GRIP are moderately less likely to report involvement in gang activity than students who have never participated in the program.
- Overall, GRIP students are moderately more likely to have negative perceptions of gangs and gang-related activities.
- The greatest difference between perceptions of GRIP participants and non-GRIP participants was on the relationship between gang involvement and drug and alcohol usage. 72% of GRIP participants agree that drugs and alcohol are a big part of gang life, versus 59% of non-GRIP participants who agree to this statement.

² The FBI Part I Crime Index includes: willful homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft and arson. According to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, a crime is classified as "gang-related" if the suspect or victim can be identified as a gang member, or if the crime seems to fit a pattern of gang-related crimes that have recently occurred in the area.

Options for Strengthening Gang Deterrence Efforts

The following options for consideration are based on the evaluation findings, findings from past studies, interviews conducted for this evaluation, and the ninth grade survey results.

- Option I: Reallocate Resources to Improve GRIP and Other Anti-Gang Efforts in Paramount

Option IA: Replace Current Ninth Grade Program with More Extensive Seventh Grade Program

Option IB: Develop Ongoing Monitoring System in Order to Monitor Progress toward Program Objectives

Option IC: Refocus Certain GRIP Program Lessons to Improve Outcomes

- Option II: Continue to Research Promising Approaches and Best Practices That May Be Part of Other Communities' Anti-Gang Efforts
- Option III: Increase Training of GRIP Staff Members
- Option IV: Increase Collaboration Among Anti-Gang Activities in Paramount
- Option V: Increase Collaboration with Neighboring Communities to Significantly Reduce Gang Activity

Option VA: Neighboring Communities Could Explore the Research on Promising Approaches and Best Practices

Option VB: The Gateway Cities Region and Other Southern California Regions Could Implement Comprehensive Approaches to Deter Gang Activity

Option VC: The Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, and Southern California School Districts Could Implement Comprehensive Approaches to Deter Gang Activity

II. Background

A. Context

In 1981 the City of Paramount was facing a severe gang problem. There were six rival gangs in the city. Approximately 1,500 residents were active gang members according to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Noting the growing concerns of city residents, city officials began researching anti-gang programs. The research included interviews with gang experts and government representatives. They concluded that given the low rates of success with gang intervention programs, the key to approaching the gang crisis in the city was to develop a program geared toward the prevention of gang involvement and gang activity.

City officials and representatives worked with the Paramount Unified School District Board to develop a plan of action, which resulted in a partnership in which the city created an anti-gang prevention program that would be presented in city schools.³

Complementary Programs

In addition to the GRIP program, there are programs and projects operating in the City of Paramount that directly and indirectly address the gang problem in the city. Although these are not the focus of this evaluation, it is useful to understand these programs, in order to contextualize the impact that the GRIP program has had in the City of Paramount. The programs that directly address the gang issue in the city are the TARGET⁴ program, the Probation officer and District Attorney that are specially assigned to the City of Paramount, and the Good Neighbor Program.

These programs seek to deal with gang activity by repressing and containing it. They target known gang members, and help educate property owners and managers about the dangers of not addressing gang activities at their properties. A more indirect project that may have an impact on gang activity is the Paramount Rehabilitation Project. This project seeks to improve the standard of living for the residents of Paramount, and in turn improve the economic stability of the city with the hope that the social ills associated with a decaying city are erased.

TARGET: Team Approach Regarding Gang Enforcement Techniques

In 1993 the City of Paramount and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department developed the Team Approach Regarding Gang Enforcement Techniques (TARGET) program in order to help track gang members who have the worst impact on the City of Paramount. The TARGET program focuses on developing an interagency response to activities of hardcore gang members. It is an information and case management program that includes all members of law enforcement; social services; city, school, probation, parole, and prosecution officials; and citizen participants. The goals of the program are to:

³ Information gathered from City of Paramount undated Press Releases.

⁴ Team Approach Regarding Gang Enforcement Techniques (TARGET)

- Reduce gang violence by using a pro-active team approach to deal with hardcore gang members and violence
- Formulate a system that will provide accurate, current information to the multi-agency task force and to create a comprehensive database to aid each agency or department
- Establish criteria for classifying TARGET gang members and related incidents

The tracking system includes case management support for probation, prosecution, and judicial disposition. Name, gang affiliation, association of graffiti, photos, tattoos, vehicles, school history, family history and addresses, crime history, and probation status are recorded to identify gang members. Currently there are an estimated 158 gang members on the waiting list for the TARGET program. The TARGET program deals with the “top 25” gang members, the ones who are considered the most violent.⁵ Beat deputies are to maintain a zero tolerance toward all gang members identified under the TARGET program.

Gang members listed under TARGET are notified under the California Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act. Once identified, the gang member’s profile is kept updated and reviewed by every beat deputy. When TARGET gang members deace, move out of the area, or are imprisoned, their profile is updated and their name is removed from the list. A new name is then added to the list and the information distributed. There is no existing tally of the total number of people that have been placed on the TARGET list since it first began.

The TARGET team is made up of the TARGET coordinator, beat deputies, and parole and probation officers. Part of the duties of the TARGET team members is to gather intelligence information and monitor what gangs are doing. This involves tracking gang crime and keeping statistics related to gang activity. The TARGET coordinators review and track all crime reports related to gang and tagging activity, as well as all crime reports involving TARGET gang members. Beat deputies are responsible for knowing TARGET members that live in their beat and contacting them at home on a regular basis. They are responsible for establishing and maintaining a working relationship with the family of the gang member. The beat special assignment officers are responsible for coordinating the operations directed at gang and tagging activities in their beat. Random home searches are also conducted once a month for approximately ten TARGET gang members to assure that they are adhering to probation and parole conditions, and that they are not involved in criminal activity.

The program is funded through the utility user tax, which was approved by voters in 1996. Each year the program costs approximately \$160,000.⁶ There are additional unknown indirect costs that are not calculated into the total program cost.

⁵ Source: Deputy Tom Dobis, Sheriffs Department

⁶ Source: Public Safety Department, City of Paramount.

Probation Officer

The City of Paramount has a full time probation officer who provides information on TARGET gang members, including: criminal history, probation violations, conduct while in custody, history of child abuse victimization, and family information. They remain employed by the County of Los Angeles, but are assigned to the City of Paramount and the City pays for this service. The probation officer assists in home searches of TARGET gang members, advises law enforcement on probation conditions for gang members, attends court hearings for gang members, and refers children to the GRIP program if they or their families ask for help. Apart from suppression tactics used on TARGET gang members, the probation officer talks to children about the juvenile system and the downfall of becoming involved in criminal and gang activities. Approximately half of the 25 people listed on the TARGET list are minors.

Some of the problems facing probation officers involve the justice system's lack of responsiveness to truancy problems of gang members. The importance of getting children to stay in school and off the streets, where they have the potential to get into trouble, is a difficult thing to convey to the courts. Most are given probation or light sentences, such as two days in jail. In addition, officers in other cities will stop and cite a gang member not knowing that the individual is on probation.

District Attorney

A special district attorney is assigned to track gang-related cases that come from the City of Paramount. This position was created in 1998. The district attorney assists in keeping criminals off the streets, and provides assistance to detectives and officers in the station. The district attorney's duties include prosecuting or monitoring cases of TARGET gang members, and participating in the landlord abatement program and Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) hearings.

The district attorney is responsible for safeguarding the community by asking the court judge to detain TARGET gang members prior to trial because of their potential danger to the community as indicated in their prior history. They are responsible for thoroughly familiarizing themselves with the TARGET gang member's profile and the gang member's case prior to trial in order to assure that the case is expedited through the judicial system. The district attorney also makes recommendations on conditions of probation and search and seizure.

The district attorney also participates in the city's landlord abatement program. When a property has been repeatedly involved in gang activity, the district attorney contacts the property owner and advises him or her that the property can be taken away due to the civil and criminal liabilities caused by the gang members at the location. This program is aimed at reducing the number of gang hangouts in the City.

A SARB panel meets weekly for hearings at the Bellflower Courthouse. The panel is made up of the district attorney, school district employees, assistant principals, probation officers, child and family therapists, and hearing officers from the district attorney's office. The children attending these hearings are picked up during truancy sweeps, or for

committing vandalism, or minor criminal activity. The district attorney participates because it's an opportunity to affect children before they start getting into further trouble with the law.

Good Neighbor Program

The Good Neighbor Program (GNP) was launched in 1999 as a proactive approach to gangs and criminal activity in the City of Paramount. Having observed that a large proportion of crimes occur in apartments and multi-unit dwellings, the Public Safety Department instituted the three-phase GNP as a means of preventing crime by ridding these places of criminal elements and attracting responsible, law-abiding citizens.⁷

The GNP goals are to educate landlords and property managers on how to effectively manage their properties and how to identify signs of criminal activity, in order to identify tenants who are placing them in jeopardy. They also teach landlords and property managers how to evict problem tenants. The program provides guidance and incentives to landlords and property managers through a three-phase program. The Public Safety Department also works together with the Apartment Association of Southern California Cities, the Sheriff's Department, the District Attorney's Office, the Housing Authority, and the Community Services and Recreation Department. Together they seek to educate property owners and managers and to empower them with the knowledge and skills needed to address criminal activity.

The GNP consists of three phases, each designed to address different levels of involvement needed to achieve the program's goals. Phase I of the GNP entails educating property owners and managers on issues such as the importance of tenant screening; recognizing and reporting gang activity; code enforcement; tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities; and nuisance abatement.

Code Enforcement and Sheriff's Department personnel conduct on-site inspections during Phase II of the program. Consent from the property owner is provided prior to the inspection and the resulting evaluation of the property is presented to the property owner and/or manager to educate them on how to improve their effectiveness.

The third phase of the GNP involves ongoing participation through the Apartment Watch Program. The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator is responsible for setting up meetings and keeps the landlords and property owners who have passed Phases I and II updated and involved in the GNP and the Apartment Watch Program. During the Spring 2002 and Fall 2002 seminars, the average attendance was approximately 27 people per meeting.

Handouts are provided at the first and second seminars during Phase I. The handouts include property management forms such as rental agreements and property management guides. Community Resource listings and financial assistance programs are also made

⁷ Paramount Agenda Report to the Public Safety Commission. Good Neighbor Program. November 26, 2002.

available to the property owners and landlords as a means of helping to facilitate their property management. The total cost of the GNP is approximately \$7,500 a year.⁸

Paramount Rehabilitation Project⁹

Between the 1950s and 1960s, Paramount became a suburban city from a once agricultural community. However, in the 1970s, as it developed into an industrial town, urban blight devastated the City of Paramount. The city council and several city administrators concluded that something had to be done in order to revitalize the city. The first steps toward revitalization took place in 1973 when the Redevelopment Agency was created in order to propose financing options for the revitalization of neglected sections of town like the downtown district. By the mid-1980s two new town centers had been redeveloped. Since then the revitalization has been a continuous process inviting many physical improvements through zoning ordinances, planning regulations, design guidelines, and redevelopment and economic incentives.

The revitalization project has involved commercial and residential rehabilitation as well as code enforcements and fun, aesthetically pleasing art projects across the city. Table I describes the public and private investments resulting from this program and Table II lists some specific rehabilitation projects.

Table I: Investment in Rehabilitation Projects

Landscaping	The total development cost for landscaping is about \$100,000.
Residential Rehabilitation	Since 1990, public investment towards residential rehabilitation has been \$2.7 million with \$900,000 in private investment. Since 1997, public investment in the white picket fences program has been \$453,000 with \$187,000 in private investment.

Source: “The Revitalization of Paramount: How One City Turned Itself Around,” City of Paramount, CA, 2002

⁸ Source: Public Safety Department, City of Paramount.

⁹ All information obtained for this section came from City of Paramount administration staff and “The Revitalization of Paramount: How One City Turned Itself Around,” City of Paramount, CA, 2002.

Table II: Rehabilitation Projects in the City of Paramount

Projects	Examples
Landscaping	<p>Approximately 10,000 public trees planted to hide unsightly properties and enhance the city’s public environment.</p> <p>Pocket parks are developed on private lands that are vacant and unattended. The city enters into a no-cost lease agreement and maintains the property as a park until the owner wishes to sell. Where the pocket parks are not appropriate, large cutouts of farm animals and white picket fences are placed creating a playful urban space.</p>
Design Guidelines	The City came up with design guidelines with the help of developers that include large setbacks, generous landscaping, public art displays and architectural flourishes.
Commercial Rehabilitation	The City pays seventy-five percent of the total costs of commercial site rehabilitation.
Code Enforcement	Code enforcement officers regularly ensure that the City’s municipal codes are upheld in order to maintain an inviting atmosphere, “which in turn draws new economic development and prosperity.”
Residential Rehabilitation	<p>Qualifying homeowners receive grants to make home improvements under the Residential Rehabilitation Program.</p> <p>Rebates are offered for roof replacements.</p> <p>The White Picket Fences program provides financial assistance for the purchasing and installation of white picket fences that replace chain link fences.</p>
Art Projects	Three Los Angeles River murals and nine fountains have been placed across town.

Source: “The Revitalization of Paramount: How One City Turned Itself Around,” City of Paramount, CA, 2002

Together all of these rehabilitation projects are intended to improve the standard of living for City of Paramount residents. The goal is not only to improve the social well being of the residents and business owners of the City of Paramount but also to stimulate the City’s economy. Physical redevelopment along with improved public safety is used as a means of combating blight and promoting a “state of excellence”.

B. Findings From Past Studies

The problem of gangs and gang violence is one that reaches across all neighborhoods, socioeconomic levels, regions, races, and ethnicities. Since the 1970's, gangs and gang membership have increased almost seven times, while the number of *youth* gang members has increased over 10 times.¹⁰ The National Youth Gang Center's annual survey has reported over 750,000 gang members in the United States every year from 1996 to 2000. While there was an overall five percent decrease in the number of gangs in the United States from 1999 to 2000, cities with a population over 25,000 experienced a one percent increase of gangs during this same time, reporting an estimate of 12,850 gangs in these cities.¹¹

Studies show that gangs were first reported on the west coast (1986) and in larger cities (1989) as opposed to smaller cities, suburban, or rural areas.¹² This makes Los Angeles a key area for high gang involvement.

In a 2000 report on youth gangs, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) uses the following definition of youth gangs: "A self-formed association of peers, with identifiable leadership and internal organization, who act collectively or as individuals to achieve specific purposes, including the conduct of illegal activity and control of a particular territory, facility, or enterprise."¹³ Garry and Denise Gottfredson utilize a similar definition but include that gangs are "recognized as a gang by its members and by others."¹⁴

Commonly Used Gang Deterrence Strategies

While the problem of gangs is a national phenomenon, like many other social issues, it is near impossible to formulate a nation-wide policy that works for every community. Gang culture and crime vary from neighborhood to neighborhood. While there are overarching trends in gang activity, there is no one known variable linked to the stimulation of gang involvement. Therefore, cities and states develop varying programs and strategies in attempts to solve the gang problem in their area. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has defined seven major categories for the types of programs and strategies that have been developed over the years to counteract the spread of gangs and

¹⁰ Moore, J.P., and Terrett, C. 1998. *Highlights of the 1996 National Youth Gang Survey*. Fact Sheet #86. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

¹¹ Egley, Jr. A. (2002, Feb). National youth gang survey trends from 1996 to 2000. *OJJDP Fact Sheet*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

¹² National Youth Gang Center. 1999. *1996 National Youth Gang Summary*. Summary. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

¹³ Miller, W.B. In press. *The Growth of Youth Gang Problems in the United States*. Sited in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Summary, August 2002. Retrieved on February 3, 2003 from http://www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/summary_2000_8/

¹⁴ Gottfredson, G. D. and Gottfredson, D. C. (1999). Survey of school-based gang prevention and intervention programs: Preliminary findings. Ellicott City, MD: Gottfredson Associates, Inc..

gang violence: prevention programs, suppression programs, intervention programs, strategies using multiple techniques, multi-agency initiatives, comprehensive approaches, and legislation.¹⁵

Prevention

Prevention programs are those that try to avert young adolescents from joining gangs, and also attempt to obstruct the establishment of gangs. Prevention programs include early childhood, school-based, and after-school projects. Preventive programs are both direct and indirect in nature. For example, Paramount's school-based GRIP program is a direct prevention tool in that it makes a direct attempt to change children's attitudes towards gangs and the culture of gang acceptance in the city. It also offers alternatives to gang involvement such as recreational activities and fieldtrips. It has been argued that children who have access to local recreation centers, community service organizations and other such groups, will be less likely to seek membership and belonging in a street gang. It is this theory that drives preventive methods. Examples of an indirect preventive approach are programs that provide social, economic, housing, and education services to mothers in disadvantaged communities. Other examples of indirect approaches are enterprise zones and redevelopment areas. These programs attempt to improve the quality of life in economically deprived neighborhoods.

Suppression

Suppressive measures are those that include stiff prosecution, and strong police responses, as well as systems that track targeted gang members and mapping systems that flag "heavy" gang areas. The City of Paramount, through the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, currently has the TARGET program, which is a suppressive program that "targets" the top 25 gang affiliates in the city. While suppressive programs have been shown to be successful, studies show that cities that use suppressive methods alone do not see significant decreases in youth and adult gang activity.¹⁶

Intervention

Intervention, which is inclusive of programs that work to create non-violent localities, truces between rival gangs and gang summits, gang rehabilitation programs, and juvenile detention and correctional facilities, have become the dominant strategy in the United States--as opposed to prevention--since the 1940's.¹⁷ Successful implementation of an intervention program has been done in East Los Angeles by a partnership between Homeboy Industries and Jobs for a Future. Both organizations work together to provide services, such as tattoo removal and alternative education, and jobs as an alternative to gang membership.¹⁸ The main distinction between intervention and prevention is that intervention strategies target existing gang members, while prevention targets youth *before* they join a gang.

¹⁵ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Summary, August 2002. Retrieved on February 3, 2003 from http://www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/summary_2000_8/

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Gaouette, N. (1997). Hope rises at Homeboy Bakeries in L.A. *Christian Science Monitor*, 15(1)

Multiple Technique Strategy

Multiple technique strategy refers to the integration of two or more different types of strategies. For example, community policing, which has been shown to be successful in the area of youth gang involvement, combines community involvement (intervention) with police practices (suppression).¹⁹ Other multiple technique strategies have involved partnerships between government agencies, universities, volunteer organizations, churches, media, and private companies.

Multi-Agency Initiatives

Multiple-agency initiatives assemble various agencies for one cause. Most common alliances are between federal, state, and local law enforcement, and between law enforcement and the judicial system.²⁰ Suppression techniques are used most often, the distinction is that efforts are coordinated between different levels of government and or between two branches of government such as law enforcement and the judiciary.

Comprehensive Approach

Comprehensive approaches involve strategies that use prevention, intervention, as well as suppression methods and are community-based. This approach has gained recent popularity in the United States.²¹

Legislative Methods

The OJJDP also discusses legislative methods used at the local, state, and federal levels to directly and indirectly get at the gang problem. Examples of legislation that aim to abate gang activity are state and federal penalty enhancement provisions. Although most legislation is suppressive in its measures, the OJJDP reports that there has been an increase in prevention legislation and comprehensive legislation.

One example is the California Street Terrorism, Enforcement, and Prevention (STEP) Act of 1988 (California Penal Code § 186.22). A unique notification process is used to inform persons that they can be prosecuted under STEP. Police and/or prosecutors gather evidence that a targeted gang fits the STEP Act's definition. This information is presented to the court, resulting in a judicial order. Gang members are then notified in writing that they are known members of such a group. Following such notice, the Act can then be applied to these members, enhancing penalties for subsequent offenses because of the commission of crimes while involved in a gang. Some law enforcement sources indicate that these provisions may be partly responsible for the recent trend of gang members concealing their membership status, thus making it more difficult to identify or "certify" their status for purposes of these provisions.²²

¹⁹ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Summary, August 2002. Retrieved on February 3, 2003 from http://www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/summary_2000_8/

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

School-Based Gang Prevention Programs

No longer safe havens, school campuses have increasingly become the location of choice for youth and gang violence. Many schools and school districts have gone beyond relying on the police for gang intervention, and have taken preventive measures, hoping to take back their campuses. While school-based gang prevention programs tend to vary in nature, most are built on the assumption that gang acceptance and involvement are learned behaviors, and thus can be prevented if countered in a real way.²³ A national survey conducted by the General Accounting Office (1995) on promising violence prevention programs, categorized three major forms of school-based gang prevention:

Educational and Curricula-based

Such programs include a curriculum in the classroom that focuses on issues such as conflict resolution, social skills, mentoring, law enforcement, and gang aversion.

Environmental Modification

These programs address the social and/or physical settings of students in an effort to keep students safe on campus and out of the streets when not on campus. Environmental modification can include anything from extra-curricular recreational and academic activities to extra school security guards and metal detectors.

School Organization and Management

These programs utilize school policies and procedures to prevent gang violence. Approaches can be very specific in nature, such as having a zero-tolerance policy for weapons on campus, to very dynamic in nature, such as creating alternative schools in conjunction with outside agencies and community organizations.

Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program

One of the longest running and widely used school-based gang prevention programs running is the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program. Established in 1983, DARE is now operating in over eighty percent of school districts in the United States.²⁴ The mission of the DARE program is to prevent experimentation with drugs and alcohol and to prevent youth violence. The DARE program curriculum is typically taught in fifth and sixth grade classrooms by a specially trained uniformed police officer once a week for seventeen weeks. However, there are also elementary and high school level curricula.²⁵ In fiscal year 2002 the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance allocated \$2 million to the DARE program for regional police officer training centers.²⁶

²³ General Accounting Office (1995). School Safety: promising initiatives for addressing school violence.

²⁴ General Accounting Office (2003). Youth illicit drug use prevention: DARE long-term evaluations and federal efforts to identify effective programs. GAO-03-172R.

²⁵ Information gathered from the DARE program website, www.DARE.com.

²⁶ General Accounting Office (2003). Youth illicit drug use prevention: DARE long-term evaluations and federal efforts to identify effective programs. GAO-03-172R.

In 2003 the United States General Accounting Office (GAO) published a review of six long-term evaluations of the DARE program's elementary school curriculum. It was concluded by this report that there was no statistically significant differences in illicit drug use amongst the students who received the DARE program curriculum and those who did not.²⁷

Characteristics of Potentially Successful Programs

Several national studies assert that very little impact evaluation has been done on gang intervention and prevention programs, whereas there is a strong need for empirical evaluations to show actual effectiveness of prevention programs (General Accounting Office 1995; The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2003). However, there are several characteristics that are consistently mentioned in the studies that are considered vital to having a potentially successful gang prevention strategy:²⁸

- A comprehensive approach: Provides multiple links between school and opportunities in the community.
- An early start and long-term commitment: Early start involves engaging children at a young age to positively influence the development of their behavior and attitudes, while long-term commitment involves taking steps to sustain this influence over a period of years (ultimately into their adult life).
- Strong leadership and disciplinary policies: Schools should consistently provide adequate funding, facilities and staff time to the program, including collaboration with others. Also, policies and procedures should be clear and consistently applied.
- Staff development: Involved staff and school personnel should receive the appropriate training to not only implement the program and its strategies in the classroom, but also to handle disruptive students and mediate conflict.
- Parental involvement: The program should promote parental involvement to prevent school violence by offering opportunities for parent participation, training on violence prevention, and home visits.
- Interagency partnerships and community linkages: Collaborations should be made between the school and outside community organizations in the public and private sectors in order to address the multiple components of youth violence and its causes.
- A culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate approach: When developing programs, materials should be age appropriate and applicable to various cultures and ethnicities (e.g. bilingual materials). Such factors should also be taken into consideration when hiring and training program staff and volunteers.

Previous Evaluations of Gang Prevention Programs in the City of Paramount

The City of Paramount has periodically evaluated its gang prevention efforts.

²⁷ General Accounting Office (2003). Youth illicit drug use prevention: DARE long-term evaluations and federal efforts to identify effective programs. GAO-03-172R.

²⁸ General Accounting Office (1995). School Safety: promising initiatives for addressing school violence.

1982-1983

In 1983 a pilot study was conducted of the Alternatives to Gang Membership (ATGM) Program, with the assistance of statistics lecturer George Marcoulides, at California State University, Dominguez Hills. The ATGM program was initiated at Mark Keppel Elementary School in 1982, and was expanded in 1983 to include Los Cerritos and Roosevelt Elementary Schools. It was a requirement for all fifth graders. For the pilot study of the new program, the evaluators used a pretest-posttest nonequivalent comparison design on the latter two elementary schools and a posttest only comparison group design on the students at Mark Keppel Elementary.

Results showed that participation in the program significantly changed the participants' ideas about gangs and the effect on themselves and their community, as compared to their counterparts in a control group. The evaluation was a pilot study conducted only within the first two years of the program's inception, testing only the immediate results.

1984-1987

In 1984, Alternatives to Gang Membership staff used a posttest design for a survey of 170 of the first group of fifth grade participants to test the longevity of the program. When asked if the program helped them stay out of gangs, over ninety percent of the students responded positively. Similar results were found in 1986-87 when ninth graders from the first fifth grade program were surveyed.

1993

In the spring semester of 1993, program officials again attempted to test the longevity of Alternatives to Gang Membership's impact. Again, a posttest design was used. A sample of 3,612 participants names were compared to a list of identified gang members maintained by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. From this list, four percent (152 participants) of the sample were identified on the list of gang members, leaving 96 percent not on the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department list.

Limitations of Past Evaluations

The evaluations of Paramount's Alternatives to Gang Membership program have limitations due to the short span of the program at the time of study. There are no conclusive longitudinal studies to show the impact of the program's influence on behavioral change. Because follow-up studies of the initial evaluation did not have a control group to serve as a comparison, it is difficult to show the degree to which the GRIP program prevented participants from joining gangs. Paramount Unified School District's high transiency rate²⁹ may have an adverse affect on the program's efforts to change the culture of gang acceptance on school grounds. Considering other programs and events that occurred simultaneously with the GRIP program, showing impact, or gang activity in Paramount without the program, is difficult.

²⁹ The transiency rate measures the rate of turnover in a population.

The General Accounting Office suggests that more long-term in-depth evaluation is needed among youth gang prevention programs. While a great deal of public funds are dedicated to curbing the growing problem of youth violence and gang involvement, most of the funds are used for implementation and not evaluation. This is largely due to political pressure and administrative constraints, including lack of skilled staff and additional funding for evaluation, being that funds for this type of evaluation mostly come from private grants.³⁰

³⁰General Accounting Office (1995). School safety: promising initiatives for addressing school violence.

C. Evaluation Questions

Questions for Community Members without Children in the GRIP program

Paramount (business owner, homeowner, resident, community leader). Date. Time.

- How long have you been a member of the Paramount community?
- What was the gang activity like (ten; when you first moved in) years ago?
- What is the gang activity like now?
- Have you seen any changes in the attitudes, attire, or activities of youth in the last ten years?
- What problems or obstacles do you see in regards to gang problems that could be solved?
- How confident are you that you can detect a gang member or gang activities?
- What do you see as the main gang activity?
- Do you think children moving in are more likely to be involved in gang activity than those raised in Paramount and going to Paramount schools?
- Do people in the community get involved in helping get rid of gangs? Why don't people get involved?
- Do you know about the GRIP program?

Questions for Parents of GRIP Participants

Date. Time. Spanish translation in *italics*.

- How long have you been a member of the Paramount community?
Cuanto tiempo ha vivido en Paramount?
- How many of your children participated in GRIP?
Cuanto hijos participaron en el programa GRIP?
- Do you remember what grades they were in when they participated in GRIP?
Se acuerda de los grados en los que participaron en el programa GRIP?
- How did you find out about the GRIP program?
Como supo del programa GRIP?
- Did your children ever come home and talk to you about what they learned during the GRIP presentations? If so, what did they say they learned?
Alguna vez sus hijos llegaban a casa y hablaban sobre lo que aprendieron en las presentaciones de GRIP? Que aprendian?
- Did your children ever come home and give you handouts that were given to them during the GRIP presentations?
Alguna vez sus hijos llegaban y le daban folletos que les daban a ellos el las presentaciones de GRIP?
- Have your children ever had problems with gangs, gang members, or gang involvement?
Alguna vez sus hijos tuvieron problemas con pandillas, o pandilleros?

- Did you ever notice a change in their behavior or attitudes or clothing after going through the GRIP program (specifically towards gangs)?
Noto usted un cambio en la actitud de su hijo sobre las pandillas o en el vestuario de su hijo despues de que termino el programa GRIP?
- Did you participate in the GRIP parent meetings? Why, why not?
Participaba usted en las juntas de padres que presentaban los del programa GRIP? Porque si o no?
- Did you learn anything from the GRIP parent meetings? If so what?
Apredio usted algo en las juntas de padres de GRIP? Que aprendio?
- What was the gang activity like (ten; when you first moved in) years ago?
Como eran las actividades de pandelleros hace diez anos?
- What is the gang activity like now?
Como son las actividades de las pandillas ahora?
- Have you seen any changes in your neighborhood over the years in regards to gangs?
Ha notado cambios en la vecindad sobre los anos sobre las pandillas?
- Have you seen any changes in the attitudes, attire, or activities of youth in the last ten years?
Ha observado usted algunos cambios en actitudes, modo de vestir or vestuario en los jovenes de la ciudad en los ultimos X anos?
- What problems or obstacles do you see in regards to gang problems that could be solved?
Que problemas o obstaculos sobre las pandillas piensa usted que se pueden resolver?
- How confident are you that you can detect a gang member or gang activities?
Esta confiado que puede detectar a un pandillero o una actividad padillera?
- What do you see is the main gang activity?
Cual actividad es la mayor actividad de padilleros ahora?
- Do you think children moving in are more likely to be involved in gang activity?
Piensa que los jovenes que se mudan recientemente a la ciudad son mas propuestos ha ser involucrados en actividades pandilleras?
- Do you think the community is involved in stopping gang activity? Why, or why not?
Piensa que gente en la comunidad estan ayudando ha parar las pandillas? Por que no se involucran los residents en parar las pandillas?
- What are your opinions on the GRIP program?
Cuales son sus opinions sobre el programa GRIP?

Questions for School Teachers and Administrators

- How long have you worked with the Paramount Unified School District, and has it always been in your current capacity?
- Have you worked for any other school districts? If so could you comment on the major differences in terms of student gang activity?
- Do you currently live in Paramount?
If yes:

- How long?
- Have you noticed any changes in the community in terms of gang activity?

If no:

- Why have you chosen not to live in Paramount?
- Have you seen any changes in youth gang activity since you have been teaching here? If so, in your opinion, what is the major cause of these changes?
- What do you see as the main gang activity in Paramount?
- What is your opinion of the GRIP program?
- Do you notice a change in your students' attitudes about gangs after going through the GRIP program?
- Do you think the GRIP program is an effective way of preventing gang involvement?
- What is the general student response to GRIP curricula, do they seem engaged during the presentations?
- In terms of behavior and attitudes about gang involvement, do you see a difference in the students who went through the GRIP program and those who haven't (i.e. students who transferred from another school district and would not have been exposed to GRIP)?
- In your opinion, has there been an increase in gang activity in Paramount?
- What recommendations would you make to prevent gang involvement, if any?

Questions for Law Enforcement Interviews

Below is a list of questions that were used as a general guide for interviews. Questions were sometimes tailored to the individual's specific job duties, and individual answers often led to other questions.

- What are your job duties? How long have you been in this position? (Or in a position to observe changes in the Paramount gang situation.)
- What has your experience with the Paramount programs been and what results have you seen?
- What percent of children in town used to be involved w/ gangs (10 years ago), what percent now?
- Do you notice a difference between the children who have moved here recently versus those who have lived here a long time?
- What does GRIP staff do? (activities, services)
- What does TARGET do?
- What does revitalization do?
- How does each program impact gang activity?
- Why do you think these programs do or don't work?
- What problems or weaknesses do you think the efforts have?
- What do you see as main gang activities (leads to narcotics/turf war issue)?
- What's the difference between working in Paramount and working in surrounding communities?

- When do you think the changes in Paramount began to happen?
- How does gang activity change the duties, requirements of officers in the neighborhoods?
- Are there any programs similar to GRIP in surrounding communities?
- What are surrounding cities (Compton, South Gate, Bellflower, N. Long Beach, Downey, Lynnwood) doing to combat gang issues?
- Are there any cities that were comparable to Paramount in the early 80's that did not engage problems and so provide example of how Paramount would have looked today without GRIP, TARGET, etc?
- Do you know of any gang intervention/outreach organization(s) in the area we might be able to interview?

D. Methodology

Interviews with Community Members without Children in the GRIP Program

Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with Paramount community members such as residents, business owners, homeowners, and community leaders. The purpose of the interviews was to get community members' thoughts on gang-related activity in the City. The responses are not intended to be representative of the entire community. They will merely serve as insights into the experiences of a few people in the community with gangs. The interviews took place over the phone or in person and the respondent's anonymity is respected unless the respondent specified that it was okay to use his/her identity.

The respondents were either referred to the researchers by city administration, selected from a comprehensive list of community-based organizations, or were referred to the researchers by other respondents (snowball sampling method). A list of open-ended questions was developed by the researchers prior to the interviews; additional questions were added during the interview as needed. The interviews generally took place during the evening hours when interviewees are available.

The respondents have been part of the Paramount community for anywhere from 8 to 50 years and although these respondents had no children who had attended a Paramount school, all had heard of the GRIP program.

Interviews with Parents of GRIP Participants

Five semi-structured interviews were conducted with the parents of children that have participated in the GRIP program. The purpose of the interviews was to discover the parents' thoughts on the GRIP program and gang-related activity in the City of Paramount. The responses are not intended to be representative of the entire community or of all parents whose children have participated in GRIP. They will merely serve as insights into the experiences of a few people in the community with GRIP and gangs. All interviews took place over the phone and the respondent's anonymity is respected unless the respondent specified that it was okay to use his/her identity.

The respondents were all chosen from a list provided by the GRIP program staff. The list represented parents whose children had participated in the program when it was first implemented, parents whose children are currently participating in the program, and parents whose children had participated during the intervening years. A list of open-ended questions was developed by the researchers prior to the interviews; additional questions were added during the interview as needed.

Interviews with School Teachers and Administrators

To find out more about the GRIP program, interviews were conducted with teachers and administrators within the Paramount Unified School District who had experienced the GRIP program in some capacity. Names of potential interviewees were referred to the evaluation team by Tony Ostos, Neighborhood Counseling Manager/GRIP Program Manager. A request to participate in an interview about the GRIP program was sent out to these potential interviewees by Superintendent Jay Wilbur of the Paramount Unified School District. Of the 24 names that were provided by Ostos, ten responded to the request given by the superintendent.

Law Enforcement Data and Perspectives

Information was collected between January 28 and April 25, 2003 on law enforcement statistics and on the perspective of law enforcement personnel on the GRIP Program and gang activity in the City of Paramount. The material is organized into two sections, a quantitative section and a qualitative section.

Quantitative Data

The quantitative data was collected from various sources. This data was collected to provide information on crime statistics and patterns in general as well as directly related to gangs in the City of Paramount and its neighboring cities. The analysis of the data provides comparisons that may be used to offer insights on crime in Paramount relative to its neighbors. The data is discussed and presented in the form of graphs and tables. All ratios and per capita calculations were created using population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau and the California State Department of Finance. <http://www.dof.ca.gov/>.

One of the limitations of gathering and analyzing the data is that not all the neighboring cities of Paramount have law enforcement agencies that collect crime statistics and data in a similar manner as the Sheriff's Department, which works for the City of Paramount. The sources used to gather and analyze the data were the following:

- Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
- Paramount Public Safety Department
- U.S. Census Bureau
- California State Department of Finance
- Downey Police Department

- Long Beach Police Department
- South Gate Police Department
- California State Department of Justice

Qualitative Data

Semi-structured interviews of law enforcement personnel were conducted using a “snowball” sampling method. In a semi-structured interview the interviewer comes prepared with a list of open-ended questions for the respondent. The respondent answers in his or her own words, and these answers may lead to more questions.

The snowball sampling method involves an initial list of potential interviewees, who then connect the investigator to additional knowledgeable people to interview. In this case, we started with referrals from Paramount’s Public Safety Department, and those individuals referred us to additional sources. Interviews were conducted with personnel and law enforcement officers from the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Safe Streets Bureau, Paramount Police Substation, and former Paramount Deputies.

Ninth Grade Survey

A survey was administered in March 2003 to 735 students attending ninth grade in Paramount to compare gang participation rates and attitudes of students who had previously attended GRIP classes in the fifth and/or second grade and those who hadn’t. The survey was prepared by the evaluation research team and reviewed by GRIP staff members. The GRIP teachers distributed the survey to students prior to the start of the ninth grade GRIP lessons.

The survey was anonymous and asked in which grades, if any, students had participated in the GRIP program. Students were asked about their participation in gang activity and asked to read a series of statements pertaining to gangs and then respond with whether they agreed, disagreed, or were undecided about each one.

These survey results have the same limitations as all self-reported data. Namely, some respondents may not have answered questions truthfully. However, overall we consider the survey to be a good indicator of student gang activity and attitudes.

III. The Gang Resistance Is Paramount (GRIP) Program

This section identifies GRIP goals and objectives and describes intended program inputs, intended program activities and outputs (services), intended program outcomes (results), and assumed causal linkages among inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes.

A. Program Goals and Objectives

In 1982, the Gang Resistance Is Paramount (GRIP) program was launched by the City of Paramount as the Alternatives to Gang Membership Program, designed as a school-based gang prevention program to reduce gang activity in the City. Although the program has seen many changes throughout the years, the goals and objectives remain the same. The goal of the program is to significantly reduce the gang activity of City youth, reflecting a compromise with the transient³¹ nature of the resident population and the reality that some youth have joined gangs before moving into the City.

The objectives are to:

- Educate students about the dangers of gangs
- Discourage the City’s youth from joining gangs
- Educate the student’s parents about the signs of gang involvement
- Provide parents with resources that would help eliminate gang activities in their homes and neighborhoods

B. Program Inputs

Staff

The GRIP program staff consists of a program manager and five instructors—four full-time and one part-time. The program is administered and supervised by the Recreation Department. All staff members are equipped with a GRIP curriculum manual, instructional videos, program instruction slides, student workbooks, program posters, program coloring books, and handouts for parent meetings and recreational activities.

Staff training

The GRIP staff receives what they refer to as “internal training.” The staff is provided with and briefed on the curriculum prior to entering the classroom and is then immersed in the program. All hired staff are expected to possess certain qualities and knowledge that will allow them to perform the duties required of a GRIP counselor. GRIP staff must:

- Demonstrate the ability to communicate with youth
- Have a working knowledge of the Spanish language
- Have a four year Bachelor of Arts degree to be a full-time staff member and two years of college to be a part-time intern

³¹ Not permanently settled in place; staying in place for only a short period of time

- Possess considerable knowledge of gang-related activities without having been personally involved in gangs

Additionally, GRIP staff members continuously attend conferences and seminars in and around Los Angeles County in order to continue to be educated about gangs, gang activity, and the latest educational resources.

Longevity of Staff

The GRIP program staff has grown from one to six members. Most of the staff members who have been hired have remained with the program. In the twenty years since its inception, there have only been two or three staff members who have moved on. The staff expresses a great desire to stay with the program because they all have a strong commitment to the program's goals and objectives. They maintain that there is a need for educating youth on gangs and the effect of gang activity on the community.

Hiring staff from Paramount is important to keep the program connected to the community. Most staff members have lived in Paramount or currently live in Paramount. This allows them to relate to the students in the GRIP program more directly. Additionally, it is the belief of the staff that maintaining a stable staff helps the community to maintain a relationship with the City. If there is a high turnover rate in the staff, community members may become confused over whom to turn to, and may be reluctant to communicate their problems to city administrators.

School-Based Curriculum

The gang-resistance curriculum currently consists of 26 to 29 lessons. The number of lessons varies due to time constraints because of the "track" school calendar and mandatory testing days in which GRIP staff is not allowed to go in and teach the curriculum. Rather than eliminate lessons, they are condensed and combined to cover the most important material. In some instances if a school is already covering a topic during the regular school curriculum, the corresponding lesson will be eliminated from the GRIP curriculum. In dealing with the school system the GRIP staff must remain flexible and open to last minute changes if necessary.

The second grade lessons cover topics such as: gangs and territory, gangs and vandalism, peer pressure, drugs, alcohol, gangs and family, self-esteem, crime, alternatives, and outlining the activities that smart children don't do. The lessons discourage joining gangs through video presentations, coloring exercises, songs, poster presentations, and discussion of alternatives such as recreation activities offered in the City.

The fifth grade lessons cover and review topics describing various often dangerous gang activities and then move on to discuss future opportunities and alternatives to gang membership. Topics include graffiti, changes in gangs, violence, gangs and territory, impact on the family, peer pressure, gang tattoos, drugs, gangs and crime, gangs and the police, the meaning of belonging to a gang,. The lessons discourage students from joining gangs through promoting participation in recreational and/or school activities, video presentations, current event discussions, and open dialogue between students.

The ninth grade lessons cover and review topics such as drugs and alcohol, high school dropout, and teen pregnancy. The ninth grade lessons attempt to reinforce and expand on the values and ideas that the children learned during their elementary school lessons. In addition, the topics include discussions on self-esteem, the consequences of a criminal lifestyle, higher education, and career opportunities.

Parent Education

Parents are invited to attend parent meetings hosted by the GRIP program. The purpose of the meetings is to give parents general information about gangs and tools to help keep their children out of gangs. Parents with students participating in the GRIP program are notified that their child will be participating in the GRIP program prior to the lessons' beginning. During the course of the school year parents are notified of parent meetings. The meetings are held at the school, a private home in the community, a community center, or any other available setting in the community.

During a parent meeting, parents are introduced to the program and the problem with gangs in the City of Paramount. Numerous handouts are distributed with key information on the various programs that the city offers and the activities that are available for their children through the Recreation Department. All materials are in English and Spanish. The meetings are often bilingual. During the meetings, GRIP staff members help parents identify gang interest through gang signs and forms of dress. They help parents stay current with any new gangs in the area and inform them about "taggers" and "crew members" which are often not recognized as gangs by the community, but are still involved in gang-related activities.

The GRIP program works under the basic assumption that they will only get one opportunity to reach parents because of the parents' busy schedules. That is why they give the parents as much information as possible during that one meeting.

Counseling of Parents and Youth Regarding Gang Activity

GRIP staff members receive counseling referrals from the school district for children who are showing signs of gang involvement. Children are required to attend the counseling meetings with their parents. During the counseling session GRIP staff advises parents on ways to become actively involved in their child's life. The GRIP staff talks to the children about their options if they do not abandon gang affiliation. In the counseling sessions, parents and children are occasionally told about the recreational activities available through the city as well. Finally, the GRIP staff offers referrals to counseling, resources offered through the school system, and parenting classes for the parents.

Recreational Activities Offered

During fifth grade and ninth grade lessons the students get information about activities offered through the Recreation Department and YMCA. The activities offered vary depending on the season and are changed periodically to keep pace with current interests. In addition to informing students about different activities available, GRIP staff hand out certificates for treats such as ice cream or for major activities that are currently offered

through the Recreation Department. The activities offered are targeted to fifth and ninth graders because they are more likely to fill their time with gang-related activities.

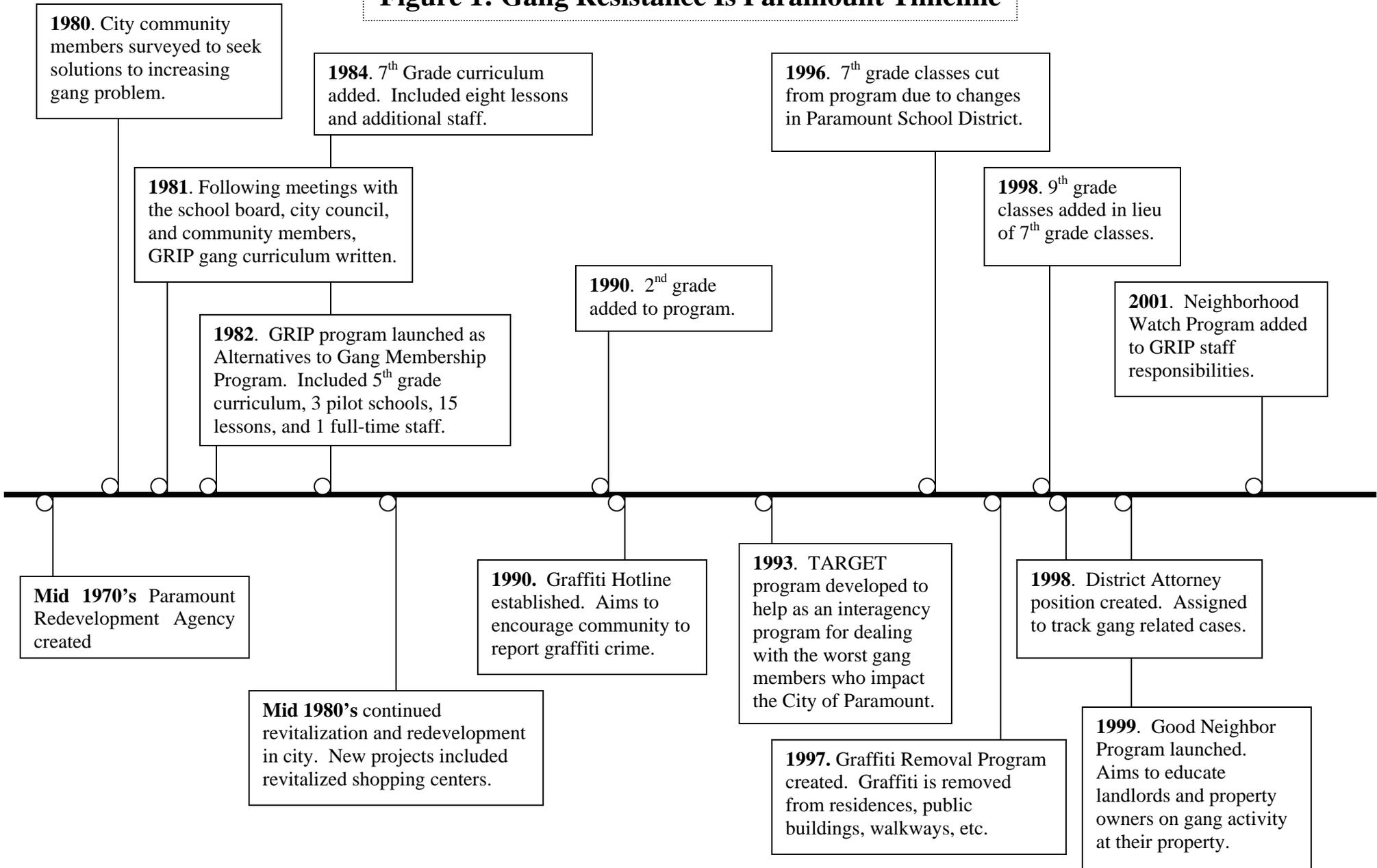
Program Changes

When the GRIP program was first developed it was implemented as a pilot in three schools in the City of Paramount. The schools were located in areas that were considered to have the most prevalent gang activity. The program was taught in the fifth grade and consisted of fifteen lessons. The only staff member at the time was Tony Ostos, who is the current program manager.

In 1984 additional staff members were added to accommodate the addition of more schools into the program. One year later in 1985, lessons were added in the seventh grade in order to provide a follow-up of the material taught in the fifth grade and to reinforce the message of the program. In 1990, the second grade was added to the program because GRIP program managers and city administrators decided that it was crucial to reach children at an even younger age.

In 1996, the Paramount School District eliminated the city's two middle schools, making it difficult to reach all of the seventh graders. A ninth grade campus replaced the middle schools. In 1998, the GRIP program staff adjusted to the change in the school system and decided that the GRIP program would be taught to the ninth graders in lieu of seventh graders, because they would be able to reach all of them. In 2001, the Neighborhood Watch program was handed over to the GRIP program staff in order to allow program staff to reach parents and community members more easily.

Figure 1: Gang Resistance Is Paramount Timeline



C. Program Activities and Outputs

School-Based Curriculum

Lessons are given to second and fifth graders at all eleven elementary schools in the city, and to ninth graders at the Paramount High School West Campus which only serves ninth graders. Ideally, students move through the entire curriculum; however, Paramount is a highly transient community, meaning that many families move in and out of the city. As a result, many students are introduced to the program for the first time in the ninth grade. In addition, a number of students attend elementary schools that are part of the Paramount Unified School District, but are outside of the city and therefore, are not exposed to the GRIP curriculum.

The following table lists the number of lessons, the length of the lesson and the average number of students per classroom. As mentioned earlier, the number of lessons varies due to time constraints because of the “track” school calendar and mandatory testing days.

Table III: GRIP Program Lessons

Grade	Number of Lessons	Length of Presentation	Number of Students in Class (average)
Second	8-10	40 minutes	20
Fifth	15	55 minutes	36
Ninth	3-4	1 hour, 6 minutes	30-50

Source: Interview meeting conducted with GRIP staff on January 29, 2003.

Second Grade

A typical lesson consists of an initial general introduction of the program or a quick review of the previous lesson, followed by a fifteen-minute video. A worksheet for the day’s lesson is handed out and given as homework. Following the end of each lesson the GRIP song is played. Finally, once all the lessons are completed coloring books are handed out, participation awards are distributed and McGruff, the Crime Dog, visits the students. The total length of the presentation is forty minutes.

Fifth Grade

A typical lesson consists of a five-minute review of previous lessons. The review is sometimes replaced by discussing a newspaper article related to children and gangs. The review is followed by an introduction of the day’s lesson, discussion questions, poster discussion, a video presentation, and a wrap-up that involves fielding questions or working on a “report book.” Sometimes the students are given pencils and drug related information books. The total length of the presentation is fifty-five minutes.

Ninth Grade

A typical lesson consists of a forty-five minute presentation and discussion of the day's topic. A video is viewed following the presentation. No handouts are given. The entire presentation is one hour and six minutes.

Parent Education

Parent meetings and gang-prevention workshops have been held at each school in the district, as well as local churches, community centers, the local library, trailer-park social halls, and private homes. The meetings are conducted in English and Spanish, and parents are encouraged to be proactive in the prevention of gang activity in their neighborhoods and the intervention of gang involvement in their homes. They are given tools such as graffiti hotline numbers, tattoo removal programs, and fact sheets identifying characteristics of gang involvement. The parent meetings serve as an avenue for obtaining information from parents about the things that are going on in their neighborhoods and to let parents know what is going on in their community. The GRIP staff encourages parents to call and report any gang activity in their neighborhoods. They encourage any information that would help improve the quality of life of community members and then help channel that information to the Public Safety Department.

Given the number of students who participate in the GRIP program, the number of parents attending the parent meetings should be higher. However, parent turnout at the meetings varies widely and depends on factors such as the location and time of the meeting. Many parents cannot attend the meetings because of scheduling conflicts with their jobs or because of a lack of transportation. Incentives such as holiday turkeys, student test scores, or raffles have been offered to parents who attend a meeting.

Counseling of Parents and Youth Regarding Gang Activity

The GRIP staff provides counseling to parents in the City regarding their child's gang-related behavior. Counseling sessions are set up by request or referral, and take place either over the phone, as in-office sessions, or in the parent's home. City officials estimate that approximately 25% of program time is devoted to counseling children and parents. Parents and children are referred to additional social, city, and health services as needed.

Recreational Activities Offered

Children and parents are encouraged to participate in Recreation Department programs, such as sports, classes, special events, and programs specifically for teens like Club Friday. Club Fridays are funded by the city's General Fund and consist of dancing with a live D.J. plus additional activities for sixth-eighth graders. Gang clothing is not allowed at these events. This activity is held once or twice a month and all others may be seasonally or regularly scheduled.³²

³² Recreational Newsletter.

Neighborhood Watch

Recently the Neighborhood Watch Program was turned over to GRIP staff. This gives GRIP staff the opportunity to combine parent meetings with neighborhood watch meetings. Informational handouts on city services and topics related to gang activity are made available at all meetings. It is the goal of the program that parents begin to cooperate with the city and actively seek help for their children.

D. Intended Outcomes

GRIP program inputs are expected to result in GRIP classes, parent meetings, and counseling sessions. The GRIP classes, parent meetings, and counseling sessions are expected to result in increases in children's and parents' knowledge about the dangers of gang involvement and available alternative activities, changes in children's and parents' attitudes toward gang involvement, fewer Paramount youth joining gangs, reduction in youth wearing gang clothing, reduction in tagging, and significant reductions in gang membership and gang activity of City youth.

E. Assumed Causal Linkages

The GRIP program is designed with the causal linkages shown on the chart on the next page titled: "Gang Resistance Is Paramount: Inputs, Activities, Outputs, and Intended Outcomes." The causal linkages have been clearly described through examination of program materials and interviews with staff, teachers, administrators, community members, and students. However, the causal linkages cannot be clearly quantified. This is due to the number of complementary programs addressing gang activity in the City of Paramount and the lack of consistent data. The gang deterrence strategy chosen by the City is the "Comprehensive Approach"; therefore there are programs using prevention methods, such as GRIP, as well as programs using intervention and suppression methods, such as TARGET. In addition, there are several external factors affecting the quantitative measurement of the causal linkages such as the transient nature of the population and the presence of gang members in surrounding cities.

An example of the causal linkages is that when resources are provided for the GRIP program such as staff and the school-based curriculum, classes are given to second, fifth, and ninth grade students. Likewise, if these classes are given, students should be educated about the dangers of gangs. This should lead to changes in attitudes toward gangs and a reduction in the number of city youth joining gangs. If there are changes in attitudes toward gangs and reductions in the number of city youth joining gangs, then there should be an improved quality of life for the City of Paramount community.

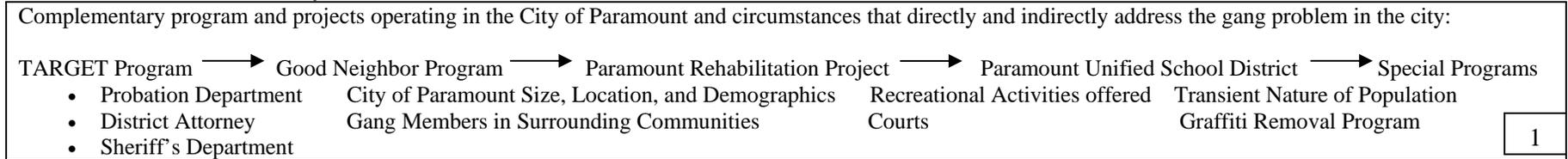
In analyzing the intended end outcomes of the GRIP Program it is important to keep in perspective the assumed causal linkages between the program's outputs, and intermediate and end outcomes, as well as those of the complementary programs and the effect of external factors. The TARGET Program employs both intervention and suppression

methods and has similar intended outcomes to the GRIP program. The Good Neighbor Program is another suppression program that is designed to reduce the number of gang members in the City by eliminating their homes as a base of activity. Like the GRIP program, both programs are designed to increase the safety of the City's streets and neighborhoods by reducing the number of gang members.

External factors outside the control of City of Paramount officials and administrators can influence GRIP's outputs and intermediate outcomes. For example, gang members in surrounding communities operating in and out of the City of Paramount that do not participate in GRIP and the city's other programs, may negatively influence the reduction of graffiti and gang-related activities in Paramount.

Figure 2: Gang Resistance Is Paramount: Inputs, Activities, Outputs, and Intended Outcomes

External Factors Likely to Affect Outcomes



Inputs/Resources	Activities/Process	Outputs	Intermediate Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	End Outcomes
Approximately \$300,000 annual budget from general fund GRIP Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program manager • 4 full-time instructors • 1 part-time intern School-based curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27-29 lesson plans 	8-10 classes for second grade 15 classes for fifth grade 3 classes for ninth grade Counseling for students and parents Parent meeting GRIP staff responsible for Neighborhood Watch Program Referrals to Recreation Dept. and other activities Staff-chaperoned dances	Educate students about the dangers of gangs Discourage the city's youth from joining gangs Educate parents about the signs of gang involvement Provide parents with resources that would help eliminate gang activities in their homes and neighborhoods Provide safe and alternative activities such as supervised dances and field trips	Change in attitudes toward gangs Increased parental awareness of gang involvement Increased use of city provided resources that help curb gang activity such as the graffiti hotline Increased use of Recreation Department resources Increased involvement and awareness of community members at large	Reduction in youth wearing gang clothing Reduction in graffiti Reduction in number of city youth joining gangs Reduction of gang related activities and crime Fewer gang members Reduction in youth 'idleness'	Improved quality of life for City of Paramount community Safe streets and neighborhoods Reduction of combined costs of imprisoning gang members and burials of gang members
2	3	4	5	6	7

IV. Program Outcomes

A. Interviews with Community Members without Children in the GRIP Program

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with community members—residents, business owners, homeowners, and community leaders from the City of Paramount. The purpose of the interviews was to get community members' thoughts on gang-related activity in the City of Paramount. The responses are not intended to be representative of the entire City of Paramount community. They will merely serve as insights into the experiences of some people in the community with respect to gangs. The interviews took place over the phone or in person. The respondent's anonymity is respected unless the respondent specified that it was okay to use his/her identity. The respondents were either referred to the researchers by city administration, selected from a comprehensive list of community-based organizations, or referred to the researchers by other respondents (snowball sampling method). Open-ended questions were developed by the researchers prior to the interviews and are included on page 14 for reference. Additional questions were asked during the interview as appropriate. The interviews generally took place during the evening hours when interviewees were available.

The respondents have been part of the Paramount community for 8 to 50 years and although no respondent had children who attended a Paramount school, four out of the five respondents have heard of the GRIP program.

Past Gang-related Activity in Paramount

The respondents were asked to describe gang-related activity in their neighborhoods when they first moved in or became a part of the Paramount community. The answers varied since some respondents have been living in the City of Paramount since 1951 and others have been in Paramount for approximately eight years. Of those respondents living in Paramount for over ten years, gang activity was described as territorial, very visible, and “out of control.”

One respondent who has been a homeowner in the City of Paramount for over 25 years said that when he first moved into his neighborhood there were gang members always hanging out a few steps from his home. The respondent said that there was always a street fight on weekends or some “different gang members always starting trouble.” The resident said that it was so bad that at one time he thought of moving out of the neighborhood. It was not until his wife died and he became more involved and things began to change that he decided to stay in his neighborhood.

Another respondent said that since he moved into the neighborhood 10 years ago, not much has changed in terms of the gang activities that he sees. What has changed in his opinion is the involvement of the city in helping to clean up the streets. He credits the decline in the gang activity to the different programs that the city employs. He said, “all the programs that displace gang members from the city. They just chase them out...”

The one respondent who has been working in the City of Paramount for 8 years said that he has not seen a big difference in gang activity, but that he has heard from other community members that it has improved drastically over the years. Geri Denning, Director of Consolidated Youth Services Network (CYSN) in Paramount said that the number of gang members that are referred to her organization fluctuates from time to time. The small percentage of gang members referred to CYSN are referred by probation officers, school administrators, parents, and social service centers. The majority of these gang members are referred to CYSN over behavioral problems or school attendance problems. Those that have expressed a change in gang-related activity in their neighborhoods say that it has declined over the years due to the city's increased involvement and implementation of various programs that seek to drive out gang members. Only one respondent stated that there was no change in gang-related activity in the city since he first moved in.

Current Gang-related Activity in Paramount

When asked to describe the current gang-related activity in their neighborhoods, the respondents said that activity was more “profit driven,” often related to drugs, and mostly associated with gang members from outside the Paramount community. However, they did observe that the city had become more responsive as demonstrated by the reduction in gang-related graffiti throughout the community.

One resident stated that gangs are now more profit-driven. He thinks gang members are now involved in drugs, counterfeiting, and money laundering. “...there is a shift from hanging out to doing things for profit.” Several respondents indicated that they suspect that the gang members that are involved in gang-related activity in their neighborhoods now are not from the City of Paramount.

They point to the graffiti cleanup, and the increased patrolling of the streets by law enforcement as signs that the city is increasingly involved. The majority of the respondents also state that it is easier for community members to become involved. One community religious leader interviewed said that there is hardly any graffiti because of the anti-graffiti campaign. All respondents know about the graffiti hotline and say that they have used it in the past to report tagging around their neighborhood. One respondent also said that it is easier to report gang activity now because the caller does not have to identify him or herself.

“You used to call the cops and they’d come right up to your door step. The gang members knew you were calling to tell on them and they’d turn around and do mean things to your house. Now you can call and you don’t have to leave your name and the cops don’t show up at your house. They go straight to the gang members.”

Another respondent also credits the cleanup of the city in helping change the attitudes of residents including gang members. “The city has made a lot of changes. They even helped clean up the city...it changes things when you drive down and don’t see trash in the lawns and couches and things. Those things also make a difference.” A second

respondent added to this by stating, “the city is very watchful, with graffiti cleanup. It has improved a lot, because the city has improved a lot in so many other ways too.” In general, respondents think that gang-related activity is decreasing and credit several factors for its improvement, including increased policing and city involvement.

Problems with Gangs and Possible Solutions

When asked what respondents thought about the current gang problem in their community and possible solutions, the answers varied from increased parental involvement to a more pessimistic view that the gang problem can never be changed. One respondent said that it all begins in the family. There is a belief that there is a cultural and generational mentality that must be changed before any other kind of change is achieved. “Your older brothers and fathers are in gangs, so you join.” The respondent said that families needed to be educated on the alternatives to gang life and the benefits that it could bring to their lives. Another respondent said that he notices gang activity decreases when the “leaders” of the gang in his neighborhood are in jail. He said that when “the worse ones are in jail, it keeps the rest down.” Otherwise, he insisted that the parents need to get involved and need to be held accountable for their child’s problems. A local religious leader echoed this opinion and added that “a general lack of moral value and education” also contributes to the problem.

Community involvement was also cited as a possible solution. Respondents all claimed to be involved in their community but suggested that others needed to become more involved. Generally they cited fear among residents over retaliation from gang members if they reported crime. However, many said that law enforcement is much more responsive and aware of the problems, making it is easier to report crime and easier for people to become involved. One respondent said that he has been very vocal about the gang activity in his neighborhood and that he urges his neighbors to do the same. “I’m a property owner. I pay my taxes. I want to keep my neighborhood safe for my grandchildren.” He stated that other community members should want to do the same, but probably count on other people to pick up the phone and report the activities they see. Additionally, one respondent said that since there is a huge immigrant community he suspected that they were less inclined to become involved because of their legal status, language barriers, or lack of knowledge about the resources available to them.

Finally, one respondent was more pessimistic on his view of the gang problem and did not think that very much could be done. He said that gangs have always existed, ever since he moved into Paramount in 1951. The gangs just take on different characteristics and have become more violent. He insisted that gangs could be suppressed and that would reduce gang activity, but that it would be impossible to get rid of them altogether.

Detecting Gang Members and Gang Activity

When respondents were asked about their confidence level at being able to detect a gang member or gang activity, some said that they could easily detect a gang member, while others said that it was difficult because of the changing urban fashion trends. Some

indicated that they could easily identify a gang member because of the way that they dressed and acted. This group described the way of dress as baggy clothes with shaved heads and tattoos on their bodies. They could not differentiate between ‘taggers’ and gang members and thought that these activities were closely related. The majority of the respondents said that it was more difficult to identify gang members because more recently children that are not gang members are also wearing baggy clothes.

One respondent said, “It’s hard to tell because all the children wear baggy clothes. Sometimes you can tell because it’s really obvious with the socks pulled all the way up and the long oversized pants and tattoos, but other times you can’t.” A local religious leader said, “Our children here sometimes look like gang types but are not. They just dress the part.” This second group indicated having a difficult time differentiating between the urban style of clothing and what gang members wear.

However, when it came to gang-related activities all respondents indicated that they could pinpoint this type of activity relatively easily. “The drive-bys are the obvious thing. You can also tell hard core gang members because they have everything” (meaning attire, tattoos, and other gang members’ attention). Pacing up and down the street constantly looking around their surroundings is another way that one respondent says he can tell when a gang member is probably waiting to make a drug deal. He said that they’re looking around to see if law enforcement is around or if people are watching what they’re doing. Additionally, crime activity such as robberies, graffiti, and car thefts are usually also attributed to gang involvement. Although some respondents were less likely to be able to positively detect a gang member, most were comfortable with being able to detect gang-related activity.

Difference Between Newcomers and Long-Term Residents

Most respondents stated that they were not able to determine if children that grew up in Paramount were more or less likely to be involved in gangs than those who moved into the city in their later teens. Respondents said that it was often hard to tell which children grew up in Paramount and which did not since families often move from one block to the next and not necessarily from one city to another. There were a couple of respondents, however, who pointed to newly arrived immigrants as more problematic than long-term residents. One respondent said, “The illegals moving in that don’t have papers and can’t work start going into illegal activity and reel the younger ones in...the majority I see here are all young, but can’t speak English.” A second respondent also suspects that new young immigrants are more likely to become involved in gangs and crime, but also suggested that it also has to do with the part of Paramount that they’re living in, the economic level of their family, and the family that they’re coming from. “If you have a big family it’s harder to keep an eye on everyone as opposed to a smaller family.”

Knowledge and Thoughts About GRIP Program

All respondents had positive attitudes towards the GRIP program. When asked if they had heard about the program or knew anything about the program, they all said that they had heard about the program either through city officials and administrators or other community members. None of the respondents has had children who attended Paramount schools. All the respondents thought that the GRIP program was needed and a good thing to have in the school system, and many offered suggestions and ideas for the program:

- “Education is great, but you need to provide children with options such as jobs. You can’t abandon them after you give them hope, you have to help them realize that hope.”
- “Show these children other environments as well. Let them know that this isn’t the best that’s available for them.”
- “I think it’s great. Raising the consciousness of these children.”
- “The program sounds like a new idea. You need young people to talk to the children. If you get an older person in there the children won’t listen.”
- “Children are hungry for that. They want to pay attention.”

B. Interviews with Parents of GRIP Participants

GRIP Program

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the parents of children who have participated in the GRIP program. The purpose of the interviews was to get the parents’ thoughts on the GRIP program and gang-related activity in the City of Paramount. The responses are not intended to be representative of the entire City of Paramount community or of all parents whose children have participated in GRIP. They merely serve as insights into the experiences of some people in the community with GRIP and gangs. The questions were open-ended and additional questions were added during the interview as appropriate. The initial questions are included on pages 14 and 15.

All interviews took place over the phone and the respondent’s anonymity was respected unless the respondent specified that it was okay to use his/her identity. The respondents were all chosen from a list provided by the GRIP program staff. The list represented parents whose children participated in the program when it was first implemented, as well as parents whose children are currently participating in the program, and many of the years in between.

The respondents all have had at least one child who has participated or is currently participating in the GRIP program. Several respondents have had more than two children participate in the program. Although not all respondents recognized the name of the program, as the interviewer began explaining the program and mentioning the names of the staff, they all claimed to remember the program very well. GRIP staff name

recognition was the most common way that a respondent understood the program. When one respondent did not recognize the program name or subject and I mentioned the parent meetings, she said, “Oh, yes, Tony used to be at all of those.”³³ All respondents had at least one child that had participated in either the second, fifth, seventh, or ninth grade curriculum. Several respondents had children that participated in the curriculum for at least two school grades. The following are general comments regarding the GRIP program based on the interview questions:

- The majority of the respondents said that they found out about the GRIP program through the school system. They had either received consent forms for participation, or some kind of notification from the school that their child would be participating in the program.
- Most parents said that their children would/do come home and talk to their parents about the things that they’ve learned during the GRIP presentations.
- Most children tended to come home and talk about GRIP exercises such as songs played, videos watched, and workbook exercises, as opposed to specific topics that were covered during the presentation.
- Most respondents did not remember their children giving them handouts that were given to them during GRIP presentations, but a couple said that they remembered the pictures from the coloring books that were given to the children.
- Only one of the respondents said that her child had had problems with gangs. Her oldest son was killed in a gang-related incident. He had participated in the GRIP program when he was in the fifth grade. None of her younger children are involved in gangs.
- None of the respondents indicated observing any kind of change in their children’s clothing style or behavior after going through the GRIP program. But the majority said that they noticed a change in their children’s attitudes towards gangs and drugs specifically.
- Only two of the respondents said that they had attended parent meeting offered by the GRIP program. All respondents were aware of the parent meetings, but many indicated that work often kept them from being able to attend the meetings.
- The two respondents who had attended parent meetings said that they learned about warning signs regarding gang behavior, and ways to keep children safe and away from gangs.
- All of the respondents had favorable things to say about the GRIP program in general. They all expressed the need for the GRIP program. A couple of respondents also indicated that in addition to the GRIP program parents needed to become more responsive to their children’s needs.

The respondents whose younger children participated in the second grade curriculum were especially pleased because they expressed the importance of introducing children to the dangers of gangs. One respondent said that her child, who is currently in the second grade curriculum, loves to go home and talk about Tony the instructor and the things that he learns about. The respondent also mentioned that in conversations with her young son she is able to notice that he is developing negative attitudes toward gang activities and

³³ Referring to Tony Pena, 2nd grade GRIP instructor.

gang involvement. One respondent whose children are now in their early 20's remembers the GRIP program and remembers the impact that it had on her children. She credits the program for introducing them to the down side of gang involvement, and credits her parenting skills for reinforcing all that was learned. She said, "I'm strict on the clothing that is appropriate...and I kept the children active in other activities." A respondent who said that her son died in a gang-related activity even after participating in the GRIP program blamed her son's involvement in gangs on the neighborhood in Paramount that she lived in. She said, "In the neighborhood there were a lot of gangs and he got caught up in that...Tony talked to him several times but it was too late." The respondent mentioned that gang members took up residence directly across from her home and that it was difficult for her son not to be caught up with them. Since the death of her son she has moved to a different neighborhood in the City of Paramount where gangs are not as visible and she says this makes a difference, since her younger children are not involved in gangs.

The parents who attended parent meetings said that they learned about warning signs regarding gang behavior, and ways to keep children safe and away from gangs. One parent added, "They talked about everything, how to keep children safe, the type of things to look out for. It was a good course." The respondents interviewed all had favorable things to say about the GRIP program and its purpose. The respondent whose children are now in their early 20's had this to say about the GRIP program: "I think it's doing an excellent job of informing children and having them become aware of what to look out for. We still have the need to have a program like this that teaches children and parents." Another respondent expressed that he liked the multiple lessons in the different grades. "The second grade is a good time to start. Then they give it to them in the fifth grade, and then in the ninth. It reinforces everything. My children enjoy it and they get to learn." Although the majority of the parents interviewed were not involved in the parent meetings, they were aware of their children's involvement with the GRIP program and were satisfied that their children were learning valuable lessons related to gangs and gang-related activities.

Thoughts on Gang-Related Activities in the City of Paramount

In addition to asking parents of children who have participated or are currently participating in the GRIP program about their thoughts on the GRIP program, they were also asked about their thoughts on gangs and gang activities in the City of Paramount. The respondents have lived in the City of Paramount anywhere from 7 years to 24 years. The following are general comments that the respondents expressed:

- A. When asked to compare gang activity when they first moved into Paramount to gang activity now, most parents said that they saw a decrease in gang activity in their neighborhoods. A couple of respondents had moved from what they thought were the "bad" parts of Paramount, such as the "Sans" area, into neighborhoods that they considered to be better.
- B. When asked to describe any noticeable changes in their neighborhoods over the past five to ten years most mentioned was that there is less graffiti on public property; contrarily, one respondent said there was a rise in graffiti, along with a

decrease in public loitering, changes in the city’s landscaping and remodeling, an increase in tagging crews, and an increase in public safety.

- C. When asked about the problems or obstacles to helping solve gang problems, several respondents said that there was a need for increased community involvement. Several additional respondents indicated that parents needed to become more accountable for their children’s actions. Additionally, community education was said to be vital to the reduction of gang activity.

C. Interviews with Paramount Unified School District Teachers and Administrators

Interviews were conducted with ten teachers and administrators from the Paramount Unified School District who had experienced the GRIP program either in the classroom or at an administrative level. Table IV gives a description of the Paramount Unified School District staff and administrators who were interviewed. The interviewees were asked for their opinion of the GRIP program and their perception of how well it prevented gang involvement. (See pages 15 and 16 for list of questions). Every interviewee spoke positively of the program and each mentioned that their students have a high enthusiasm for the GRIP program.

Table IV: Description of Paramount Unified School District Interviewees (n=10)

Description	Number
Principals	3
Assistant Principals	3
Second Grade Teachers	2
Fifth Grade Teachers	1
Ninth Grade Teachers	1
5-9 years in Paramount Unified School District	3
10-20 years in Paramount Unified School District	3
20+ years in Paramount Unified School District	4
Have worked in a district outside of Paramount Unified School District	4
Have lived in Paramount in the past	2

Source: Interviews conducted April, 2003

Gang Activity in Paramount Unified School District

When asked about the amount of gang activity in the Paramount Unified School District, respondents were not consistent in their replies. Approximately one-third felt gang activity in the school district had been on a steady decline since around the early 1990’s. Another third of the interviewees felt gang activity was on the rise. However, the remaining interviewees felt there had been an overall increase in gang activity, with a decrease since the mid-1990’s. Despite this mix of perceptions, all interviewees agreed that there was more gang activity within the community of Paramount than within the schools themselves. “There is definitely gang activity in Paramount, but there seems to be a respect for the schools,” stated Pamela Houston, Principal at Paramount Park School. While no teachers or administrators interviewed currently live in Paramount, one

interviewee did live in Paramount in the 1980's and moved because of the increasing gang violence in their neighborhood. Two of the interviewees referred to gang activity as a primary reason for not living in Paramount.

The major problems cited from gang activity in the Paramount schools were vandalism and graffiti, with graffiti mentioned by all interviewees. It was also mentioned that the larger gangs that were once very prevalent in Paramount are being replaced with smaller gangs and tagging crews. Other problems identified were drug trafficking, turf wars, and possession of weapons. However, these issues were not identified as major gang activities in Paramount Unified School District in comparison to vandalism and graffiti.

Highlights of the GRIP Program

Four aspects of GRIP were consistently highlighted as benefits of the program: 1) The involved staff, 2) Information presented to students about the consequences of gang involvement, 3) Referrals offered by the GRIP staff to teachers, students, and parents to additional assistance and resources, and 4) The early age at which GRIP starts its curriculum. All interviewees saw these as vital components of the program. Erwin Lopez, a fifth grade teacher at Roosevelt School, shared that he once suspected a student of being involved in gang activity due to his dress and demeanor. Lopez asked the GRIP staff what he should do, and they were immediately able to refer the student and his parents to counseling services. Over time Lopez noticed a positive change in the student's behavior. Several other teachers shared similar anecdotes about the GRIP staff.

A comparison of the GRIP program to the DARE program was mentioned by two of the interviewees. Both agreed that the GRIP program was more effective in reaching the children. "DARE was more formal. The children didn't know the person, and the classes were very sporadic. GRIP is more consistent and connects with the students," stated Dolores Stephens, principal at Hollydale School. Harris stated, "What we have here in Paramount is a much more peaceful approach, people of the community who love the community and are committed to it and the children. It is the best gang abatement program I've seen." In terms of barriers to success of the GRIP program, teachers and administrators stressed the importance of family structure. The problem of gang culture within a youth's family was mentioned by eight of the ten interviewees.

Additional Factors Affecting Gang Activity in Paramount

All administration and staff expressed the desire to continue the GRIP program. However, majority of those interviewed did not attribute the decrease of gang violence within the Paramount Unified School District to the GRIP program alone. The following programs and initiatives were mentioned as additional factors that have contributed to the decrease of gang activity in Paramount:

- Paramount graffiti removal program
- Redevelopment throughout the city
- Outreach by the Department of Parks and Recreation
- Contracting with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

- Restructuring of the school district from the traditional middle school model to the current K-8 model
- Adoption of school uniforms within the district
- Other school district anti-violence programs and curriculum such as “Peace Builders,” “Like Skills,” and “Here’s Looking at You 2000”

When asked if there was a difference between students who had gone through the GRIP program, and students who had not, the majority of teachers and administrators surveyed mentioned that there was a slight difference, but this response was not echoed universally. For example, Lopez, who has taught fifth grade for five years in Paramount, stated, “We’ve had a couple of children from other districts. There is a big difference. When they go through GRIP, it helps.” On the other hand, Ellen Woo, who taught second grade for ten years in Paramount, has seen no difference in the children. The variance on experience may be attributable to the age of the children. For example, Stephens stated, “There is a definite difference in some of the children. Some of the older children feel they have to be violent to protect themselves. Most of our students know there are places to go for help. The K-8 system makes a difference.” While it cannot be deduced that the GRIP program makes a noticeable difference in all students’ behavior, it can be said that most teachers and administrators do notice differences between students who have grown up within the Paramount Unified School District, and those who have not. Michelle Dutton, Assistant Principal at Gaines Elementary stated, “Yes [there is a difference in behavior and gang activity between students who have gone through GRIP and those who haven’t] but not one-hundred percent of the time. GRIP is not able to save every child.”

Improving GRIP

All interviewees expressed the importance of programs like GRIP in reducing gang involvement and violence. When asked if they had suggestions for the City of Paramount and the school district in regards to gang prevention, the following recommendations were given:

- Expand the GRIP program to third and fourth grades to reinforce the concepts during this time
- Further develop the GRIP program’s ninth grade curriculum
- Expand other violence prevention programs such as The Peace Builders Program, and coordinate the curriculum of such programs with GRIP
- Increase after-school program options within the city and district
- Better coordinate the GRIP curriculum with the school district considering scheduling constraints created by the new Open-Court system
- Consistently update GRIP curriculum

In addition to the above recommendations, all interviewees stressed the importance of having a comprehensive strategy to address youth gang prevention. This is consistent with findings of the General Accounting Office (GAO) in their 1995 study of four separate gang prevention programs, including the GRIP program. The GAO study also

found that teachers saw their own programs as successful, but unequivocally believed that no one program could solve the problem of gang violence.³⁴

D. Law Enforcement Data and Perspectives

Information was collected between January 28 and March 28, 2003 on law enforcement statistics and on the perspective of law enforcement personnel on the GRIP Program and gang activity in Paramount. The material is organized into two sections: quantitative data collected from the Sheriff's Department and other government sources and qualitative data collected from interviews with law enforcement personnel.

Quantitative Data

Summary of Findings

- There has been a significant decrease in the activity of major gangs, gang members, and the ratio³⁵ of gang members to residents in Paramount since 1982.
- Paramount has a lower ratio of gang members to residents than Compton, Lynwood, and South Gate but a higher ratio of gang members to residents than Bellflower and Long Beach. However, comparisons with Long Beach and South Gate should be made with caution because their criteria for defining gang members appears to be different than that of cities that contract with Los Angeles County for law enforcement services.
- Per capita gang-related crimes in Paramount from 1994 to 2002 show a fluctuating pattern. However, while the overall gang crime rate is only 2 % higher in 2002 than in 1994, gang-related Part I³⁶ crimes show a decrease of approximately 25% during this period.
- Between 1994 and 2002 per capita gang-related crimes in Paramount and Bellflower followed similar patterns. Each city's gang crime rate was 2% higher in 2002. During the same period, Lynwood experienced a steady decrease in its gang-related crime rate, which dropped 30% between 1994 and 2002.
- Paramount's reduction in gang-related Part I crimes between 1994 and 2002 was greater than that of Bellflower but less than that of Lynwood.

³⁴ General Accounting Office (1995). School safety: promising initiatives for addressing school violence.

³⁵ All ratios and per capita calculations were created using population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau and the California State Department of Finance. <http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/DEMOGRAP>

³⁶ The FBI Part I Crime Index includes: willful homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft and arson. According to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, a crime is classified as "gang-related" if the suspect or victim can be identified as a gang member, or if the crime seems to fit a pattern of gang-related crimes that have recently occurred in the area.

- Since 1997 Paramount has experienced a dramatic increase in the percentage of gang-related crimes linked to narcotics. At the same time, nearly a third of Paramount ninth graders surveyed in 2003 disagreed with or were undecided about the statement that drugs were a big part of gang life.
- While gang-related homicides in Paramount increased in relation to the overall county trend from 1997-1998, they have decreased against the increasing regional trend since 1998. Between 1995 and 2000, the three-year moving average for per-capita gang-related homicides decreased approximately 19% in Paramount and approximately 37% in Los Angeles County overall.
- The Violent Crime Rate in Paramount decreased 50% between 1981 and 2002. This is a more substantial drop in violent crimes than any of the surrounding cities experienced during the same time period.
- Overall Part I crime rates (gang-related and non-gang-related crimes) in Paramount show a steady decline starting in the early 1990s. Between 1981 and 2001, the Part I crime rate in Paramount followed roughly the same pattern as rates in neighboring cities. During these years, Paramount experienced a 48% decrease in Part I crimes. Decreases in surrounding cities ranged from 37% to 60%.
- Paramount's median household income is very similar to those for most of the surrounding cities. Its high school dropout rate is lower than those of most neighboring communities.

Number of Gangs and Gang Members

Information provided by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the Paramount Public Safety Department shows a significant decrease in the absolute number of major gangs and gang members as well as the ratio of gang members to residents.

Number of Gangs

In 1982 there were six major gangs in Paramount.³⁷ By 2002 there were only three major gangs in the city.³⁸ According to Deputy Tom Dobis of Paramount, a major gang is a "turf" gang that claims responsibility for a geographic area within the city. There are also approximately 10 "transient" gangs in Paramount at any one time. Transient gangs often come in and try to start activity or claim an area in a major gang's turf, which results in outbreaks of violence between the gangs. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department does not separate its gang statistics into "major" and "transient" gangs. Data obtained from the Sheriff's Department corroborated the overall number of 13 gangs in Paramount.

³⁷ Source: Paramount Public Safety Department

³⁸ Source: Paramount Public Safety Department

Number of Gang Members

In 1982 there were 1,500 gang members in a Paramount population of 36,407. That’s approximately one gang member for every 24 citizens. By 2002 there were only 880 gang members in a population of 55,266, or approximately one gang member for every 63 residents.

Comparison with Nearby Cities

Long Beach has approximately 6000 gang members³⁹ and 40-50 gangs, 15 of which are considered “very active.”⁴⁰ However, with approximately 473,000 residents, the ratio of gang members to residents in Long Beach, 1 to 79, is lower than in Paramount.

South Gate has 96 identified gangs and approximately 2,800 identified active gang members.⁴¹ With a population of 99,200, South Gate’s ratio is one gang member for every 35 residents. South Gate does not separate “major” or “very active” gangs from its total gang tally like Paramount and Long Beach.

Table V: Gangs and Gang Members in Paramount and Nearby Cities, 2002-2003

City	# of Gangs	# of Gang Members	Gang Members per Gang	Size of City in Square Miles	Gangs per Square Mile	Gang Members per Square Mile	Gang Members to Residents
Paramount	13	880	68	4.7	2.76	128	1/63
Bellflower	6	659	110	6.1	1	108	1/114
Long Beach	40-50	6000	150-120	50.4	.79-.99	119	1/79
Lynwood	81	1977	24	5	16	395	1/36
South Gate	96	2800 “active”	29	7.5	12.8	373	1/35
Compton	38	4928	130	10.2	3.7	483	1/19

Source: Estimates from Law Enforcement Officials from Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department, Long Beach Police Department, and South Gate Police Department...

Based on these estimates, Paramount appears to have more of a “gang presence” than Long Beach, but less than South Gate. However, this analysis does have some limitations, which are described in the following paragraphs.

Based on information obtained thus far, criteria for identifying an individual as a gang member varies between cities. Criteria for defining a “major” or “very active” gang also differs between jurisdictions. Therefore, comparisons should be made with caution, since direct comparisons may be misleading. For instance, one city may have “looser” criteria for identifying gang members, making it appear that that city has more gang members

³⁹ See Appendix C for Long Beach criteria for identifying gang members.

⁴⁰ Source: Long Beach Police Department

⁴¹ Source: South Gate Police Department. Estimates based on information collected over the last 3-4 years.

than another city with a more narrow definition. A case in point is South Gate, which has a more informal, less-defined set of criteria; and Long Beach, which has a fairly specific set of guidelines.

Also, gang members do not necessarily commit crimes only in the cities in which they live. While one would assume that a lower ratio of gang members to residents reduces the amount of gang-related crime in an area, gang members from one city may also contribute to gang crime in another city.

Finally, it is important to note that numbers of gangs and gang members are law enforcement estimates based on observations and intelligence collected. Therefore, there is some margin of error in these numbers.

Gang-Related Crimes

Gang-related crime data has been collected since 1994 in Paramount.⁴² During these years, gang-related crimes in Paramount have fluctuated, with spikes in 1996-97 and 1999. (Shown in Table VI below.) Figure 3 shows the per capita rate of gang-related crimes overall, and of gang-related Part I crimes for these years, both of which reflect the same fluctuating pattern. The FBI Part I Crime Index includes: willful homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft and arson.

While the overall rate of gang-related crimes ends up in nearly the same place in 2001 as in 1994 (the 2001 rate is 4% higher than the 1994 rate), gang-related Part I crimes decrease approximately 23 percent.

Analysis of the proportion of narcotics-related gang crimes matches the pattern described by some public safety and law enforcement officers who stated that they thought gang activity had shifted from “turf wars” to narcotics activity.

Table VI: Gang-Related Crimes In Paramount, 1994-2001

Year	Total Gang Crimes	Part I Crimes (Gang-Related)	Percent of Gang Crimes that are Narcotics Related
1994	237	88	5%
1995	255	96	10%
1996	352	118	11%
1997	346	150	8%
1998	181	76	14%
1999	326	103	22%
2000	220	72	22%
2001	262	90	19%

Source: Paramount Public Safety from Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department Operation Safe Streets

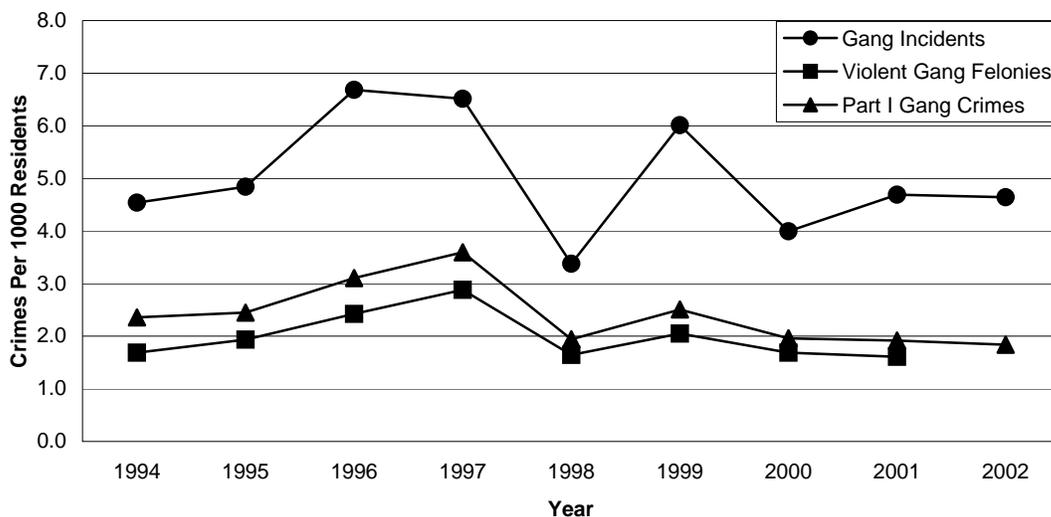
⁴² Provided by Paramount Public Safety, which cites its source as Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department Operation Safe Streets.

It is interesting to note that while gang-related crimes in Paramount have fluctuated since 1994, gang-related Part I crimes have declined and overall Part I crimes (see section on Part I crimes, page 46) steadily declined after 1994. The volatile rates of gang activity match the descriptions by deputies of gang crime as “cyclical.” Some deputies stated that these cycles usually coincide with the imprisonment or release of groups of prominent gang members.

The difference in the patterns of gang-related crimes, gang-related Part I crimes and overall Part I crimes after 1994 suggest a couple of theories. First, factors that lower the rate of serious (Part I) gang crimes do not have the same effect on less serious gang activity. Perhaps Paramount’s anti-gang programs have been most successful in discouraging the most violent gang members from operating in that city. Second, variables which affect Part I crimes (for instance, an improved economy) do not have the same effect on gang crimes.

Another theory regarding this finding might be that the number of crimes classified as “gang-related” has fluctuated with law enforcement’s ability to distinguish gang crimes from other crimes. Several law enforcement officers stated that over the years, gang members have gotten “savvier” and “less obvious.” Police have also said that classification of gang crimes is somewhat subjective. Therefore, it is possible that the variation in reported gang crime rates reflects changing gang members and patterns – and changing law enforcement recognition of them – over the years.

Figure 3: Paramount Per Capita Gang Crimes



Source: Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department can provide information on the number of gang-related Part I crimes in Paramount's surrounding contract cities since 1994. 1994 is the earliest year for which the Sheriff's Department can offer these numbers because gang crimes statistics were not tracked via computer until then. However, our contact at the Sheriff's Department has said that they switched to a new computer system in 1997 and he feels that the information beginning 1997 is the most accurate, since all information may not have been transferred to the new database.

How Gang Crimes are Identified

According to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, a crime is classified as "gang-related" if the suspect or victim can be identified as a gang member, or if the crime seems to fit a pattern of gang-related crimes that have recently occurred in the area.

Team Sergeants from the Sheriff's Department gather all reports in their respective areas on a daily basis to determine which crimes can be classified as "gang-related." However, if the crimes cannot be connected to gang activity in this initial phase, they are "off the radar" and may be handled by another agency. Even if evidence eventually emerges suggesting that the crime is gang-related, the information may never get back to the Sheriff's Department for entry into the database. This problem is further complicated by the fact that there is no common standard among law enforcement agencies determining what is considered a gang crime.

A Sheriff's Department spokesman said that the department errs on the side of conservative estimates of gang activity, and although he thinks there is some margin of error, he believes the classification of gang-related crimes has been consistent over the years.

Gang-related Homicides

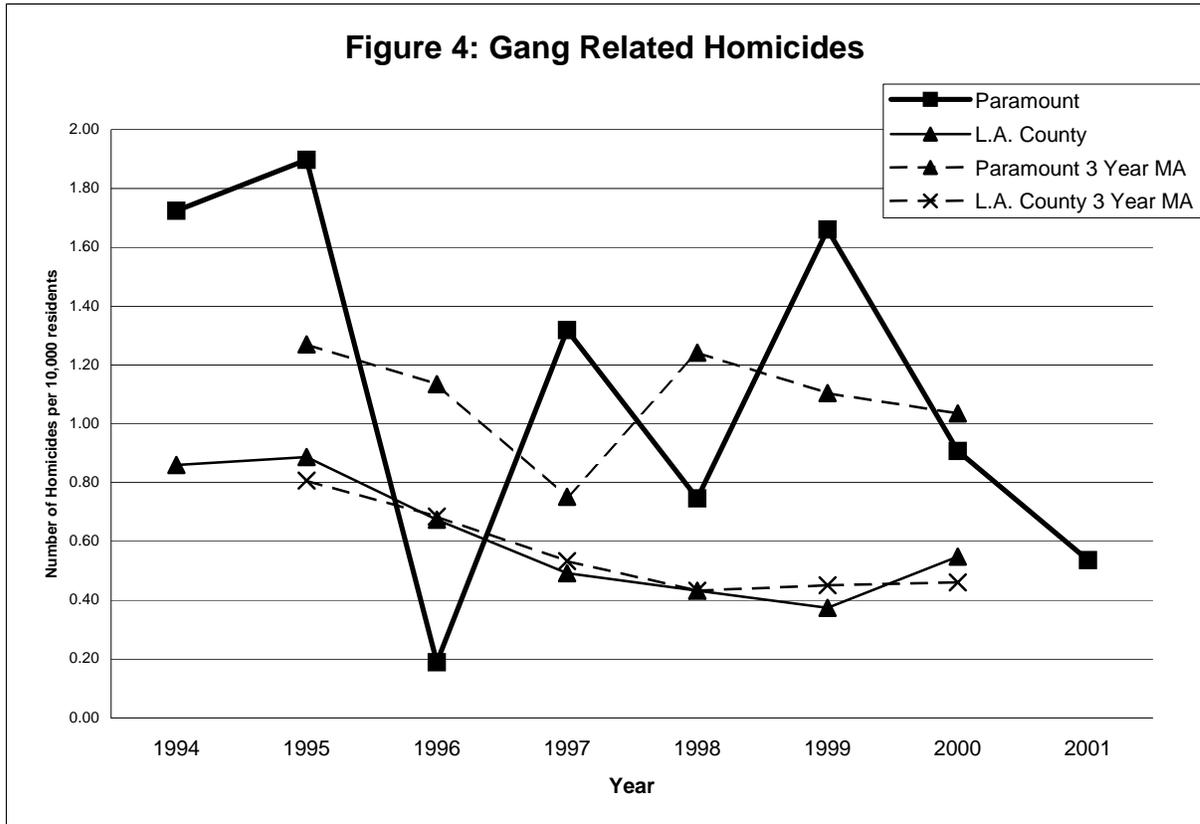
Data was collected on the number of gang-related homicides in Los Angeles County from 1980 to 2000.⁴³ Gang-related homicides data for Paramount are available only since 1994. To get a better picture of overall crime trends, actual rates were collected and used to calculate a three-year moving average,⁴⁴ comparing gang-related homicides in Los Angeles County and Paramount between 1995 and 2000. (See Figure 2.)

The three-year moving average for Los Angeles County gang-related homicides shows a steady decline between 1995 and 1998, followed by a small increase between 1998 and 2000. The Paramount three-year moving average shows a more dramatic decrease from 1995-1997 followed by a sharp increase from 1997-1998 and a gradual decrease between 1999 and 2000. While the number of Paramount gang homicides increased against the

⁴³ Provided by Paramount Department of Public Safety. Source cited: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Safe Streets Bureau

⁴⁴ A three-year moving average is calculated by averaging the per-capita homicides for a particular year with those of the prior and subsequent years. For instance, the moving average for 1996 was calculated by taking the average of gang-related homicide rates for 1995, 1996, and 1997.

overall county trend from 1997-1998, they have decreased against the increasing regional trend since 1998. Between 1995 and 2000, the moving average for per-capita gang-related homicides decreased approximately 19% in Paramount and approximately 37% in Los Angeles County overall.



Source: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Part I Crimes

To look at a long-term picture of crime trends in Paramount and its surrounding cities, we have reviewed statistics on overall Part I crimes for the years 1981-2001 for the cities of Paramount, Bellflower, Compton, Downey, Long Beach, Lynwood, and South Gate.⁴⁵

We used yearly population estimates from the California State Department of Finance⁴⁶ to develop estimates of per capita Part I crimes for the years 1981-2001 in each of these cities.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Source: California State Department of Justice

⁴⁶ <http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/DEMOGRAP>

⁴⁷ Results of calculations were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Overall, Part I crimes have declined on a per capita basis in Paramount. Between 1981 and 2001, Part I crimes in the city declined from approximately 81 crimes per 1,000 residents to approximately 42 crimes per 1,000 residents – a per capita reduction of about 48%.⁴⁸ This decrease is in the middle of the range when compared with neighboring cities, as illustrated in Table VII.

Table VII: Per Capita Part I Crimes - Change Between 1981 and 2001

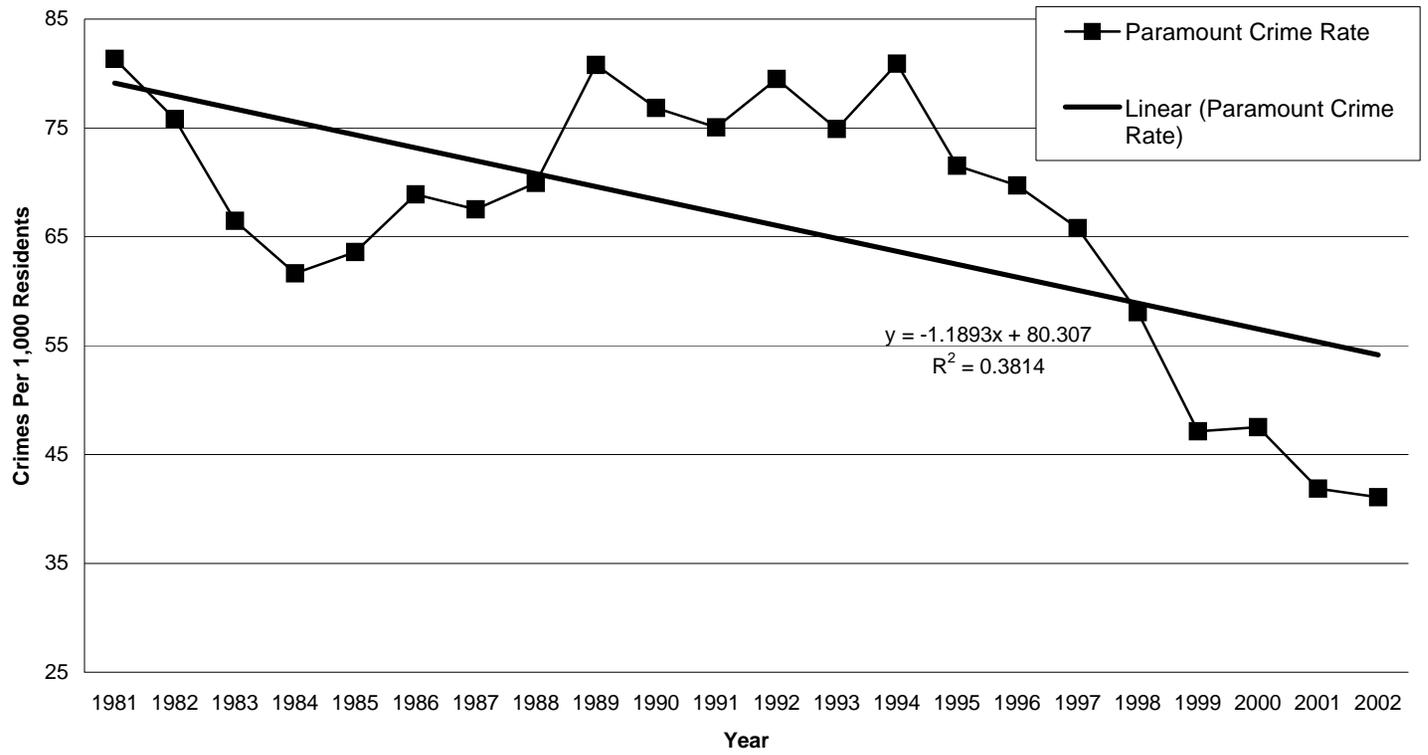
City	1981 Crimes Per 1000 Residents	2001 Crimes Per 1000 Residents	Percent Change
Lynwood	91	36	-60%
Long Beach	89	40	-55%
Paramount	81	42	-48%
Bellflower	71	38	-46%
Compton	105	57	-46%
South Gate	59	32	-46%
Downey	54	34	-37%

Source: California State Department of Justice and California State Department of Finance

Analysis of the trends in per capita Part I crimes for Paramount shows a decline in these crimes from the early to mid 1980s, followed by an increase from the mid '80s to the early '90s, stabilization from the early to mid 1990s, and a decline from 1994 on. (See Figure 5) This pattern is fairly consistent with that of surrounding cities for the same time period. (See Figure 6)

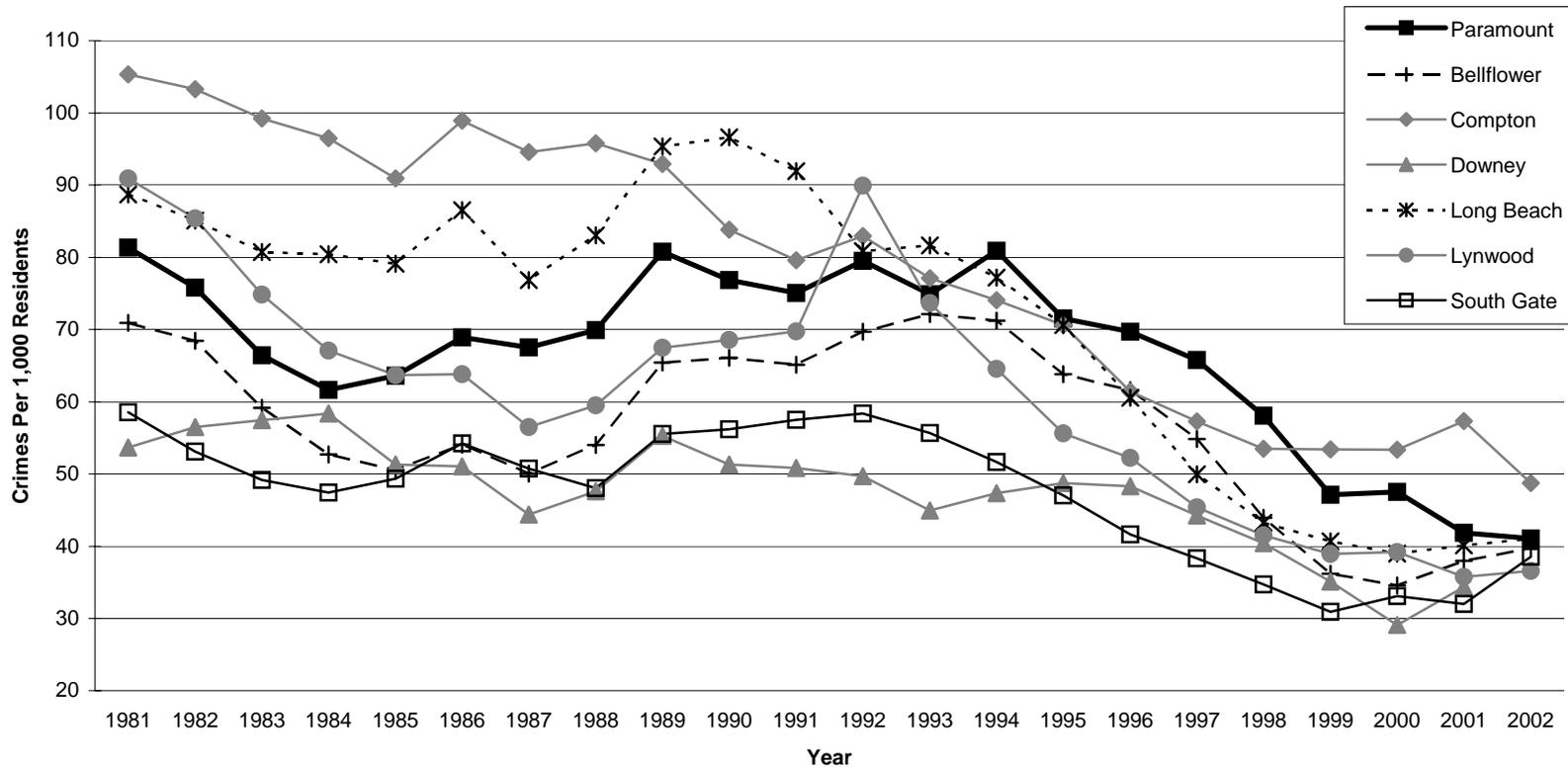
⁴⁸ This differs slightly from information provided by Paramount's Public Safety department, which listed a decrease from 77 crimes per 1000 residents to 41 crimes per residents, for a total decrease of nearly 47%. The differences may be due to slightly different population estimates.

Figure 5: Per Capita Paramount Part I Crimes



Source: California State Department of Justice and California State Department of Finance

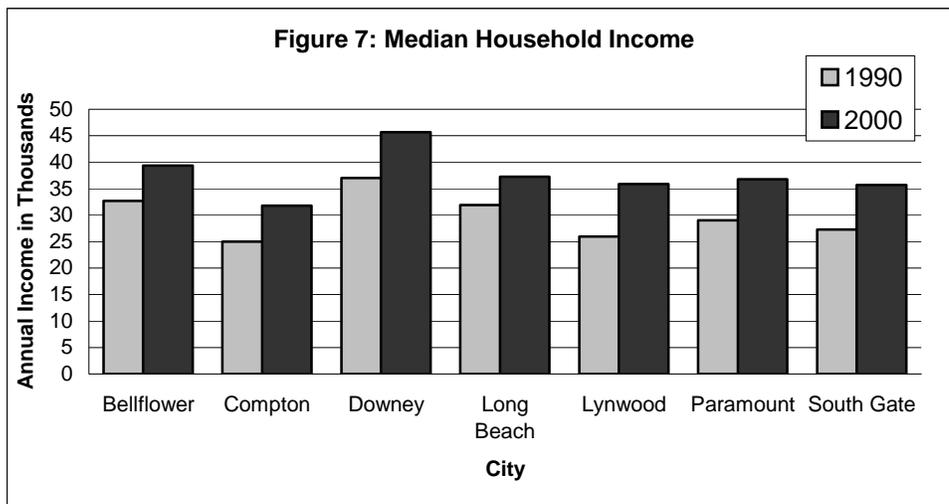
Figure 6: Per Capita Part I Crimes 1981-2002



Source: California State Department of Justice and California State Department of Finance

Since socio-economic factors may also influence crime rates, median incomes and school dropout rates were measured for Paramount and surrounding cities. Paramount's median household income is similar to those of all surrounding cities except Compton, which has a slightly lower median income and Downey, which has a slightly higher median income (see Figure 5).⁴⁹ This is a small change from 1990 when Paramount income ranked further above that of South Gate and Lynwood, and further below that of Long Beach.

Paramount's school dropout rate is significantly lower than that of all surrounding districts except Bellflower (see Figure 6).⁵⁰ It is interesting to note that in 1992 Paramount's dropout rate was higher than all surrounding cities except Long Beach and Lynwood. Dropout rates throughout the area have decreased dramatically in the last ten years except for that of Compton, which has increased.

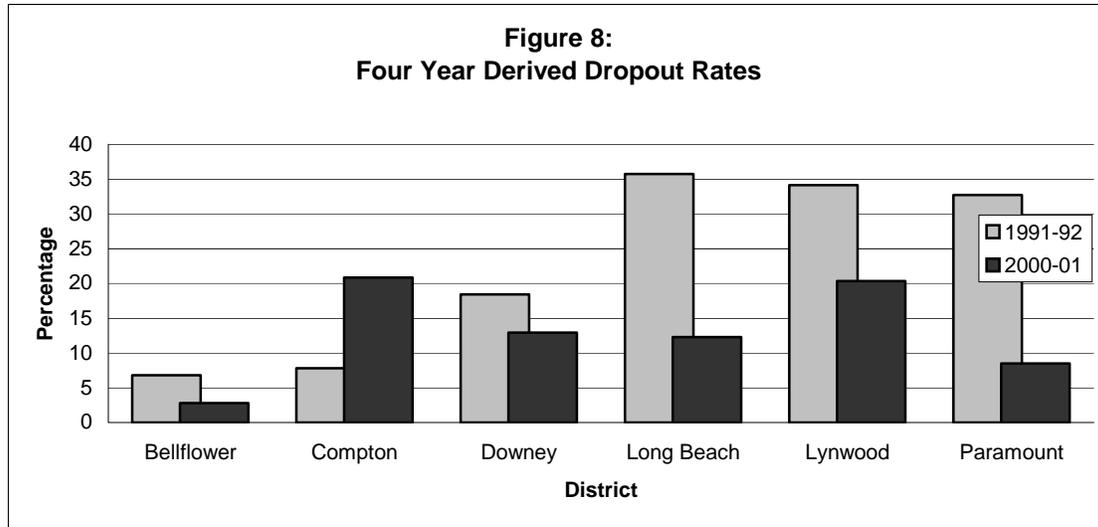


Source: 2000 Census

These findings do not indicate that Paramount's anti-gang efforts have resulted in a difference in the rate of serious crimes in Paramount versus the rate of those crimes in the surrounding cities. However, it is also possible that Paramount's proactive approach to gangs has contributed to declining crime rates around the region. There is a great deal of mobility of residents within this cluster of communities and it is reasonable to assume that the anti-gang actions of Paramount have affected neighboring cities.

⁴⁹ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

⁵⁰ Source: California Department of Education. The four-year derived dropout rate is the percentage of a single cohort that would drop out between grades 9-12 if the dropout rate for the most recent year (2000-2001) was consistent through all four years. Because so many students move in and out of districts, it is impossible to develop a true rate for any cohort.



Source: California Department of Education

It should be noted that not all Part I crimes are gang-related. Therefore, it is possible that gang-related crimes in Paramount have decreased at a different rate from rates in surrounding communities.

Qualitative Data

Semi-structured interviews of law enforcement personnel were conducted using a “snowball” sampling method. In a semi-structured interview the interviewer comes prepared with a list of open-ended questions for the respondent. The respondent answers in his or her own words, and these answers may lead to more questions.

The snowball sampling method involves an initial list of potential interviewees, who then connect the investigator to additional knowledgeable people to interview. In this case, the initial list was made up of referrals from Paramount’s Public Safety Department, who then provided referrals to additional sources.

Interviews were conducted with the following people from the following organizations:

Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Safe Streets Bureau:

- Captain Pete Amico – Oversees operation of gang investigators and enforcement teams for 5 cities in Lakewood Bureau.
- Sergeant Steve Newman – Oversees gang intelligence for Sheriff’s Department, including CalGangs database.

Note: Captain Amico and Sergeant Newman both stated that they could only give an overall picture of crime in the Lakewood Station region they oversee, since they are not specifically devoted to Paramount and have limited exposure to its unique situation.

Paramount Police Substation:

- Fred Bertsche – Assistant Public Safety Director for Paramount since 1995. Was deputy in Paramount for the majority of 1986-94.
- Sergeant Cindy Conner – Lead Sergeant of Paramount Special Assignment Officers (SAOs).
- Deputy Tom Dobis – TARGET Deputy
- Detective Don Lord – Deputy in Paramount for past 7 years.
- Detective Sergeant Mike O’Shea – Investigates gang crimes in Paramount.
- Sergeant Bob Windrim – Part of Operation Safe Streets. Based in Lakewood Station, oversees gang investigators in Paramount.

Former Paramount Deputies:

- Sergeant Augie Pando – Former patrol deputy, SAO, detective, and training officer in Paramount.
- Lieutenant Peggy O’Neal - Former sergeant and lieutenant in Paramount.
- Deputy Steve Thomas –Served in Paramount 1996-2000. Assigned to Crime Watch program in Paramount.

Gang officers from Long Beach and South Gate Police Departments

Summary of Qualitative Findings

Below is a brief list of the most pronounced trends to emerge from law enforcement interviews. Qualitative findings are described in more detail in the following sections.

- Law enforcement personnel believe that the gang/crime situation in Paramount has improved dramatically over the past ten years.
- Most deputies attribute the change in Paramount gang and crime activity to increased support and resources the city has given to law enforcement, which allows officers to be more proactive.
- Nearly all interviewees praised the City of Paramount for acknowledging its gang problem and being proactive in addressing it. Many respondents said that they had never seen another city make such extensive efforts in this area.
- Many deputies believe that there is a noticeable difference between Paramount and some of its neighboring communities, particularly Compton. Interviewees cite more graffiti, obvious gang members and a more run-down look to other cities.
- Overall, law enforcement personnel believe that city programs such as GRIP and revitalization have contributed to reductions in crime rates and gang activity.

Changes in Paramount Over the Last 10 Years

Overall, law enforcement personnel expressed a strong belief that Paramount's anti-gang activities have been working. All interviewees who spoke specifically about Paramount agreed that the level of gang activity and violence in the community had significantly decreased over the last 10 years.

One deputy said that in 1991 he would have estimated that about 25% of the residents were associated with turf gangs. Today he would put that figure at less than 5%. The same officer said that 10 years ago people didn't walk around town with their children, particularly at night. Now he sees families out walking at night all the time.

Another veteran deputy described a "vast change" in the number of gang slayings and violent crimes in Paramount between the 1980s and the present.

Factors Responsible for Lower Crime Rate in Paramount

The majority of deputies interviewed felt that the most important factor leading to lower crime rates in Paramount was the high level of support and resources the city had given to law enforcement. They stated that they had developed a relationship of "trust" with residents. Because of this trust, the city gives the Sheriff's Department a great deal of freedom to allocate resources and address issues causing crime as it sees fit. This contrasts to the past, when the city might mandate that a certain number of officers be assigned to certain types of details. Deputies said this support and freedom allows them to be more effective against crime.

One deputy also said he thought a key factor in the dropping crime rate was that Paramount had sought out "proactive" law enforcement personnel who actively sought out crime and criminals instead of waiting for a call to come in. He said that this level of proactive vigilance deterred many criminals and pre-empted major crimes because wrong-doers were stopped for minor crimes. Another deputy echoed this sentiment, saying the change in crime occurred because law enforcement became more "visible" in Paramount. Other deputies also mentioned that the department had become more proactive and less reactive.

Two deputies specifically mentioned the TARGET program as the program that made the most difference. One said TARGET was the "thing that helped Paramount turn the corner" because it was a "unique and well thought-out approach" to the gang problem.

One deputy also pinpointed revitalization as the most important factor in reducing crime problems in Paramount. He said that the "broken windows" approach is key to changing the crime situation because it gives people pride in the place where they live. After the city started making capital improvements, more people started joining Neighborhood Watches and cooperating with police. This deputy also said that these efforts helped to change the crime rate by making the city more attractive to a new group of people. Two other deputies said revitalization "played a major role" and "had a huge impact" on the

crime rate. One said, “Before, gangs were the only people taking ownership of the city. Once [the city] started cleaning it up, the people wanted to take ownership.”

Deputies thought it was important that they had improved internal cooperation and communication. Previously, deputies were segmented into units pursuing separate missions, such as gangs or quality of life issues. Now the different units communicate with each another more. Deputies also think it has been helpful to have a dedicated District Attorney and Probation Officer to keep cases and probationers from “falling through the cracks.”

Nearly every interviewee said that city programs such as landlord abatement, GRIP, the Good Neighbor Program, and revitalization were all components that had contributed to the improved crime rate. Two deputies said that the “innovative thinking” of city leaders was a key factor in this success. One deputy said the rapid removal of graffiti was important in reducing crime because it removed incentive for gang members to come in and write over rival graffiti.

One deputy specifically said he thought it was the combination of GRIP and TARGET that made the difference, though the other programs were also factors.

A common theme running through the responses was high praise for the city and its actions. Law enforcement personnel unanimously gave the City of Paramount and its leaders a great deal of credit for admitting to a gang problem and aggressively fighting it.

Regardless of the different factors they cited as most important in crime reduction, all deputies interviewed felt that the turning point in the Paramount crime situation occurred in the early 1990s. This perception coincides with quantitative data (Figure 5, page 48) showing a drop in per capita Part I crimes starting around 1993-94.

The majority of law enforcement personnel interviewed also noted that crime is cyclical and greater crime occurs when there are more young people in a community or when gang members are released from prison. This perception more closely matches the varying 1990s pattern of gang-related crimes in Figure 3, on page 44.

Paramount Versus Surrounding Communities

Nearly all the interviewees stated that a significant difference between Paramount and other local communities is Paramount’s proactive approach to attacking its problems. For instance, Captain Amico mentioned that Paramount had taken the initiative to convene a regional meeting of law enforcement personnel from different agencies to discuss crime issues affecting them all. Some respondents said they felt Paramount may have done a better job of identifying its problems than its neighbors. More than one deputy said that they had never seen another city put so many resources into fighting crime.

Deputies said they believe criminals are now less likely to commit crimes in Paramount because they perceive there is a greater likelihood they'd be caught there. They attributed this perception to the "zero tolerance" position of Paramount law enforcement to criminal behavior. For example, one deputy said that years ago people would steal cars and then drive them around town for days because they had little fear of being caught. Now if people steal cars, they use them to get someplace and then dump them.

Three of the deputies interviewed said they thought it was difficult to isolate Paramount from the surrounding areas to compare levels of gang membership. They didn't believe there was a significant difference in "acceptance of the gang culture" between Paramount and the surrounding cities, and said sometimes socio-economic factors were responsible for the differences they saw in the communities.

However, six other deputies told a very different story. They see a dramatic difference between Paramount and the neighboring areas of Compton and north Long Beach. They specifically mentioned the presence of more graffiti, more obvious gang members loitering on corners, less prominent police presence, and differences in the way the town itself looks (more bars on windows) in these two neighboring communities.

When asked what Paramount would look like today if it had not been proactive in all these areas, several deputies said Paramount would probably look like Compton. Huntington Park and Maywood were also mentioned in this category.

Anti-Gang Efforts in Neighboring Communities

Most current and former Paramount deputies said they didn't know that much about anti-gang efforts in neighboring communities. However, the overall perception of this group was that most other cities don't put as many resources into law enforcement as Paramount.

No one knew of another city-run program such as GRIP within the cities that contract with the Sheriff's Department for law enforcement services. However, officers at the Safe Streets Bureau did say that the Sheriff's Department was implementing the ATF-funded Gang Resistance Education And Training (GREAT) program for fifth and sixth graders in Compton. The program is a 13-week curriculum that has been implemented at different sites nationally but was just implemented by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department last year.

South Gate

Over the last 5-6 years, South Gate has had 1-2 dedicated gang units, called Crime Impact Teams (CITs). Typically, 1-2 officers in these units were responsible for tracking a single gang and patrolling the area frequented by that gang. South Gate's gang units were disbanded 6 months ago due to manpower shortages. However, the department is now in the process of re-assembling them.

According to officers interviewed, the focus of South Gate's anti-gang law enforcement efforts has been to make it uncomfortable for gang members to congregate in the city. They said one of the most successful strategies has been partnerships with other city departments, such as Housing and Code Enforcement. For example, if gang members are causing a disturbance at a house, police check with the Housing Department to see if the residents have Section 8 housing vouchers. If so, the Housing Department can threaten to take away the voucher because part of the Section 8 agreement is that recipients will not cause disturbances in the neighborhood. This is a way that the problem can be addressed when there are no grounds for arrest.

Gang prevention efforts cited by South Gate officers include:

- The JADE program: offers counseling for juvenile delinquents and their families. The problem is that this program is shared with other communities and resources are limited.
- The SANE program: similar to DARE, but South Gate officers also discuss gangs as part of the program. The program has been temporarily suspended while manpower issues are being resolved.

South Gate officers said they feel their city's efforts have been highly successful, primarily because for a number of years they had the largest gang unit of any city in the area. However, officials did say that the situation had deteriorated somewhat because manpower difficulties resulted in elimination and scaling back of gang and narcotics programs.

Long Beach

The Long Beach Gang Enforcement Division is currently undergoing re-organization. It is being merged with Homicide, Robbery, Violent Crimes, and Special Enforcement to improve communication within the department.

The Long Beach detective interviewed said that "zero tolerance" has been the primary strategy of the police department in combating gangs. "We try to throw as many of them in jail as possible."

This respondent said the gang situation in Long Beach has dramatically improved since the 1980s. Like Paramount law enforcement personnel, he credits the city for acknowledging its gang problem and putting additional resources into law enforcement tools such as a specialized gang unit. He says community cooperation and better gang laws also helped to improve the situation.

The City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation Department also offers a variety of programs through its Office of Gang Intervention and Prevention. These programs include counseling and motivational programs, job skills training, and artistic training. Most of these programs are intervention programs that receive referrals from schools, juvenile court programs, and other sources. There is no systematic gang prevention program such as GRIP that is run through the schools for youth who have never been in trouble.

Long Beach also offers a Tattoo Removal Program. The city will pay to have all “obvious” tattoos removed so that participants can improve their chances to get jobs.

Differences Between Newcomers and Long-Time Residents

Overall, deputies said they had not noticed significant differences between the behavior of long-time Paramount residents and that of newcomers to the city. They stated that they thought it would be inaccurate to suggest that those who have recently moved into the community commit more crime, or similarly, people from neighboring communities.

Perceptions of GRIP

The deputies interviewed knew the concept behind GRIP and some had even spoken at GRIP lessons. However, they had varying levels of familiarity with the program. For instance, they stated that they thought fifth grade was too late to start the lessons and were surprised to learn there is also a second grade program.

All deputies considered GRIP to be a positive program that should be continued. They felt any positive messages and education about the dangers of gangs could only help the situation. They thought that GRIP might partially fill a “hole” left by parents who are not involved and vigilant with their children. They also believe that GRIP is important because it shows children that they have options besides gangs. This is important because the deputies believe most children get involved with gangs because they don’t see any future for themselves in any other role. They also think it’s good that GRIP tries to make contact with “good” children, versus intervention programs which spend all the resources on the “bad” children.

However several deputies emphasized that GRIP and other programs like it could be only so effective without family/parental support. They said that it is difficult for lessons at school to compete with the influence of family members who are gang members, or with parents who do not involve themselves in their children’s lives.

Deputies also said it was important that the city administered GRIP instead of leaving it to law enforcement officers. They felt the message of the program was more effective coming from civilian community members and it would be inefficient to pay a deputy to administer this type of program. However they also thought it was good to have officers as guest speakers because it is better if a child’s first contact with law enforcement takes place in a positive environment.

A couple of the deputies said they felt GRIP had made a difference because they had heard people talk positively about it at community forums and graduations. However all deputies said that it is difficult to gauge what impact GRIP may be having, since it is so hard to measure results. They compared the program to DARE and referenced studies saying that DARE didn’t make a difference. They didn’t know about any previous

studies on GRIP’s effectiveness and wondered why it hadn’t been evaluated to determine impact.

One deputy summed it up as follows, “If I had \$10 to spend [to combat crime], I’d put \$2 into GRIP and \$8 into law enforcement.”

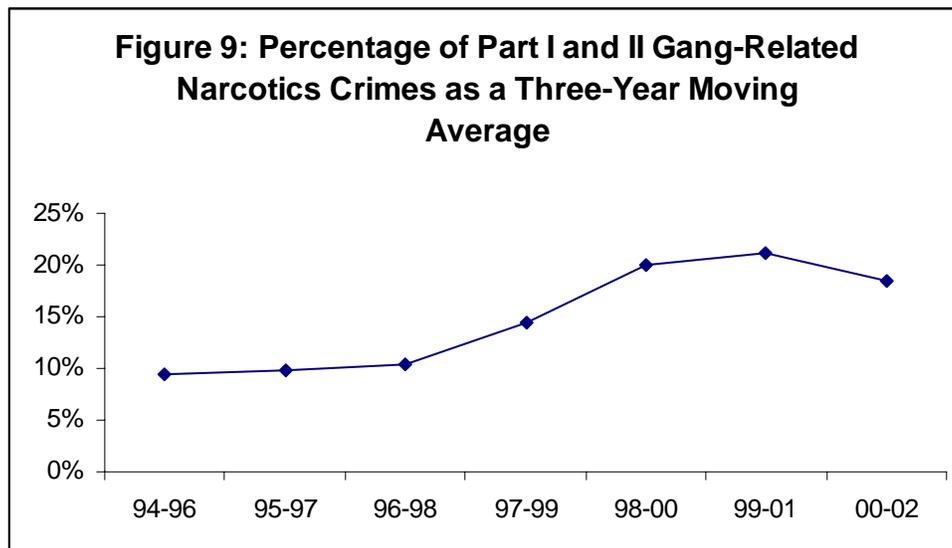
Could Better Law Enforcement Have Done It Alone?

Deputies were asked if Paramount would have seen the same results in the crime rate if it had not pursued prevention (GRIP), revitalization, and other anti-gang activities in addition to enhanced law enforcement activities. The officers said they did not think the same results would have been achieved because “you have to do something for the good people” and “you have to give people hope.” They believe that is what both GRIP and revitalization offer.

Changes in the Nature of Gang Activity

Officers interviewed at the Safe Streets Bureau said that they thought gang crimes still usually revolved around traditional “turf wars.” However, Paramount Public Safety officials and the majority of Paramount deputies interviewed felt that gang activity had shifted from turf wars to narcotics issues. They said that now gang territories are less clearly delineated, and there is greater violence because rival gang members cross paths more often when moving drugs from one area to another.

Quantitative data reflects a rise in narcotics gang activity in the City of since 1997 as shown in Figure 9.



Several deputies emphasized that narcotics are an ongoing challenge for Paramount, as they are for many cities, since drugs are a lucrative enterprise. One deputy said that it is

difficult to deter children from crime when they can make \$100 just standing on a corner as a lookout.

Graffiti Tracking

According to the Assistant Director of the Paramount Public Works Department, Public Works takes photos of graffiti if it is “out of the ordinary,” or in an area where there have recently been a lot of gang incidents. The photos are forwarded to the Paramount Public Safety Office and analyzed by deputies. One deputy described these photos as “invaluable” in providing information on which gangs and gang members are feuding, as well as the areas in which it is occurring. He said that graffiti analysis in Paramount has significantly improved and has become more consistent since the introduction of the TARGET program.

Analysis started about ten years ago, with deputies making handwritten notes in notebooks. Sometimes Public Works would cover the graffiti before law enforcement had the opportunity to analyze it. Now law enforcement and Public Works have a far more sophisticated system involving digital photography of the graffiti.

A long-time Paramount deputy said that the amount of gang-related graffiti is cyclical, matching the highs and lows of gang activity overall. He reported that approximately 5-10% of the graffiti photos he sees turn out to be “irrelevant” to gang activity – “just children spray painting for fun.” He says this percentage of non-gang graffiti has risen since the early 1990s, when approximately 1% of the graffiti he saw was not gang-related.

Numerous deputies interviewed said that the city’s rapid response to graffiti was something that set it apart from some other local cities. For instance, Paramount paints over graffiti on weekends, while most of its neighbors do not. All interviewees say this makes a big difference in the perception of the city as a safe, clean place.

Areas for Improvement

Overall, when asked about weaknesses or areas for improvement in Paramount’s anti-gang initiatives, interviewees said they couldn’t think of much that the city could or should do differently. However, the following suggestions were mentioned:

Deputy Tenure

Paramount Public Safety personnel indicated that, although law enforcement has done an excellent job dealing with gangs, gang suppression efforts might be improved by longer tenures of deputies assigned to the area. They felt if officers had more time to get to know the neighborhood and people, they would have a better sense of potential gang activity and troublemakers in the area.

However, deputies interviewed thus far said that the range of deputy tenure was anywhere from 3 to 15 years. They stated that deputies wanted to work in Paramount because of the support and appreciation they receive from the city. For example, a barbecue was thrown for the deputies to celebrate the declining crime rate. A list is kept of deputies who want to come to work in Paramount.

Paramount deputies said that their Special Assignment Officers have an intimate relationship with the community and know everyone on the street. They also said that even if deputies know they may have a short tenure in the area, they care about doing their jobs well. A deputy's current assignment is his or her "project" and they want to make sure it goes as well as possible.

Children Need A Sense of Future

Several interviewees said that one of the biggest problems with children in Paramount and the surrounding area, leading them to join gangs, is a lack of hope for the future. They said that programs like GRIP, revitalization and the new Paramount education initiative are helping in this area, but they wish more could be done.

Community Needs To Feel Safe Speaking Out

One deputy said that one of the strengths of his work in Paramount was his relationship with the community. He had a number of high profile cases he would not have been able to solve without the help of residents. He said that as he bonded with the community, he built up trust with people and overcame their initial reluctance to come forward with information about criminal activity.

However, another deputy said that even though the community's relationship with law enforcement has improved, some people are still afraid to speak out. He thinks the city should put pressure on courts to give tougher sentences so that people will feel safer reporting crimes and being witnesses. The same officer also encouraged stronger emphasis on participation in the neighborhood watch program.

Planning, Housing and Further Revitalization

One deputy suggested that density in housing is a problem and Paramount should stop allowing multi-family residences to be built. He also said that the city should crack down on multiple families living in single-family dwellings. In his experience, a disproportionate number of calls for police service come from these types of living quarters.

This deputy said that the city should make low-cost home improvement loans available. (It was not clear whether or not he was aware of the residential programs the city currently offers.) He also suggested that the city convince local growers to donate flats of flowers so that the city could have a big spring planting event every year to encourage people to beautify their yards.

E. Survey of Ninth Graders

To compare gang participation rates and attitudes between GRIP participants and students who have not experienced GRIP, a survey was administered to 735 current ninth grade students in Paramount. The survey was anonymous and asked in which grades, if any, students had participated in the GRIP program. Students were asked about their participation in gang activity and whether they agreed, disagreed, or were undecided about a number of statements related to gangs.

For the purposes of analysis, students were divided into three categories of GRIP participation based on their responses.

- GRIP Participants – Students who said they participated in the GRIP program in second grade or fifth grade, or both second grade and fifth grade.
- No Participation – Students who had not participated in GRIP prior to ninth grade.
- Uncertain Participation – Students whose answers were blank, unclear or indicated they may have participated in another program that they believed to be GRIP.

These survey results have the same limitations as all self-reported data. Namely, some respondents may not have answered questions truthfully. However, we consider the survey findings to be a good indicator of student gang activity and attitudes

Summary of Survey Findings

- Students who experience GRIP are moderately less likely to report involvement in gang activity than students who have never participated in the program.
- Overall, GRIP students are moderately more likely to have negative attitudes about gangs and gang-related activities.
- The greatest difference between perceptions of GRIP participants and non-GRIP participants was on the relationship between gang involvement and drug and alcohol usage. 72% of GRIP participants agree that drugs and alcohol are a big part of gang life, versus 59% of non-GRIP students who agree to this statement.
- All students, including GRIP participants, displayed low levels of anti-gang sentiment on the questions of graffiti, tattoos, hanging out with gang members, dressing like gang members, drugs and alcohol in gangs, and gang violence affecting non-gang members of the community.

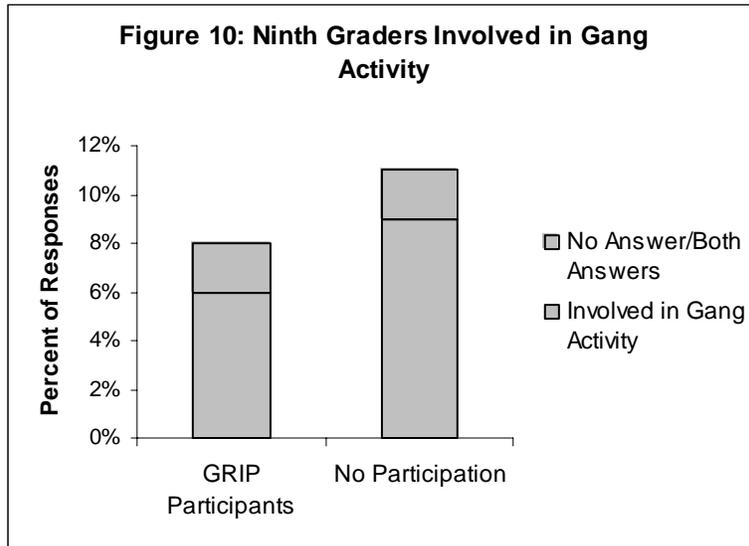
Involvement In Gang Activity

The survey asked students to state whether or not they are currently involved in gang activity. Answers were divided into four categories: those who said they are not involved in gang activity, those who said they are involved in gang activity, those who did not answer, and those who marked both answers. The results are shown in Table VIII below.

Table VIII: Survey Responses

GRIP Participation	Total Students	Not Involved in Gang Activity	Involved in Gang Activity	No Answer or Both Answers
Participation in second, fifth or both	505	466	29	10
No Participation	209	185	19	5
No Answer or Uncertain Participation	21	18	2	1
Total	735	669	50	16

Table VIII shows the percentage of GRIP participants and non-GRIP participants who reported involvement in gang activity. Also displayed are the percentages of each group who did not answer this question or checked both “yes” and “no” for gang involvement. These last two answers do not necessarily indicate gang involvement, and are displayed only to show how results would change if those students were all involved in gang activity. These results show students who experience GRIP are moderately less likely to report participation in gang activity.



Gang Involvement and Ethnicity

The ethnic makeup of students who reported involvement in gang activity is roughly proportionate to the ethnic makeup of the total population of students surveyed. Therefore, the GRIP program appears to be serving all ethnicities equally well.

Table IX: Gang Involvement and Ethnicity

	Total Survey Population	% Total Survey Population	Gang Involved	% of Gang Involved
African American	71	10%	5	10%
Asian	13	2%	1	2%
Caucasian	11	1%	0	0%
Latino	573	78%	36	72%
Other	59	8%	8	16% ⁵¹
No Answer	8	1%	0	0%

Gender and Gang Involvement

Of the 50 students reporting gang involvement 34% (17 out of 50) were female. Of overall survey respondents, approximately 50% were female. Although the majority of gang members are still boys, girls are clearly now a significant part of gangs.

Of the males who reported gang involvement, 52% (17 of 33) had experienced the GRIP program. Of females who reported gang involvement, 71% (12 of 17) had participated in GRIP. This finding suggests that girls may not relate to GRIP’s curriculum as much as boys.

Attitudes About Gangs

The following are summaries of responses to the attitudinal questions on the ninth grade surveys. To simplify the results, analysis has been limited to the most significant respondent groups and answer categories.

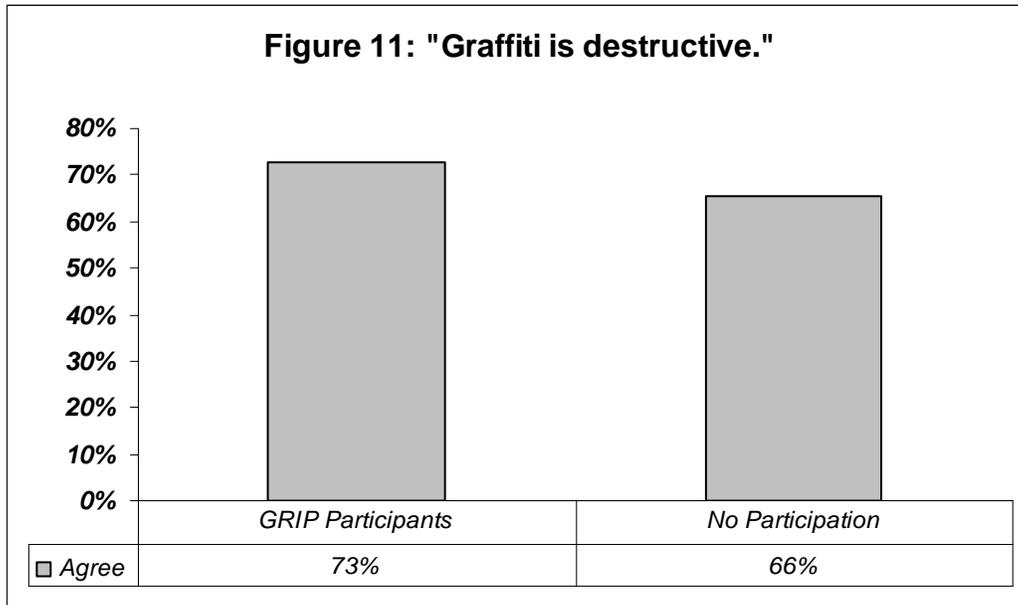
Graffiti is destructive.

GRIP participants were more likely than non-participants to agree that graffiti is destructive. However, even among GRIP students, only 73% agreed with this statement.

In police interviews conducted in Paramount, many deputies and community members specifically cited graffiti as a key sign of gang activity and criminal activity in an area.

⁵¹ Of the eight gang-involved students who wrote in “Other” ethnicities, five entered ethnicities which may be considered the same or very similar to Latino, such as “Hispanic” and “Puerto Rican.”

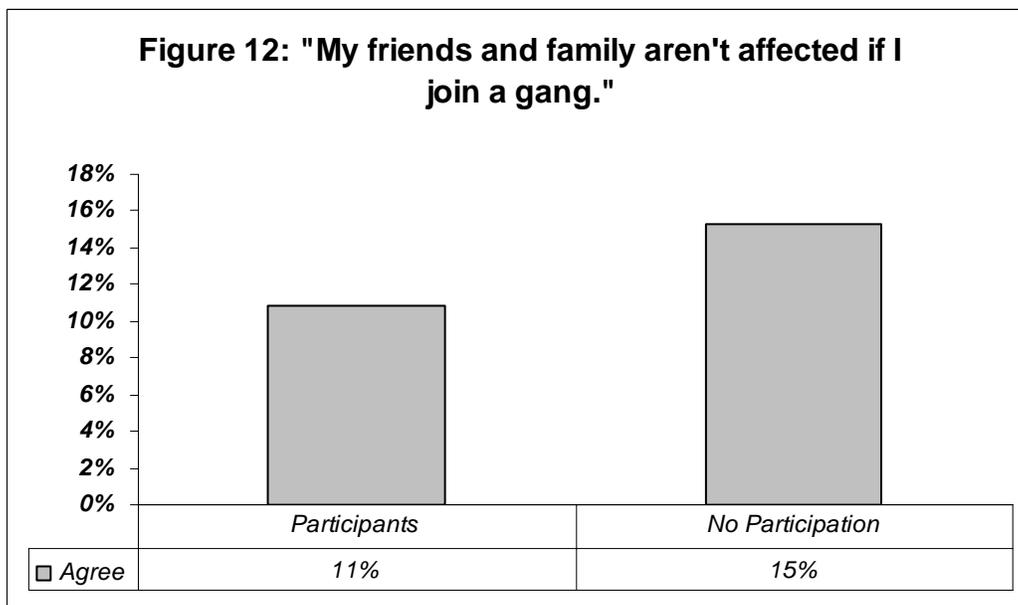
This disconnect between perceptions of youth and other community members may indicate a need for more emphasis on the negative consequences of graffiti in the GRIP program.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

My friends and family aren't affected if I join a gang.

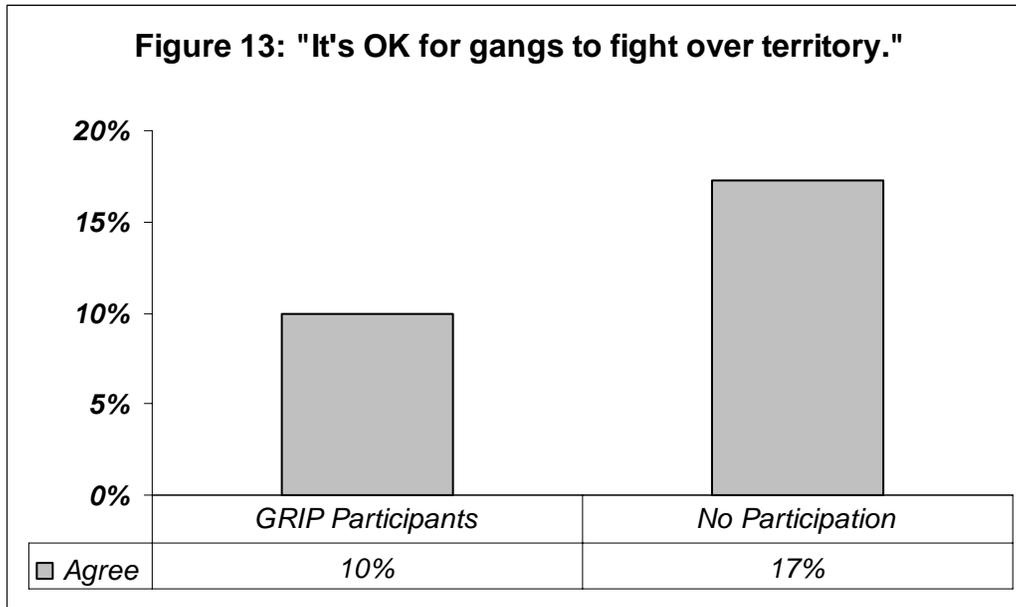
GRIP students were moderately less likely to agree with this statement than students who had never participated in GRIP.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

It's OK for gangs to fight over territory.

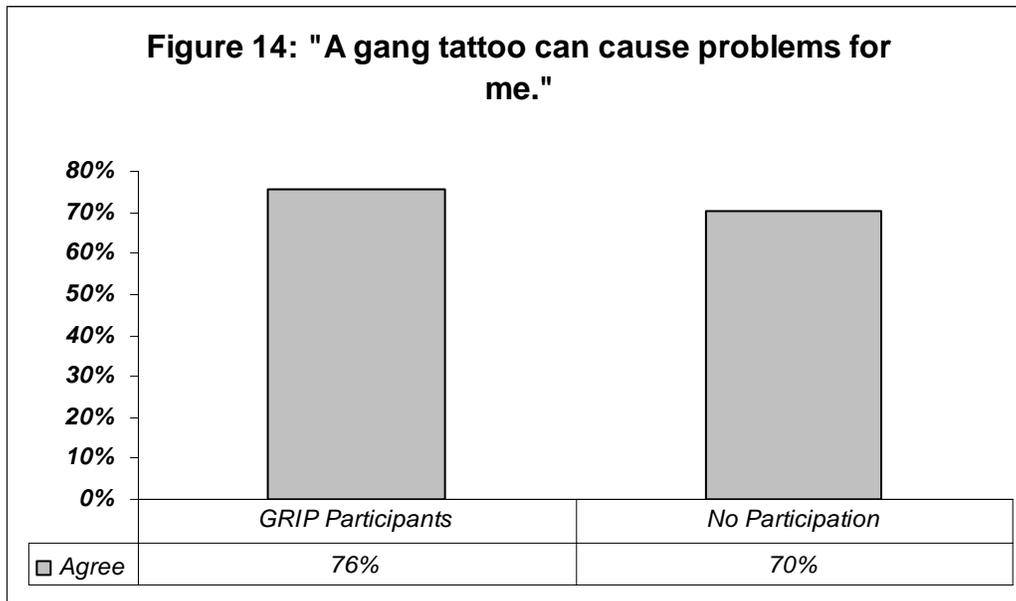
GRIP students were less likely to agree with this statement than non-GRIP students.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

A gang tattoo can cause problems for me.

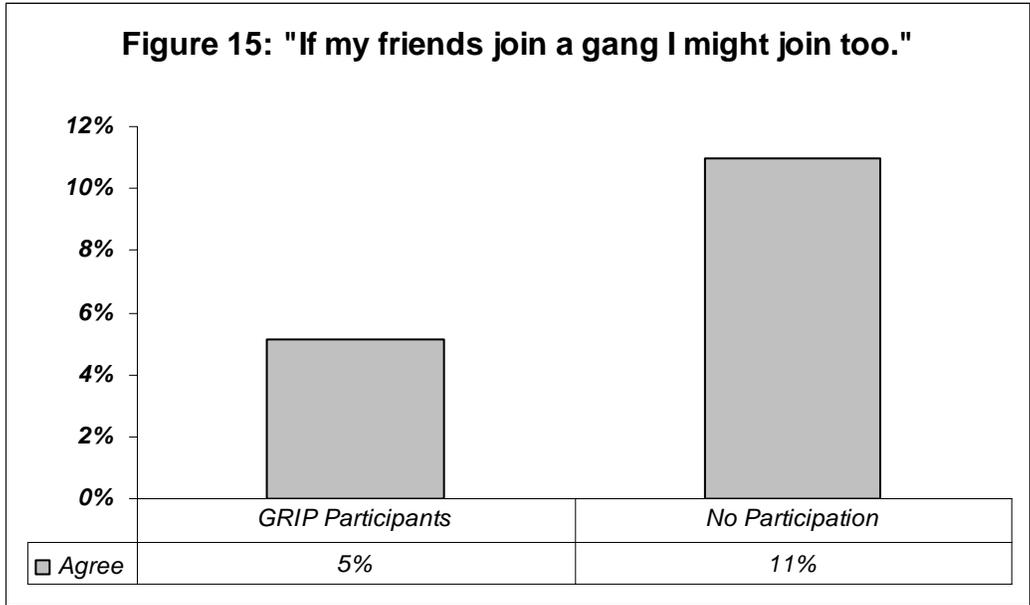
GRIP students were more likely to agree that a gang tattoo could cause problems for them. However, nearly one quarter of GRIP students disagreed or were undecided on this question. This finding may indicate a need for more GRIP focus on negative aspects of gang tattoos.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

If my friends join a gang I might join too.

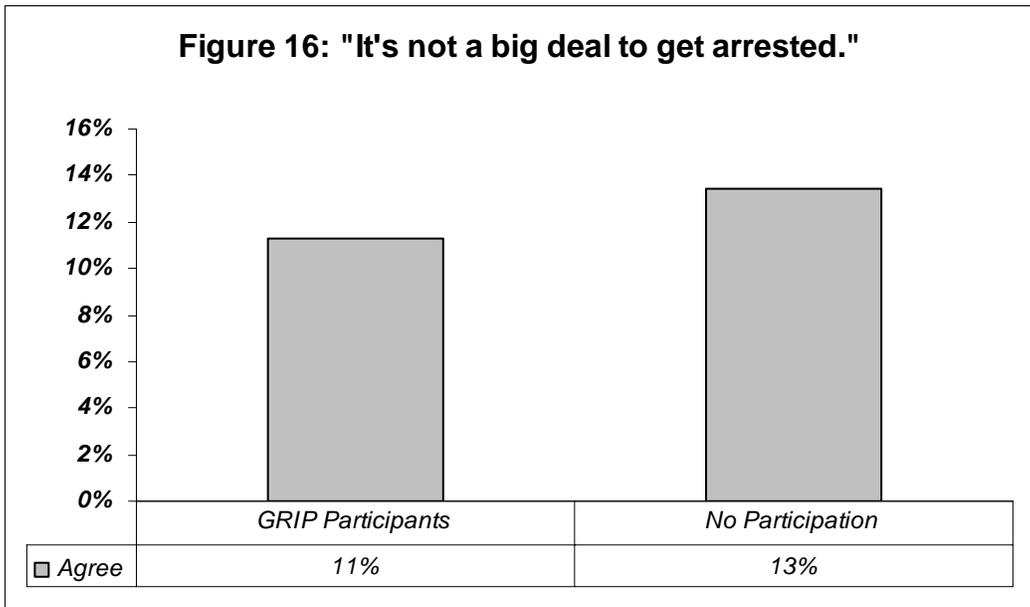
GRIP participants were less likely to agree with this statement.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

It's not a big deal to get arrested.

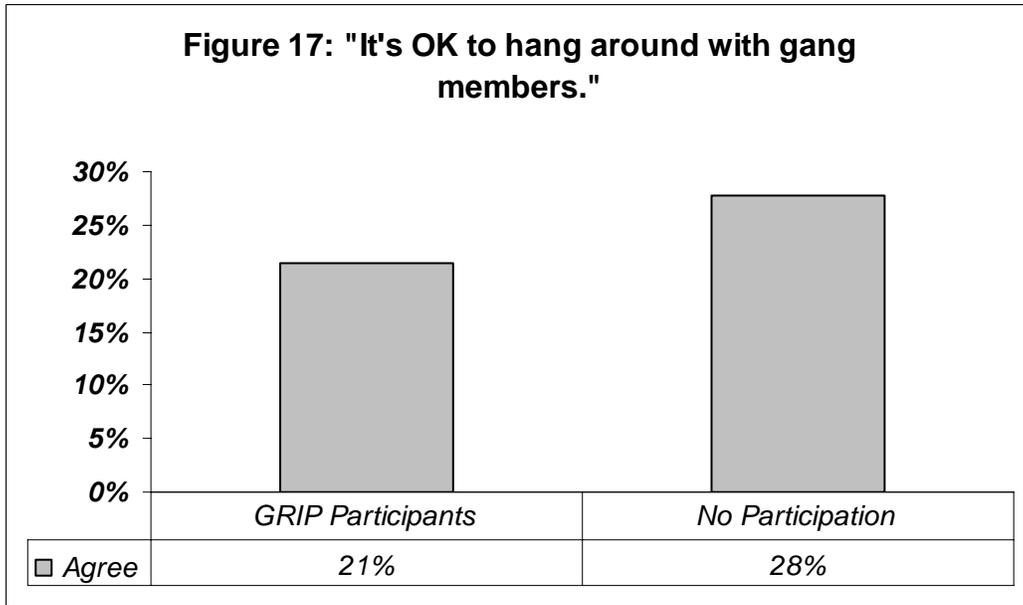
GRIP students were less likely to disagree with this statement.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

It's OK to hang around with gang members.

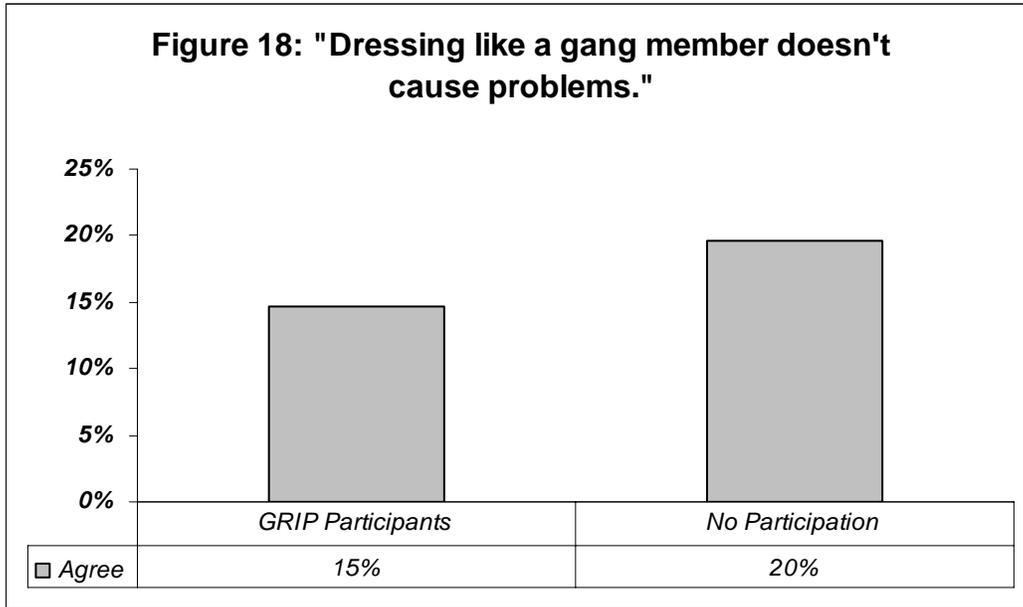
GRIP participants were less likely to agree with this statement. However, 21% of GRIP students still agreed that it is OK to hang around gang members. These responses may indicate a need for more education on the dangers of association with gang members. Results may also reflect the reality that many students may have family members who are current or former gang members.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

Dressing like a gang member doesn't cause problems.

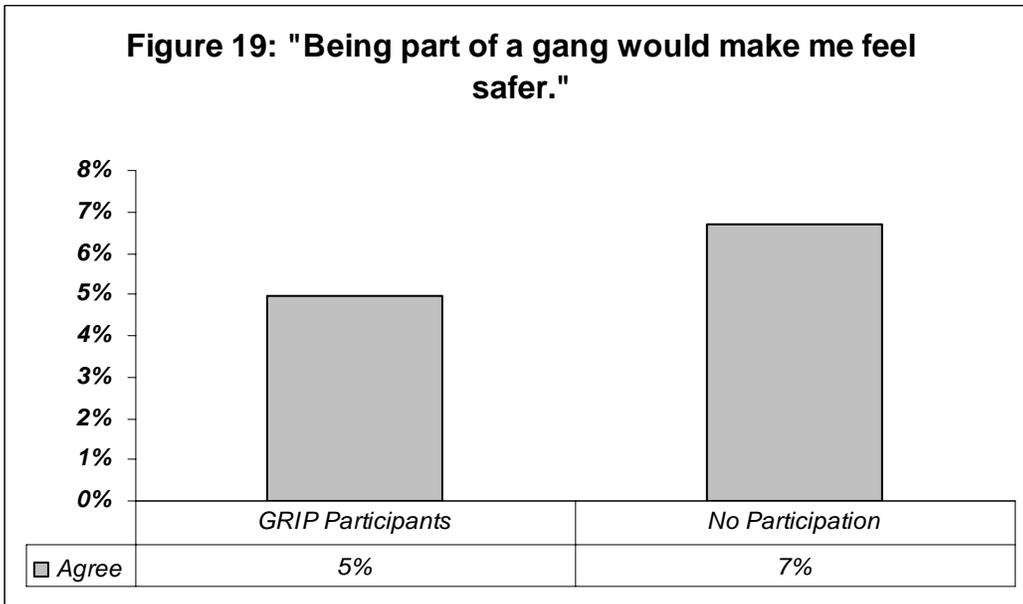
GRIP students were less likely to agree with this statement. However, 15% of GRIP students still believed that dressing like a gang member would not cause problems. This finding may reflect current trends in youth fashion. However, deputies commented that just dressing like a gang member can be very dangerous for young people since they might be mistaken by actual gang members for members of a rival gang. Therefore, there may be a need for more education of youth on this subject.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

Being part of a gang would make me feel safer.

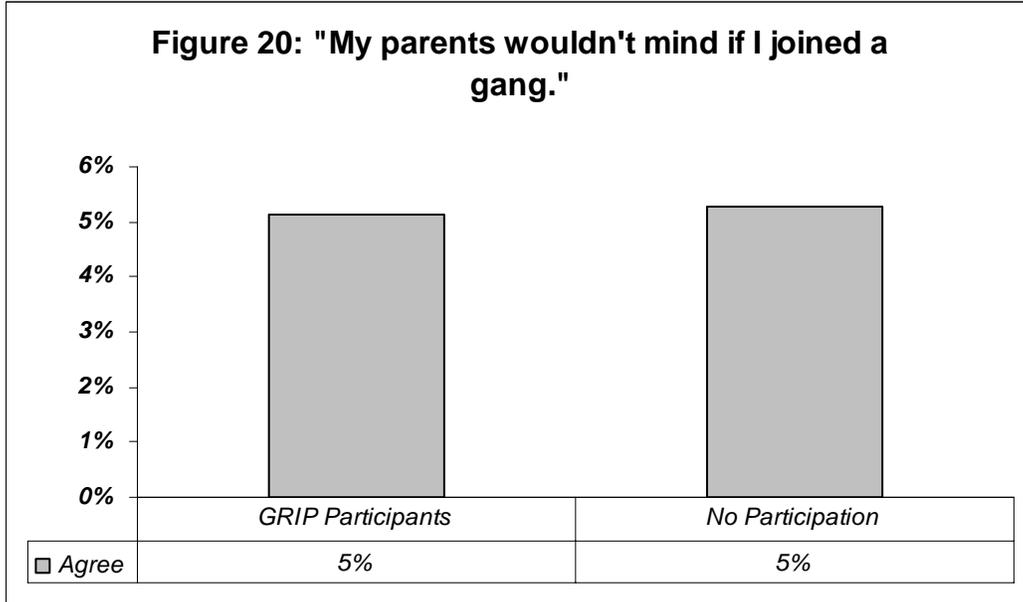
Very few students overall agreed with this statement. GRIP participants were less likely to agree than non-participants.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

My parents wouldn't mind if I joined a gang.

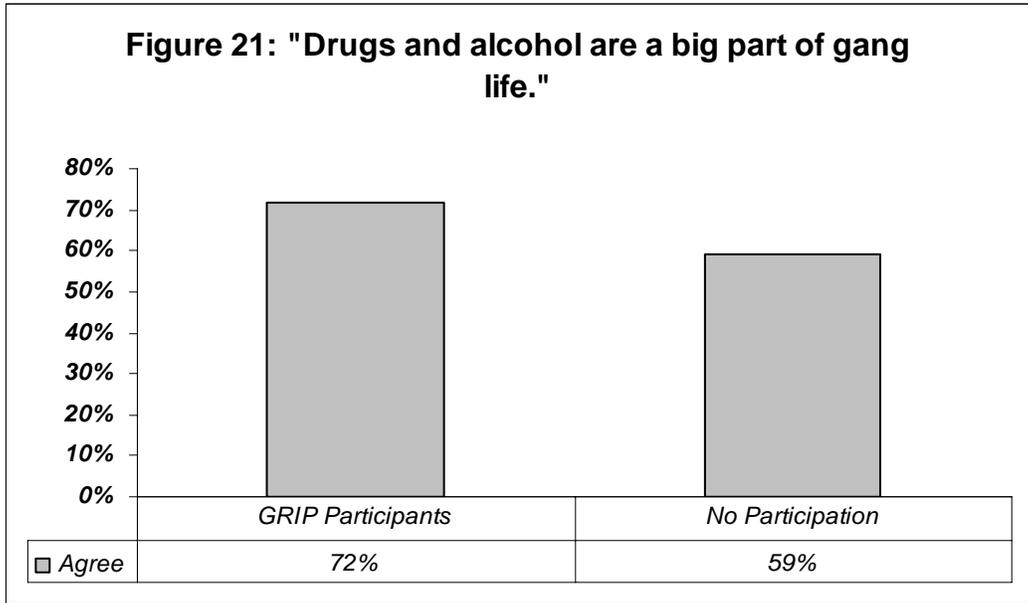
On this question, responses between participants and non-participants were identical, with only 5% agreeing.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

Drugs and alcohol are a big part of gang life.

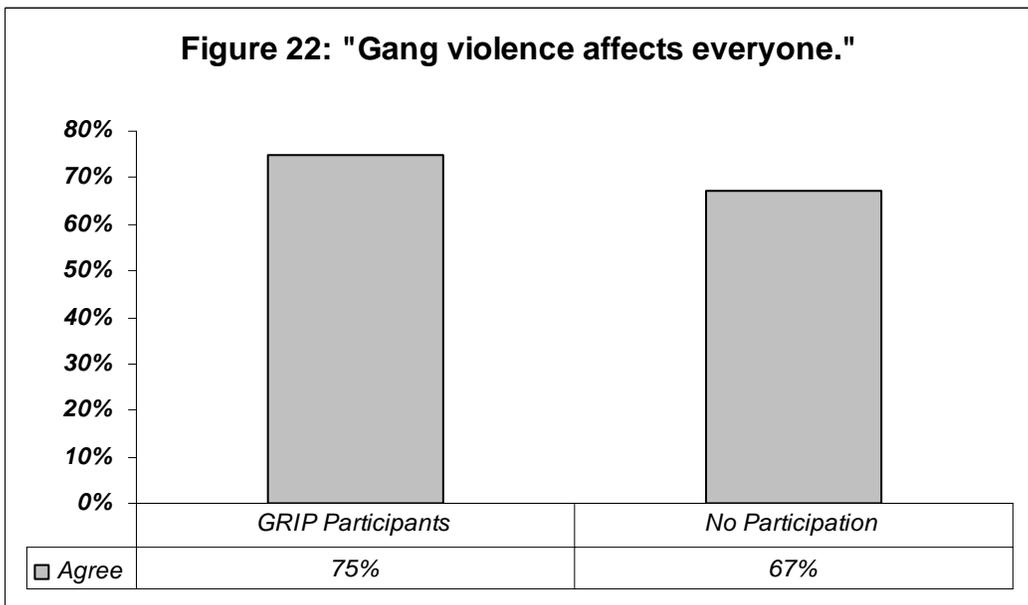
GRIP students were more likely to agree with this statement than non-GRIP students. This was the widest margin of difference in opinions of participants and non-participants. This finding suggests that exposure to GRIP makes a difference in the perceptions of youth about gangs and drugs and alcohol. However, only 72% of GRIP participants agreed with this statement, indicating a possible need for more education in this area.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

Gang violence affects everyone.

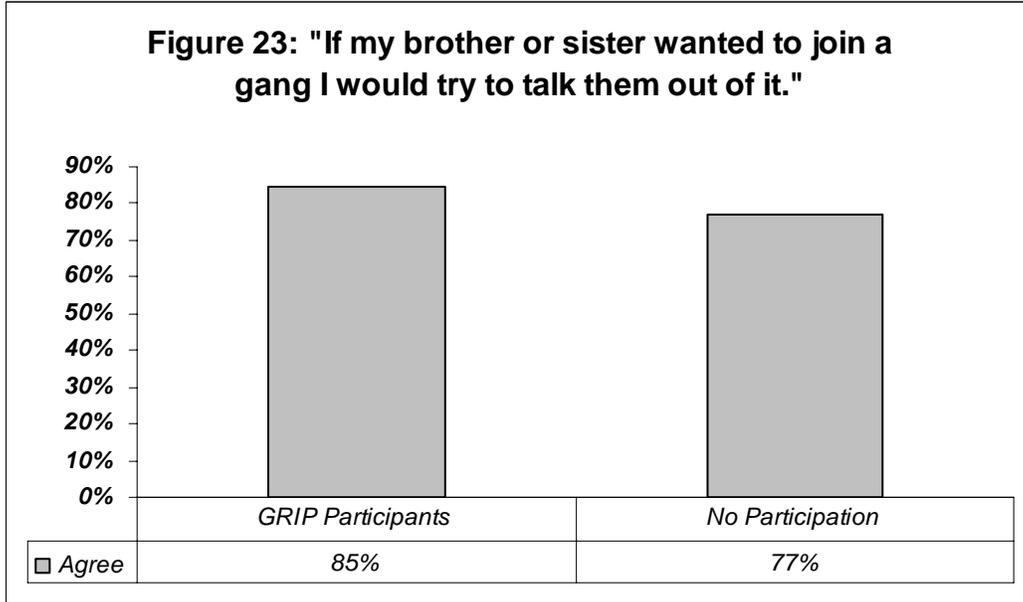
GRIP students were more likely to agree with this statement, with 75% agreeing. However, one quarter of GRIP students disagreed or were uncertain on this point. This finding may indicate a need for additional attention to this point in the GRIP program.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

If my brother or sister wanted to join a gang I would try to talk them out of it.

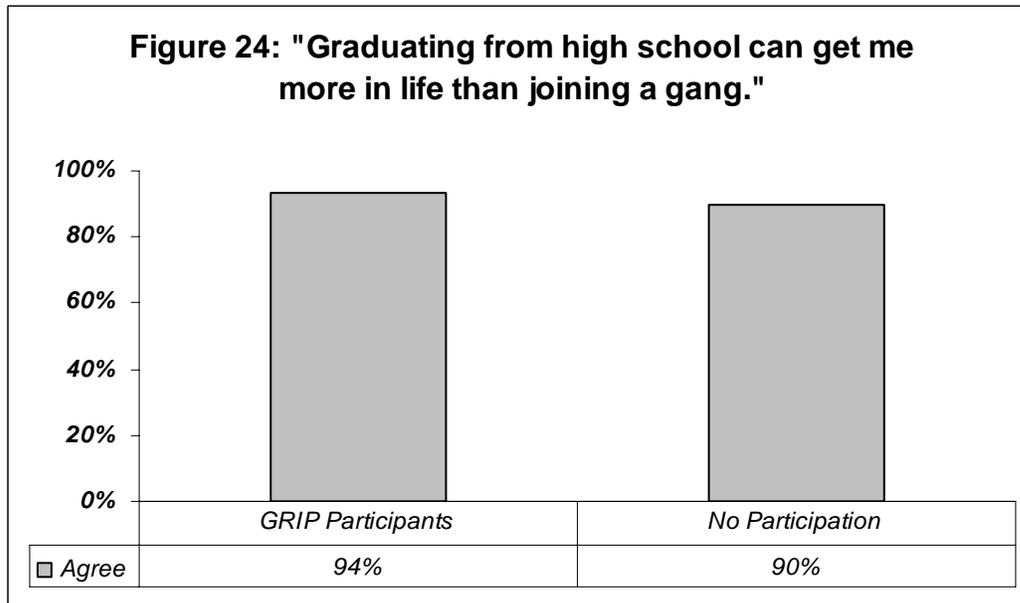
The majority of students in both groups agreed with this statement. GRIP students were more likely to agree than non-GRIP students.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

Graduating from high school can get me more in life than joining a gang.

GRIP students were more likely to agree with this statement. However, there was a very high level of agreement with this statement overall, with 90% of even non-GRIP students agreeing.



Source: 2003 Survey of ninth grade students, Paramount Unified School District

GRIP SURVEY

1. In what other grades have you participated in the GRIP or Alternative to Gang Membership programs?

second _____ fifth _____ second & fifth _____ I did not participate in GRIP _____

2. If yes, at which school? _____

3. Are you currently involved in gang activity? Yes _____ No _____

4. I am: Male _____ Female _____

5. Place a check in the blank that best reflects your ethnic background:

African American _____ Asian _____ Caucasian _____ Latino _____

Other (please state) _____

For the statements below, mark: Agree (A), Disagree (D), or Undecided (U)	A	D	U
Graffiti is destructive.			
My friends and family aren't affected if I join a gang.			
It's OK for gangs to fight over territory.			
A gang tattoo can cause problems for me.			
If my friends join a gang I might join too.			
It's not a big deal to get arrested.			
It's OK to hang around with gang members.			
Dressing like a gang member doesn't cause problems.			
Being part of a gang would make me feel safer.			
My parents wouldn't mind if I joined a gang.			
Drugs and Alcohol are a big part of a gang life.			
Gang violence affects everyone.			
If my brother or sister wanted to join a gang I would try to talk them out of it.			
Graduating from high school can get me more in life than joining a gang.			

V. Options for Strengthening Gang Deterrence Efforts

Option I: Reallocate Resources to Improve GRIP and Other Anti-gang Efforts in Paramount

The City of Paramount may want to consider reallocating City resources in ways designed to improve the GRIP Program and other anti-gang efforts in Paramount. The GRIP Program currently has over \$300,000 available each year through the General Fund. The budget provides funding for salaries, maintenance costs, operational costs, and external conferences costs, among other things. Reallocating existing resources to specific activities within the GRIP Program and other anti-gang efforts in Paramount may improve the City's results in combating gangs. The City may want to consider reallocating some of the existing resources to fund additional classes in additional school grades and to allocate additional resources aimed at reaching parents, since lack of parental involvement was often named as a problem.

Option IA: Replace Current Ninth Grade Program with a More Extensive Seventh Grade Program

The current ninth grade curriculum consists of 3-4 lessons that aim to relate the importance of staying away from gangs, and also talk about teen pregnancy and staying in school. The intended ninth grade curriculum included six lessons. The decrease in lessons is largely due to time constraints because of the "track" school calendar and mandatory testing days. However, in interviews teachers and law enforcement personnel stated that the ninth grade was too late and "the earlier the better." It is believed that the seventh grade is a better time to reach teens about gangs, as opposed to the ninth grade. Several teachers stated that they believed that the ninth grade was too late to prevent a teen from becoming involved in gangs. By the time students are in the ninth grade the teachers observed that those teens interested in gang activity were already active gang members. A more extensive seventh curriculum that covers the material currently taught in the ninth grade, in addition to recapping material taught in the second and fifth grades, will be more likely to impact students' gang involvement.

Actions Steps:

1. Relate the importance of adding a seventh grade program to Paramount Unified School District officials.
2. Identify the number of seventh grade classes in the Paramount Unified School District.
3. Develop seventh grade curriculum that includes current ninth grade lessons, most relevant second and fifth grade lessons.
4. Allocate appropriate resources (money and staff) to implement seventh grade program.

Option IB: Develop Ongoing Monitoring System In Order to Monitor Progress Toward Program Objectives

In order to assess whether the GRIP Program is achieving its program goals and objectives it is necessary that it consistently monitor these program goals and objectives by conducting surveys of second, fifth and ninth graders each year. Using a survey similar to that used for ninth graders for this report would allow GRIP Program staff members to determine if the objectives are being met and to what degree they are successful. Consistently monitoring the program objectives would allow program administrators to respond to any objectives that are not being met successfully. During the Fall 2003 Semester, University of Southern California students might be interested in helping develop a useful monitoring system for the City *pro bono*.

Action Steps:

1. Contact USC Professor Joseph Wholey regarding the possibility of having a team of evaluation seminar students help develop a monitoring system for the GRIP program *pro bono*.
2. Once monitoring system is developed, use it consistently to monitor program objectives.
3. Consider improvements to program based on results of the monitoring system.

Option IC: Refocus Certain GRIP Program Lessons to Improve Outcomes

Following the analysis of the Ninth Grade Survey there were several indicators that pointed to the need for changes to the GRIP curriculum. First, GRIP staff members should re-evaluate the GRIP curriculum to determine how the program can better relate to females and issues involved in female gang membership. Girls account for an increasing percentage of gang membership and it is important that their needs are addressed. Second, consider more emphasis on the following topics in the GRIP program:

- Negative impact of graffiti on the community.
- Negative consequences of gang tattoos.
- Negative consequences of association with gang members, with recognition that many students will have family members who are current or former gang members.
- Dangers of dressing like a gang member.
- Dangers of drugs and alcohol activity associated with gangs.
- Dangers of gang violence to innocent people.

Action Steps:

1. Consider changes on GRIP material as it relates to females, based on findings of Ninth Grade Survey Results of the report.
2. Consider further emphasizing the topics mentioned above in the GRIP program curriculum, as they received the lowest positive results in the Ninth Grade Survey Results.

Option II: Research Promising Approaches and Best Practices That May be Part of Other Communities' Anti-gang Efforts

It would be useful for the City of Paramount to continue to gather information about promising approaches and best practices that may be part of other communities' anti-gang efforts. The information gathered should come from Los Angeles, other regions in California, and other parts of the United States. Researching and analyzing additional approaches and best practices used to combat gang activity and membership might provide valuable information that could be used to improve the existing programs in Paramount. Once again, University of Southern California Fall 2003 evaluation seminar students from the School of Policy, Planning and Development may be contacted to gather and analyze such information *pro bono*.

Action Steps:

1. Contact USC Professor Joseph Wholey regarding the possibility of having a team of evaluation seminar students gather and analyze additional approaches and best practices that may be under way in Los Angeles County, California, and elsewhere in the United States.
2. Evaluate findings and determine if the City of Paramount should adopt any of those approaches in order to improve their anti-gang efforts

Option III: Increase Training of GRIP Staff Members

A real knowledge and understanding of the dangers of gang activity is an important aspect of being a GRIP class instructor. Personal understanding of the issues that can foster gang membership and the different effects that being in a gang have on an individual and his/her family allow the student to relate to the topics being covered and the instructor as well. This may also include cooperating with some gang intervention groups to find out what elements of GRIP and similar programs work and which ones do not work. In addition to bringing personal knowledge to the classroom, GRIP instructors should be equipped with additional training. Together with the regularly scheduled gang information conferences, regular GRIP staff member training seminars will improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities and allow for consistent dissemination of important information. Staff development is considered to be one of the important characteristics vital to having a potentially successful gang prevention strategy. The staff members and students will both benefit from the increased understanding of gangs and gang membership.

Action Steps:

1. Evaluate current training program for GRIP staff.
2. Gather information on practical teaching techniques and current issues of concern related to gang membership, from best practices results and gang information conferences.
3. Design introductory training seminars for new GRIP Program staff members and regularly scheduled training seminars for regular GRIP Program staff.

4. Explore the possibility of encouraging GRIP staff members to enroll in relevant outside courses, with their tuition costs paid by the City of Paramount or others.

Option IV: Increase Collaboration Among Anti-gang Activities in Paramount

There are several characteristics that are consistently mentioned in the studies that are considered vital to having a potentially successful gang prevention strategy. One such characteristic is the provision of multiple links between schools and opportunities in the community. Collaborations should be made between the school and outside community organizations in the public and private sectors to address the multiple components of youth violence and its causes.

For example, the City can cooperate with Paramount Unified School District and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to develop a system for tracking how many GRIP students eventually become identified as gang members. The City can also work with deputies to develop interview questions for gang members arrested in Paramount to discern if they experienced GRIP and if so, why it didn't work for them. There are also separate gang prevention efforts in the schools. Partnerships between the GRIP program and the Paramount schools to align their message and their efforts together will benefit everyone involved.

Action Steps:

1. Gather information on existing efforts from other agencies that address gang prevention.
2. Meet with other agency officials such as school board members, law enforcement representatives, and additional community leaders in order to strengthen existing partnerships.
3. Develop partnerships for implementation of a system for tracking how many GRIP students eventually become identified as gang members.
4. Develop interview questions for gang members arrested in Paramount to discern if they experienced GRIP and if so, why it didn't work for them.

Option V: Increase Collaboration with Other Communities

Develop linkages with Los Angeles County, other Gateway cities, school districts, foundations, and nonprofit organizations in cooperative, collaborative, and partnership efforts to significantly reduce and eventually eliminate gang activity.

Option VA: Neighboring Communities Could Explore the Research on Promising Approaches and Best Practices

One of the ways to encourage cooperation and collaboration on anti-gang activities is to educate potential partners on the current promising approaches and best practices. Utilizing the City's accumulated research, including this study, as well as information gleaned from conferences and contacts in the industry, the City could sponsor

seminars for neighboring communities as well as encourage them to undertake research of their own.

Action Steps:

1. Continue to gather information on existing anti-gang efforts in Los Angeles County and other Gateway cities.
2. Contact neighboring communities to discuss anti-gang research and to encourage them to explore key research on current promising approaches and best practices.
3. Develop seminars on current promising approaches and best practices in gang prevention.

Option VB: The Gateway Cities Region and Other Southern California Regions Could Implement Comprehensive Approaches to Deter Gang Activity

In 1982, the City of Paramount said that they could no longer sit by and allow their youth to be uninformed about the dangers and consequences of gang membership. That message of deterrence could be shared with regional entities such as the Gateway Cities Council of Governments in Southern California with an invitation to engage in the development of a comprehensive regional strategy to deter gang activity.

Action Steps:

1. Meet with appropriate regional officials in order to invite them to engage in the development of a comprehensive regional strategy to deter gang activity.
2. Seek supplementary grant funding to develop a comprehensive regional strategy to deter gang activity including coordinating activities between government agencies.
3. Implement the comprehensive regional strategy to deter gang activity.

Option VC: The Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, and Southern California School Districts Could Implement Comprehensive Approaches to Deter Gang Activity

One strategy for success is to pool resources across agencies, collaborating across jurisdictional boundaries. This can enhance the effectiveness for each agency and reduce the chance that gang members slip through the cracks of knowledge between agencies such as when officers in other cities will stop and cite a gang member not knowing that the individual is on probation.

Action Steps:

1. Meet with appropriate officials in order to encourage, develop, and strengthen cooperative, collaborative, and partnership efforts aimed at the reduction of gang activity in Los Angeles County and the Gateway Cities region.
2. Seek supplementary grant funding to strengthen cooperative, collaborative, and partnership efforts aimed at reduction of gang activity in Los Angeles County and

the Gateway Cities region; in particular, supplementary grant funding for research and demonstration efforts to monitor and evaluate current anti-gang efforts and test the value of cross jurisdictional anti-gang efforts in Los Angeles County and the Gateway Cities region.

3. Seek supplementary grant funding to implement cross-jurisdictional comprehensive approaches to deter gang activity.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Criteria for Identifying Gang Members

APPENDIX B: Explanation of Trend Lines

APPENDIX A

Criteria for Identifying a Gang Member, Paramount⁵²

When asked the criteria for identifying a gang member, a Paramount deputy responded “Anything in the California State Penal Code Section 186.22.” This section of the state penal code is part of the California Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act, and describes the definition of a criminal street gang, but not the criteria for gang membership.

Criteria for Identifying a Gang Member, Long Beach⁵³

To be identified as a gang member, an individual must meet three of the criteria below. However, if a person admits to being a gang member, he or she must only meet one other criterion below to be identified by police as such.

- Admits to gang membership.
- Identified as a gang member by a reliable informant. (A reliable informant is defined as one that has been used by the police department at least three times prior and is considered a trusted source of information.)
- Identified as a gang member by an untested informant, with corroborating evidence.
- Wears gang clothing.
- Uses gang symbols or hand signals.
- Has gang tattoos.
- Frequents gang areas.
- Affiliated with documented gang members.
- Has been arrested with known gang members.

Criteria for Identifying a Gang Member, South Gate⁵⁴

The officer interviewed said that most individuals identified as gang members have at least one of the following characteristics.

- Admit to gang membership.
- Are affiliated with active gang members.
- Have gang tattoos.

The officer noted that these people generally hang out in certain areas known to be gang areas. He said names are entered into the department’s GREAT database based on information from field interrogation cards and information gathered during the booking process (sometimes during booking of non-gang-related crimes). However, he said there was no formal written criteria and did not list a minimum number of criteria required as some other law enforcement agencies have.

⁵² Information obtained via interview with a Paramount Deputy.

⁵³ Information obtained via phone interview with a Long Beach police officer.

⁵⁴ Information obtained via phone interview with a South Gate police officer

APPENDIX B

Explanation of Trend Lines

Regression trend lines track the pattern of a group of data points by plotting a straight line through them. The more linear the data points are, the more accurate or “better fit” the trend line will be. Goodness of fit is determined by the R^2 of the equation. The closer the R^2 is to 1, the better the trend line represents or “fits” the data.

Steepness of slope is determined by the coefficient in the equation of the trend line. For instance, if the equation for the line is $y = -0.1178x + 5.8943$, the coefficient is -0.1178 . The larger a coefficient is, the steeper a slope is in the positive or negative direction. For instance, a slope of -3 indicates a steeper decrease than a slope of -1 .

Equations and R^2 s for Trend Lines in Figure 5

Paramount:

$$y = -0.1178x + 5.8943$$
$$R^2 = 0.2864$$

Bellflower:

$$Y = -0.0861x + 1.8371$$
$$R^2 = 0.2295$$

Lynwood:

$$Y = -0.237x + 5.8943$$
$$R^2 = 0.8724$$

Since Lynwood has the largest negative coefficient in the equation of its trend line, it indicates the sharpest decrease in Part I per capita gang crime rates, followed by Paramount, then Bellflower. However, Lynwood’s trend line also has a significantly higher R^2 than those of Paramount and Bellflower, which means that its trend line better represents the pattern of its crime rate than the trend lines of the other two cities.

Equations and R²s for Trend Lines in Figure 5

Paramount:

$$Y = -1.1893x + 80.307$$
$$R^2 = 0.3814$$

Bellflower:

$$Y = -.9893x + 67.85$$
$$R^2 = 0.2797$$

Compton:

$$Y = -2.8331x + 111.25$$
$$R^2 = 0.9455$$

Downey:

$$Y = -1.0458x + 59.134$$
$$R^2 = 0.7032$$

Long Beach:

$$Y = -2.4893x + 99.959$$
$$R^2 = 0.6669$$

Lynwood:

$$Y = -2.0605x + 84.651$$
$$R^2 = 0.6408$$

South Gate:

$$Y = -1.026x + 59.166$$
$$R^2 = 0.5346$$