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Transportation
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TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FROM: ELLEN G. LEVINE *ELG*
EXECUTIVE OFFICER, TRANSIT OPERATIONS
SUBJECT: PROGRESS REPORT ON PROBATION DEPARTMENT
AND MTA MEDIATION & RESTITUTION SERVICES
(MARS) WORK CREWS

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SUMMARY

Director Antonovich requested that Transit Operations provide performance information for the Probation Department and MTA Mediation Restitution Services work crews. The following table summarizes the work performed during the current Fiscal Year:

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Probation Department and MTA MARS Programs
Work Performed July through November 1997

	Buses Cleaned	Bus Stops Cleaned	Right-of-Way (ROW) Cleaned (in miles)	Bags of Debris Removed
PROBATION DEPARTMENT	10,236		50	6,147
MARS PROGRAM				
Adult Weekdays	200	4,949		
Adult Weekends		4,092		
Juveniles			4	2,429
GRAND TOTAL	10,436	9,041	54	8,576

These crews work seven days a week. Currently, the Los Angeles County Probation Department crews are assigned to clean buses at several major bus terminals and to clean MTA inactive rail right-of-way (ROW). The MARS adult crews, who work both weekdays and weekends, are assigned to clean bus stops and buses. The MARS juvenile crews, who work only Saturdays and Sundays, are assigned to clean MTA inactive rail right-of-way.

HISTORY

The use of community service workers began in 1993 when policymakers determined that an expanded comprehensive anti-graffiti program was warranted. Following are the highlights of development of the Anti-Graffiti program:

- January 1993: The Board of Directors approved the initial elements of the Enhanced Graffiti Abatement Program (EGAP). Subsequent elements were added as funding permitted. This program consisted of the following three elements: (1) Graffiti Mitigation & Prevention, (2) Community Outreach & Education and (3) Law Enforcement. The Board endorsed use of Probation Department juvenile work crews as one of the program elements. The January Board report lists as one proposal a "Juvenile Diversion Program (JDP) ... (noting that) the District may also implement a JDP, where select juveniles, arrested on graffiti offenses, will be given the option of providing graffiti clean-up service at the District."
- February 1993: The Los Angeles County Probation Department re-instituted its juvenile work program whereby up to 35 juvenile offenders were assigned to remove graffiti on buses at terminals.
- Fiscal Year 1995: The multi-faceted anti-graffiti program became the Zero Tolerance Program.
- Fiscal Year 1996: The Board approved increased funding and the Probation Department expanded the juvenile program and implemented the Mediation and Restitution Program (MARS) augmenting MTA staff cleaning efforts. Juvenile clean-up crews were described as one of the mitigation efforts in our Zero Tolerance Program. Notable events included the following:
 - MTA contracted with the Centennial Valley Juvenile Diversion Project for a one year pilot program using juvenile work crews as an alternative to Court sentences.
 - Individual Board members helped organize and promote the interest of judges in sending court referrals to MTA for community service as an alternative to fines or incarceration.
- Fiscal Year 1997: The Juvenile Diversion Program (JDP) was brought in-house as the MARS juvenile program. Transit police officers were used to supervise the juvenile work crews. The Transit Police began to send juveniles to the work crews as a substitute for formal arrest for first time offenders, in addition to the referral of juveniles from the courts. The MARS program

began to accept adult court referrals for work crews both during the weekends and weekdays. The Transit Police supervised both the adult weekend and weekday work crews. (Weekday adult crews were later supervised by MARS civilian supervisors, although the police continued to supervise the juvenile and adult crews on weekends.)

- Initially, the majority of the Transit Police officers who supervised the MARS crews were from the Graffiti Habitual Offender Suppression Team (GHOST). This was a group of undercover officers trained and used to concentrate on the graffiti trouble spots. In supervising the MARS juveniles, the GHOST officers, in addition to supervising clean-up tasks, also used this time as an opportunity to encourage the juveniles to develop a sense of personal responsibility for one's actions and to set constructive goals, such as staying in school and getting a good job.
- November 1997: The police merger ended the supervision of the MARS adult crews. Supervision of the MARS juvenile crews is continuing with a reduced juvenile program in effect on an interim basis. Adult MARS crews are now supervised by MTA MARS civilian supervisors both on weekdays and on weekends.

EFFECTIVENESS

With respect to program effectiveness, the statistics indicate that both the Probation Department and the MARS juvenile and adult crews are cleaning a significant number of buses, bus stops and miles of right-of-way. Both groups evoke a positive response from MTA patrons and residents who observe these crews at work. These programs also have had a positive effect on the participants.

In summary, this overall program has provided the opportunity for the MTA to demonstrate its commitment to the communities we serve. MARS and the Probation Department work crews have helped eliminate blight to segments of our inactive right-of-ways, making them safer and clear of debris. The program has also enhanced the appearance of our bus fleet and provided cleaner bus stops for our customers.

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