



Los Angeles County
Children's Planning Council
Improving Children's Lives

Children's Planning Council Meeting

April 17, 2008

2:30 p.m.

Room 140, Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, California

Present: Victoria Lewis Adams, representing Steve Cooley
Bettye Anderson
Lauraine Barber
Angela Carter, representing Trish Ploehn
Samuel Q. Chan, representing Marv Southard
Micah R. Cohen
Deborah Davies
Duane Dennis
Lupe Delgado, representing Darline Robles
Jeff Farber
Chris Floyd
Lisa Garrett, representing Steven Golightly
Cynthia Harding, representing Jonathan Fielding
Nick Ippolito, representing Don Knabe
Rafael López
Larry Lue
Penny Markey, representing Margaret Donnellan Todd
Danny Ramos
José Ramos
Lisa Cleri Reale
Nina Sorkin
Beatriz Olvera Stotzer
Robert Taylor
Mary Helen Vasquez
Sharon G. Watson
Phillip L. Williams

In place of Chair Don Knabe, who had a family emergency, Phillip Williams brought the meeting to order at 2:40 p.m. and asked that Council members and the audience introduce themselves. Williams explained that the single purpose of today's meeting was to continue discussing the recommendations of the Governance Workgroup. Minutes from this meeting and the one in March will be submitted for approval at the Council's regularly scheduled meeting on May 21.

Acting Chief Executive Officer's Report: Cheryl Mendoza, Ph.D.

Cheryl Mendoza thanked everyone for coming, stating that for the Children's Planning Council to be effective, it must actively listen, reflect, and clarify the Governance Workgroup's recommendations, around which there have been some misunderstandings. "We want as much

feedback as possible," she said, "engaging in a dialogue with respect, trust, openness, and dignity. We must bring order to a messy situation, and not pretend that CPC is well organized." When Mendoza was originally hired as chief operating officer, her task was to increase and develop the capacity of the Children's Planning Council to advance its mission and accomplish its goals in a focused and prioritized way. The Governance Workgroup was an attempt to address underlying issues, but consensus is needed on a course of action that will bring about the desired change.

"I see hope for a new CPC, ready to take its place in the county and the community," Mendoza said, "but I'm not without trepidation. Talking about the recommendations is important, but so is doing. Change is a verb. We can't afford to keep things the way they are. I'm struck with the level of frustration and anxiety we're experiencing because of our misalignment and the lack of understanding around these recommendations. The opportunity has come for us to choose change."

Executive Committee Report: Lisa Cleri Reale

Member packets contained a goldenrod document summarizing feedback on the governance recommendations that has been received from Council members (24 forms were submitted), and a green document summarizing comments submitted by the general public following the March meeting (11 forms). Jeff Farber, co-chair of the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee, also distributed that committee's written suggestions for revisions to various recommendations, agreed to at its April 10 meeting.

The goal of this meeting, Lisa Cleri Reale said, is to identify recommendations on which consensus exists and, if possible, to resolve issues needing clarification. Prior to the May meeting, the Executive Committee will review any areas of continued disagreement, taking into consideration the comments made at this meeting, input from the supervisors' offices, and any further written feedback. An addendum to the Governance Workgroup's recommendations will be developed that will allow clear options to be voted on.

Discussion and Public Comment

Opportunities for comment were taken in recommendation order. If a recommendation does not appear below, Council members and the public indicated sufficient consensus around the issue on their feedback documents from last month, and attendees had no further discussion.

Recommendation 1: **Streamline the composition of the CPC** to reduce its size and better reflect the evolution of various CPC partnerships and the way in which the county and other public systems now function.

- ⇒ The Strengthening Community Capacity Committee's document requested that the Children's Planning Council "affirm that community representation is essential to achieving the five outcomes of child well-being. **Conveners of each SPA/AIC Council should continue to sit as members of the CPC**, as the voice of the SPA/AIC Councils."
- ⇒ Lupe Delgado reported superintendent Darline Robles's concerns about the Los Angeles County Office of Education's being rolled into the rotating education seat selected

through the Education Coordinating Council. As a regional education agency (not a local agency), LACOE provides information on issues to all school districts in the county, and Robles believes **LACOE should retain its seat on the Council.**

⇒ Nick Ippolito reported Chair Knabe's receipt of a letter from Public Defender Mike Judge with his recommendation that **county department heads remain on the Children's Planning Council**, rather than being replaced by the four Deputy Chief Executive Officers heading up the departmental clusters in the county's new administrative structure. Chair Knabe agrees with Judge's suggestion, and Chief Robert Taylor also expressed his support, both because the new county structure is still being tested and because the DCEOs are more removed from the direct operation of individual departments.

To improve the Children's Planning Council's ability to function, Sharon Watson said, the Governance Workgroup attempted to reduce its size by nearly half. If the nine SPA/AIC Council conveners and twelve department heads are retained, who else would be cut?

With regard to the education seat, Watson explained that the Workgroup's intent was to have all members of the Council be representatives of 'umbrella' groups. Unfortunately, however, such a group doesn't exist for education in this county. As a regional body, LACOE comes closest, but it doesn't speak for the school districts, which needs to be the role of the education seat. Although Watson acknowledged that the Education Coordinating Council wasn't a perfect choice, it is the only body that regularly convenes all 81 school districts and intimately engages seven of the largest. Workgroup members were also attuned to criticisms they heard that the Los Angeles Unified School District's presence on the Children's Planning Council (it is currently the only other school entity beside LACOE) tended to skew focus, making it "all about L.A.," Watson said. Workgroup members felt that rotating the education seat among the school districts with seats on the ECC—Pasadena, Long Beach, Pomona, Lancaster, Compton, Los Angeles, and LACOE—would begin to address those concerns.

Recommendation 6: **Streamline the workforce.** Limit the number of permanent staff and raise the level of their expertise so that key functions are well staffed but consultants and independent contractors are used to support short-term and special projects.

The Strengthening Community Capacity Committee indicated its support of this recommendation if it is meant to limit the number of permanent Council staff only in the Hall of Administration. According to the document the committee submitted, "The SCCC believes that it is essential to, at a minimum, maintain the existing SPA/AIC field staff and not decrease the workforce that supports the community work of the CPC." Currently, the minimum staffing requirement for the SPA/AIC Councils is two positions, SCCC co-chair Colleen Mooney said, and committee members felt that the councils could not work with any fewer. "But we see lots of folks downtown," she remarked, "who really aren't essential to the functioning of CPC."

Rafael López sees the staffing issue as a “chicken and egg” situation. “What we do informs how we staff it,” he said. “Until we have outcomes from year to year for CPC, we don’t know what structure best supports it, and we need to be careful until we get that clear. I agree that a community-based, grassroots structure is the way to go, and that it aligns with the city of L.A.’s approach to gang violence—but we need to be careful about staffing structures.” A staff person from the SPA 1 Council emphasized the need to focus on strengthening families in her area, stating that a large staff—in SPA 1’s case, two staff and two interns—was useful with the number of projects going on in that region.

Sharon Watson confirmed that the intent of the Governance Workgroup was to limit the numbers of permanent staff at Council headquarters only.

Recommendation 10: Restate the function, leadership, and composition of the SPA/AIC Councils. The SPA/AIC Council serves as the community collaborative in the SPA or American Indian community and should represent that population and institutional infrastructure. It should have a small steering or operations committee that serves as the principal driver of its work.

- ⇒ The Strengthening Community Capacity Committee asked for **edits to the language** of the second bullet on page 21 of the Workgroup’s report, with regard to the councils’ structural elements: [The SPA/AIC Councils should] Be primarily a composed of individuals and networks of groups—members ~~should~~ can be individuals of the community and individuals representing identifiable constituencies, networks, or organizations in the SPA or American Indian community
- ⇒ The Strengthening Community Capacity Committee recommended that **county departmental representatives be maintained as members of the SPA/AIC Councils, and their attendance and participation should remain mandatory.**

Departmental representatives are very useful in facilitating partnerships between county departments and the SPA/AIC Councils, Mooney said, and even though some may feel it’s not a good use of their time, the intent is to strengthen those relationships in line with Interagency Operations Group efforts and the philosophy of the county’s Demonstration Impact Grants. “We’ll be taking a step backwards if we dismantle this,” Mooney said. Jeff Farber believes the departmental representatives add great value to the councils in leveraging county department resources and support for capacity and sustainability. LACOE representatives to several councils have been valuable in building networks within and between SPA/AIC Councils, Lupe Delgado said, and any policy that strengthens those relationships is important. Phillip Williams agreed, stressing the value of facilitating formal and informal communication over such a vast area as Los Angeles County.

Chair Knabe also has concerns about de-emphasizing the role of departmental representatives to the regional system of councils, Nick Ippolito reported, wanting instead to ensure a direct line from county government to the community. At the Interagency Operations Group last week, Sam Chan said, discussions of this recommendation centered on assessing the will of the larger community with regard to the value added by departmental representatives and how that is perceived. Backing off on the level of commitment required and making

participation less than mandatory runs the risk of valuable, contributing members being pulled back to the line and the councils losing that relationship altogether.

Recommendation 11: **Clarify the SPA/AIC Councils' community organizing role.** CPC should affirm that community building work and strengthening the capacity of communities to act on their own behalf are necessary to achieve the five outcomes of child well-being. However, grassroots community organizing is but one strategy that the SPA/AIC Councils can use to engage community members, and it is one that should be undertaken only under specific conditions. Councils should focus on partnering with other organizations and groups that have the capacity and experience to build parent, youth, and resident networks; on connecting existing efforts; and on forging strategic alliances to strengthen the role of community members and create community change.

⇒ The Strengthening Community Capacity Committee asks that the **recommendation be reworded** as follows:

Affirm the SPA/AIC Councils' community organizing role. CPC should affirm that community building work and strengthening the capacity of communities to act on their own behalf are necessary to achieve the five outcomes of child well-being. Relationship-based organizing is a pivotal strategy that the SPA/AIC Councils will utilize in the work of community building, and should be supported by the CPC. Councils should partner with other organizations and groups to engage in institutional organizing as well as to help build parent, youth, and resident networks.

⇒ The Strengthening Community Capacity Committee has also refined some of the Governance Workgroup report narrative, starting toward the bottom of page 23:

The following distinctions in terminology are made:

- “Strengthening the capacity of communities” refers to any activity that supports parents, residents, youth, and other partners in their efforts to be positive social agents and the best advocates they can be for children, and their families, and communities.
- “~~Community building~~” can involve a myriad of strategies, including organizing. The SPA/AIC Councils develop collaborations, understand the needs and assets of the community, conduct assessments, and develop plans and strategies. **“Community building” is the process of building trusting relationships between families, and service providers, and with public entities, business, and philanthropy, thus increasing the capacity of residents to be in relationships and create their own networks that lead to change.** The SPA/AIC Councils should be the bridge for county government, local networks, and nonprofits these entities to connect and work together in the community to resolve difficulties, support families, and help clients to achieve community, systems,

and/or policy change that will contribute to better outcomes for children and families.

Engaging residents is difficult and labor-intensive work that requires dedicated effort and resources over a long period of time, ~~and~~ Although CPC and the SPA/AIC Councils face very real resource limitations in the future, the organization believes community building is the core strategy necessary to achieving better outcomes for children and families. CPC will invest in sustaining networks that are critical to community building. ~~It is unrealistic to believe that CPC can sustain dozens or hundreds of networks with two staff per council. CPC resources should not be used to organize neighborhood residents, to mobilize individuals to take direct action, or in grassroots lobbying. It is in keeping with CPC's role to identify strategic opportunities to~~ **affiliate, partner, and network with other groups who are already organizing in communities—not to be doing what others can do.**

Community building strategies selected should build upon each SPA/AIC Council's current work, take into account a council's capacity to carry them out, and allow for innovation where successful practices exist.

The original Workgroup recommendation, Mooney said, spoke of *grassroots* organizing, but what the SPA/AIC Councils are doing is *relationship-based* organizing. “The original also said it should be done only under limited circumstances, and we fundamentally disagree with that,” she said. “The strategy we’re using to build capacity is relationship-based organizing. All other strategies come from that foundational approach.”

“The concern we’ve had for a while,” Chief Robert Taylor said, “is about the ability of the SPA/AIC Councils to do community capacity building. Not their desire or will, but frequently the skill set needed just isn’t there. The county has made an investment to help individual councils do community capacity building—we’ve committed to it and would like to see it, but there needs to be a toolkit to accomplish that.” Sam Chan related his experience with SPA 4’s Demonstration Impact Grant, working with other county staff on an ‘in-service’ on what community building looks like. “That’s the kind of work that the Council’s Center for Community Building would do,” he said, “organically evolving county personnel in the community who know how to do this.” The community building strategy is one of the change theories that the Department of Children and Families’ prevention initiative demonstration project wants to expand, Angela Carter said. “If DCFS is solely responsible for child abuse prevention, we’re going to be unsuccessful. We see this as a major asset in communities helping us and sharing accountability.”

The city of Los Angeles would support the revisions from the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee, Rafael López said. Particularly with the mayor’s strategic focus on violence prevention and gangs, neighborhood-based elements are critical. Clarification is needed, however, on the best way to invest funding to strengthen capacity, and on roles and responsibilities. “No SPA Council should own community organizing [in an area],” he said. “We need clear outcomes. What is the work? What are the strategies to get us there? We need to look at community organizing as one strategy, with multiple entities fully engaged.”

⇒ Although Larry Lue generally agrees with the strategy, he stressed that non-Hispanic linguistically isolated populations, especially within Asian/Pacific Islander communities, are being left far behind. "We need to get back to the *what*," he said. Because new approaches are necessary for these communities, Lue asked that **the last sentence of the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee's language be changed to ". . . allow for innovation where successful practices exist or do not exist."**

"If we look at the definition [that the SCCC uses]," José Ramos said, "it's not saying we work only with community residents, but with nonprofits and service providers, too. SPA 4, for example, is huge. We can't do it with just two staff. We need to look for partnerships and help connect with communities. Community engagement is partnerships with other nonprofits and outreaching to other sources."

Governance Workgroup members absolutely agree that community building should be done, Watson said, but their discussions found big differences between how people understood terms like *community building*, *capacity building*, *engaging*, and *organizing*. "The recommendation language specifically uses *clarify* because people confuse the terms when different labels are used," she said. "Everyone agrees about community building and capacity, but *organizing* triggers other interpretations." The *relationship-based organizing* definition that Mooney used, Duane Dennis said, was what Governance Workgroup members equated to *community building*. "That's what we felt the SPA/AIC Councils should be doing," he said. "Developing partnerships, making sure the right players were at the table, involving underserved populations, looking at gaps in the community, bringing forces together to fill those gaps. Community building is relationship-based organizing." In some parts of the county, *community strengthening* and *capacity development* are also terms in use, Valerie Coachman-Moore added, within an asset-based approach.

At the Executive Committee meeting, Farber said, participants decided that the intent of the Workgroup was actually different from how the report narrative read, and Strengthening Community Capacity Committee members recrafted the passage so that, in their view, intent and language agreed. What the Workgroup had addressed, Dennis explained, was the mandate several years ago through which organizing became part of the work of all the SPA/AIC Councils. "The interpretation of that mandate was *grassroots organizing*," he said, "and when we looked at capacity, we thought it was impossible—grassroots organizing is very difficult. That's why we changed the term from *organizing* to *community building*, and said that it would not be mandated, but a tool. We had a half-day debate on this."

In addition to doing innovative work on their own, Phillip Williams said, "SPA/AIC Councils act as conveners, facilitators, and catalysts—tools whereby the county and the Children's Planning Council can marshal other people with passion and put them to work as partners. Whether you do it yourself or enlist people who are already there, the power of the councils is to identify those in a region who know what they're doing and will collaborate."

Regardless of the terminology used, Lupe Delgado asked, "What are we zeroing in on? What are the outcomes? What will we get out of this? Larry Lue has touched on one outcome [reaching out to non-Hispanic linguistically isolated populations], but how do we get there? We should be focusing on a process that is SPA-specific and contextual to that region and relationships. What's critical is what the outcome is shooting for."

“As a parent, participating in meetings, I’m totally confused,” Mary Helen Vasquez said. “I can only imagine being a parent in a SPA meeting. There has to be clarity for me to have buy-in—clarity with both the wording and the concept.”

⇒ Perhaps what is missing, Beatriz Olvera Stotzer suggested, is that outcomes must first to be determined to figure out the role of the SPA/AIC Council. “Should that be mandated for the councils?” she asked. “If we’re looking at performance and process, the work has to be based on outcomes, and the councils are responsible for them. Should that be a preamble to this sentence?” **That the SPA/AIC Councils’ primary function is to improve the five outcomes of child well-being**, Watson noted, is clearly stated elsewhere, but Olvera Stotzer believes that language **should be added to this recommendation.**

Again, Nick Ippolito said, the Council is faced with a chicken-and-egg scenario. “The purpose of relationship-based organizing is to get a sense from the community as to the priorities for CPC. The CPC is targeting specific outcomes, but the reverse is also true—parents and children are telling the CPC what’s needed. We need to be concrete but loose at the same time.” Historically, Olvera Stotzer said, each SPA/AIC Council has determined its own priorities within the five outcome areas and built those into its yearly workplans. “The recommendation should reflect that intent—that we’re looking at better outcomes for kids,” she said.

Recommendation 12: Revise the SPA/AIC Councils’ funding formula and reframe their staffing function. Rather than distributing funds equally to all SPA/AIC Councils, CPC should apply a “fairness formula” that would guarantee a base amount for core activities, reward good work, and reframe the two staff positions for each council.

⇒ According to SCCC members, as the self-governance body for the system of SPA/AIC Councils, **the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee should be the body to approve SPA/AIC Council budgets and determine staffing patterns**, not the Operations Committee created in Recommendation 13.

Part of this change, Farber explained, ties into the idea of building capacity across the system of councils. Right now, budgets are looked at individually, not in terms of shared work or leveraging resources and working together to address capacity issues. “If a governance body for the system of councils looks at policy, planning, direction, and workplans, yet does not have the ability to determine the financial considerations for those workplans,” Farber said, “then it has no control over outcomes.”

Governance Workgroup members heard a great deal of feedback, Watson said, that what the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee is doing now isn’t working, and co-chair Mooney agreed. “The SCCC hasn’t yet emerged as a governance body willing to govern its peers,” she said. “We haven’t taken on tough issues like performance and nonperformance, and we recognize that. But another piece is that we have no real power. In the conversation about the mini grants, the SCCC took a clear position and made several recommendations that were never adopted. As a result, we have an entirely different mini grant process that we

don't support. There's a weakness in the structure—if we're to be held accountable, we must have some power over where funding goes and saying what outcomes we expect in return, and that we'll hold each other to that. That's not happening. I don't think that's happened anywhere in the system. That's part of why the SPA/AIC Councils are at such uneven places, with uneven performance. We think that leadership clarity should reside in the SCCC."

Chan sees the heart of this issue being the management of a volunteer workforce—volunteers in leadership positions who can't be held fully accountable for results, yet who are directly supervising and giving direction to paid staff who *are* held accountable. "It's a recipe for disaster, I think anyone will tell you," he said. "The CPC has evolved to that point, but we have to do more than simply hope for accountability. This is the core of our governance discussion."

Mooney's experience in SPA 8 has been different. "The pivotal issue in your scenario," she told Chan, "is who the volunteer leaders are and what they are willing to do. We've never had a conversation where we outlined our expectations and timelines, telling them they must have a commitment to the vision and mission beyond their own self-interest, and if they don't, we don't want them. We haven't taken that approach to recruiting volunteer conveners, although we certainly have a number now who are committed to that larger vision. But part of the issue is that we haven't had leadership that says, 'This is a big deal. If you want to be in it, this is what you have to bring to the table.'"

One commitment that the Children's Planning Council has made, Olvera Stotzer said, is to involve volunteers who *don't* have an experience of engagement, and who have never held this kind of responsibility. Without that, the full spectrum of socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural elements present in Los Angeles County would never be represented. "But if this were twenty years ago and I were a parent with two kids," Olvera Stotzer said, "there's no way that I would participate. It just wouldn't work. In the last ten years, we haven't defined a better way of making the Council accountable to itself, although it's slowly been able to grow in what it needs to do. But the approval of budgets means dealing with cutbacks, fund-raising, and performance issues. It's unfortunate and irresponsible of us to expect that kind of buy-in from volunteers. It should be staff-driven and leadership-driven. Use volunteers about what to do for children, not about process and bureaucracy."

Lauraine Barber sees both sides of the argument. "I'm not going to be a rubber stamp, but some volunteers want to be," she said. "If we work with the community, we need their input, but we have to train them on how to give that input. I had no idea what I was doing when I first convened the SPA 8 Council. It depends on the person and who you're working with."

Danny Ramos runs a small volunteer organization that supports community projects in East Los Angeles, and he feels that Vasquez's confusion as a parent (under Recommendation 11) should be heard loud and clear. "Our glue is the spirit and the passion of the people who come here, to this circle," Ramos said. "Our children will carry on the tradition of what we do here. In ancient circles, gathered for the betterment of the community, every child had a place. The community as a whole realized that everyone had a gift to offer. Even in programmatic discussions, we need to continue to get simpler in our approach, as we transform what we'll be handing off to our kids."

Farber acknowledged the truth of Watson's comments about the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee's not assuming authority and not taking a leadership role, but part of the reason for that, he believes, lies in how outcomes are determined for the SPA/AIC Council workplans. "As the governing body for the councils, we have no control over funding streams and where they lead the workplans," he said. "When certain funding comes in, the councils are told to work on certain issues. If the SCCC had control over budgets and workplans, we could be the glue that holds community needs together with whatever specific funding streams require, and we could look for funding that matches what the community says it wants. That hasn't happened.. The financial pull of an organization is a crucial piece. What other governance body exists with no ability to make financial decisions?"

Phillip Williams suggested incorporating further procedures for the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee to present recommendations and get approval. "If the organization listens and is responsive to what a particular council wants to do in its own area, the system doesn't have to be self-governing," he said. "But the organization has to listen to what you're saying."

Recommendation 14: Create a broader "Community Table" in place of the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee. Broaden the SCCC to become a community collaborative or "table" created by the SPA/AIC Councils, to function as a committee of the CPC with an agenda driven by the communities it represents.

⇒ The Strengthening Community Capacity Committee disagrees with this recommendation, stating that, as the self-governance body for the system of councils, the SCCC is responsible for providing overall direction by addressing policy, planning, operational, and financial issues, and approving SPA/AIC Council workplans. The SCCC is composed of the conveners from the nine councils plus two at-large members from the Children's Planning Council. The SPA/AIC Councils *are* the community table, and, as representatives of that greater body, the **Strengthening Community Capacity Committee should be maintained and strengthened to determine policy and approve SPA/AIC Council budgets, in addition to its existing governance role.**

Duane Dennis prefaced the discussion by explaining that the design of the Community Table resulted from Governance Workgroup members' hearing during many stakeholder interviews about major institutional dysfunction and ineffectiveness at various levels in the SPA/AIC Councils. SCCC member José Ramos expressed disbelief at that. "It's amazing to hear that we've been doing this so long and are still dysfunctional," he said. "*Something* has to be working." Since he knows that the SPA/AIC Councils don't represent the entire community of Los Angeles County, though, he has no objection to bringing in other stakeholders. "We do want to make it better," Ramos said. "But it needs to continue the way it's going."

Deborah Davies concurred, expressing how seriously she takes her responsibility to speak not for herself but for the many organizations, community members, residents, and youth who put their time and energy into the SPA/AIC Councils. "We work our butts off," she said. "When I come to the many meetings I attend, I'm responsible for bringing what I've heard. That's the purpose of our table." The SCCC is the only real component of the Children's

Planning Council that already represents a community table, Danny Ramos said, because of a very simple principle. "We were elected by our peers at the community tables we represent," he reminded everyone, "as opposed to others who are appointed."

"The county departments are missing from the Community Table design," Lue noted, "and should be there to engage and discuss things. The whole goal of the system of regional councils was to feed into the process of departmental planning, so that the county could deliver services better." The bulk of resources for the work of the SPA/AIC Councils comes from the county departments, Mooney said, but a real conversation about how those resources are allocated has never occurred. "If we believe that community engagement is a strategy for social change," she said, "then the departments must invest in that strategy, as DCFS has." Part of the success of the SPA 8 Council results from its roots in the family support module, which was originally a strategy for DCFS to work with local reform collaboratives. After that process broke down, the SPA 8 Council, along with DCFS and its regional administrators, was able to hold together a plan to funnel family support dollars into the community structure that still remained. "That's what I'm talking about," Lue commented, "controlling that process of planning where a community says a certain initiative will work, and it follows through, with county departments dictating accountability."

While expressing the greatest respect for Mooney and the idea of the SCCC, Watson said that the Governance Workgroup "had to work on what we heard in our interviews. There are nine people who vote on the SCCC—the SPA/AIC Council conveners," she said. "We were told that the SPA coordinators have no real input, there are no true partnerships, no dissenting viewpoints are being expressed, and it's been difficult for the group to make decisions. The councils are meant to represent communities, but the conveners themselves are for the most part nonprofit agency executives. The new Community Table design includes the parent and youth representatives from the Children's Planning Council, giving them a direct voice. Also, because the Workgroup didn't mandate departmental representatives at the SPA/AIC Council level—because of complaints we heard about constant turnover, not being able to build real relationships, and departments being strapped for resources—the Community Table would be the place to negotiate with them across the countywide system, not just SPA by SPA. With the inclusion of departmental reps, parents, youth, and SPA coordinators, the Community Table would be an even more powerful group" than the current committee.

"You want to strengthen the SCCC and give it more power," Olvera Stotzer asked Mooney and Farber, "knowing that you don't represent all the community? And that not every SPA has parent and youth networks?" What already makes the SPA/AIC Councils community tables, Davies said, are the community action groups that the councils have created that support and sustain youth, parents, and residents, although she acknowledged that they are all at different developmental stages. The councils also have a leadership structure that informs the conveners sitting on the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee, Farber added.

Lue sees the issue not as an *either/or*, but as a *both/and*. "We need to have community capacity building to get the Asian/Pacific Islander communities up to engaging in dialogue," he said, "and we want a place at the table with the county departments to work things out. The SCCC builds that capacity to engage." The discussion at the Governance Workgroup, Dennis said, concentrated on the degree to which the Strengthening Community Capacity

Committee can make the SPA/AIC Councils accountable, and most of the “dysfunction” comments Workgroup members heard were around the accountability issue.

- ⇒ **The options Dennis sees are to maintain the current Strengthening Community Capacity Committee and to create the Community Table in addition to that, or to establish the Community Table in place of the current SCCC.**

Conclusion and Next Steps

Today's discussion brought clarification to some issues, but others may need further resolution. Although the Governance Workgroup is now disbanded and its submitted report stands as written, the Council can vote to revise the recommendations themselves. Even in May, though, a vote will not be rushed, Lisa Cleri Reale assured everyone. Following today's meeting, Nick Ippolito will brief Chair Knabe and the Executive Committee will meet to review progress. Meetings are also being convened to encourage substantive discussions among staff.

Questions remain on:

- ✓ Recommendation 1, the Children's Planning Council's composition
- ✓ Recommendation 10, allowing individual members (not representing groups) on the SPA/AIC Councils, and continuing to mandate departmental representative participation
- ✓ Recommendation 12, the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee's role in SPA/AIC Council budgeting and financial decisions
- ✓ Recommendation 14, the creation of a Community Table in place of the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee

Possible language tweaks are being proposed for:

- ✓ Recommendation 6, streamlining the Hall of Administration workforce
- ✓ Recommendation 11, the SPA/AIC Councils' community organizing role

Meeting attendees were encouraged to submit additional comments via e-mail to Alex Marcelino, at AMarcelino@laccpc.org, **no later than May 7** so that feedback may be compiled and sent out prior to the May 21 meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children's Planning Council is scheduled for:

Wednesday, May 21, 2008
9:30 a.m.
Room 140, Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.