Item 6

Strategic Plan Update: Approve Home Positions on the Six Key Levers for Impact
SUBJECT:
First 5 LA 2015-2020 Strategic Plan: Focusing for the Future

RECOMMENDATION:
To advance First 5 LA’s stated Strategic Imperative (SI), approve Commissioner and Program & Planning Committee members’ recommended home positions for each of the six levers for impact.

BACKGROUND:
A key challenge surfaced by the Listening, Learning, and Leading (L3) initiative and the exhaustive data collection efforts of 2013, is that First 5 LA lacks clarity, direction, and focus for impact. Combined with the Long-Term Financial Projections, which show First 5 LA’s reserves and future income both diminishing, First 5 LA is faced with significant challenge in terms of driving the type of impact needed for Los Angeles County children 0-5 and their families.

To provide First 5 LA focus and grounding in meeting this challenge, the Commission endorsed a strategic imperative (SI) on April 10, 2014:
1. Maximize return on the Commission’s future investments to achieve mission and greatest possible impact for children 0-5 and their families
2. Determine a clear, well-defined focus for First 5 LA
3. Align goals to long-term financial projections and strategy

Based on input and conversations to date—including findings from the synthesis of L3 and other data and the jumpstart session facilitated by consultants from the Drucker School—six levers for impact emerged as mechanisms for the Commission to provide policy guidance to best advance this strategic imperative. These levers also align with best practices in the literature on defining clear strategy for funding agencies. The levers were first introduced to Commissioners at the April 10th Board meeting. Determining positions on these levers represents a set of critical policy choices for the Commission to make regarding how it guides First 5 LA to do its work so that we may maximize impact on the lives of L.A. County’s children. When considered together, the six levers provide vital definition and clarity regarding how First 5 LA will advance the principles of the strategic imperative, add unique value to the County, and achieve optimal impact and long-term sustainability. Positions for each lever can fall along a continuum, with the far end of each continuum represented here:

1. From investing in approaches that are “upstream” (prevention and early intervention) to investing in approaches that are “downstream” (tertiary/targeted intervention);
2. From funding direct services to advancing systems and policy change;
3. From “going broad” (supporting low-touch, low-impact approaches that have a broad reach) to “going deep” (supporting intensive, high-impact approaches that have a targeted reach);
4. From approaches with an **individual focus** (e.g., benefit the parent only or the child only) to approaches with a **family or community focus** (e.g., contribute to outcomes for both parents and children);

5. From growing **untested local models** to leveraging **evidence-based models**; and

6. From “**going it alone**” to engaging in efforts that **leverage a partnership opportunity from the start**.

At the April 24, 2014, Program & Planning Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Commission, Commission members were asked to identify a ‘home position’ for First 5 LA on each of the six levers as well as identify specific conditions under which First 5 LA might deviate from that position. To achieve this, the Commission broke into three small groups, each charged with recommending a home position for two of the levers for impact and specifying conditions for deviating from that position. Members of the community present for the meeting had the option of meeting in their own breakout group or observing Commissioners’ discussions. Each of the small groups was asked to use the SI as their guidepost for making their recommendations. The recommendations developed by the small groups were then shared with the full committee and the public. Commissioners present at this meeting discussed and ultimately endorsed all of the home positions and conditions included in this memo.

**DISCUSSION:**
Landing on home positions for each of the six levers for impact – and defining the conditions under which it will operate at other points on each lever – is akin to developing a ‘six-part identity statement’ for First 5 LA. These six key components of the organization’s identity will serve as criteria by which First 5 LA can guide decision-making regarding the change that it seeks. They will also ultimately influence and guide the vision, goals, outcomes and pathways First 5 LA will utilize to achieve that change. Determining a home position on the levers for impact does not restrict First 5 LA to only supporting work that falls on that specific point on the continuum. Rather, the home position represents the part of the continuum where First 5 LA can have the most impact based on its mission, capacities and position in the field, and therefore should be focusing the majority of its effort and resources. The conditions for deviation provide specific ‘guardrails’ or direction for the Board and staff to use to determine specific times when it could make sense for First 5 LA to operate on different points of each continuum.

The following table summarizes the recommended home positions for each of the levers as agreed to by members of the Commission present at the April 24th Program & Planning Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Commission. Appendix A outlines more specifics related to each of the levers, including a detailed description of the lever, stated home position, and conditions for possible deviation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lever</th>
<th>Recommended Home Position</th>
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Community members participating in the small group discussion took the opportunity to obtain a better understanding of the SI and the intent behind the six levers and the home position exercise. The participants explored the funding implications of the recommended home positions for each of the levers. They also raised a key strategic issue that is not addressed directly by the levers for impact, but will be discussed in future conversations. That point is related to the issue of what populations First 5 LA intends to target with its resources in order to achieve impact. These issues are important decision points for the Commission to address and will be discussed at upcoming working meetings of the Program & Planning Committee. A recommended position on target population (to what extent do we focus on high risk, high need populations) will be developed at the May 19th Program & Planning Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Commission, as that position will affect the refinement of outcomes and pathways. This recommendation will come before the Commission for endorsement at the June 12th meeting. Conversations related to allocating financial resources across strategies will occur later this summer following further refinement of the organization’s mission, vision, goals, and pathways.

One final area that was discussed centered around the extent to which will First 5 LA will or can pursue additional funding to supplement tobacco tax revenues. This issue will be addressed at the Commission retreat on June 30th, as a directional recommendation on this question will be necessary to set the stage for developing the content for the strategic plan.
(e.g. how much will we be able to achieve over the five year strategy cycle) during July and August, 2014.

**Next Steps:**
Approval of the home positions recommended by Commissioners at the April Program & Planning Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Commission is an important milestone in this strategic planning process. At the May 19th, Program & Planning Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Commission, Commissioners will use the SI and the approved home positions as a filter to review and refine the vision, goals, outcomes, and the pathways First 5 LA will utilize to achieve the goals and outcomes. At that meeting, the Commission will also be asked to recommend a position regarding a defined target population for future investments. At the June 12th Commission meeting, the full Board will be asked to approve the recommended vision, goals, and target population. Application of the lever’s home positions as a filter to refine First 5 LA’s outcomes and pathways will continue at both the June 23rd Program & Planning Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Commission and the June 30th Board retreat.

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**For Office Use**

**Board Action Taken:**

- Approved:  □ Yes  □ No  □ Further Discussion

**Referred to Committee/Work Group:**__________________________
The following sections contain the recommendations that emerged from the April 24, 2014 Program & Planning Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Commission. Each section contains:

- a description of the lever;
- an articulation of First 5 LA’s recommended home position for that lever;
- an articulation of the conditions under which First 5 LA will intentionally deviate from the recommended home position;
- a rationale for the lever home position recommendation that is grounded in the strategic imperative; and
- a high-level description of the implications of the recommended home position and conditions for future decision-making.

Commissioners will find that in the rationale section of each description, the articulated home positions for each lever generally support the first and third components of the Strategic Imperative. It is important to note, however, that the application of all the home positions holistically will help First 5 LA achieve the second component of the strategic imperative, which is to determine a clear, well-defined focus for First 5 LA.

**Lever #1: Upstream (Prevention) → Downstream (Intervention)**

**Description.** Activities on the upstream end of this continuum are focused on addressing issues (such as child abuse or literacy challenges) as early as possible, ideally before they are expressed at all. Downstream activities focus on treating the issue or condition after it has been fully expressed or manifested.

**Home position.** The activities that First 5 LA supports will generally fall on the upstream side of the continuum.

**Conditions which may influence deviation from the home position.** First 5 LA could support activities on the downstream end of the continuum only under the following circumstances:

1. When the support of downstream activity is indirect, for example through policy change, systems improvement, or capacity building of providers working on the downstream side of the continuum.
2. When the activity also includes an upstream component that engages and builds the capacity of the family or community to address the downstream problem/condition.

**Rationale.** Supporting activities that fall on the upstream end of the continuum will help First 5 LA achieve the first Strategic Imperative of achieving maximum return on investment and greatest possible impact, as upstream investments tend to be more cost-effective and have more long-term benefits.

**Implications for future decision-making.** First 5 LA will positively influence upstream issues/conditions for children 0-5 by emphasizing systems and policy change and community capacity building moving forward, focusing on building ‘protective factors’ within a community and the families that live within it. In instances where it chooses to support direct services (consistent with the guidance provided by First 5 LA’s home position on the Direct Services → Systems and Policy Change lever), it will do so in a way that prioritizes issues as early as possible.
**Lever #2: Direct Services → Systems and Policy Change**

**Description.** The ‘direct services’ end of this continuum refers to activities in which a service is provided to, and directly benefits, a child and/or their family. The ‘systems and policy change’ end of this continuum refers to activities designed to achieve improvements to laws or policies that affect children and families and/or strengthen the service delivery systems that serve them, both of which represent ‘indirect’ means to improving outcomes for children and families. In the middle of the spectrum are activities that build the capacity of organizations that are aligned with First 5 LA’s mission and vision.

**Home position.** The activities that First 5 LA supports will primarily fall on the ‘systems and policy change’ side of the continuum.

**Conditions which may influence deviation from the home position.** First 5 LA could support activity on the ‘direct service’ side of the continuum under one of the following circumstances:

1. When support of a direct service has significant potential to support additional children and families in LA County in a manner that advances scale/replication or being incorporated into policy.
2. When a direct service focuses on upstream issues/conditions and is delivered in a manner that builds a community’s capacity to support children and their families.

**Rationale.** Supporting activities that fall on the ‘systems and policy change’ end of the continuum will help First 5 LA achieve the first Strategic Imperative of achieving maximum return on investment and greatest possible impact, as the cost of delivering direct services can be high and the number of beneficiaries limited.

**Implications for future decision-making.** First 5 LA will need to consider how any future direct services work can be aligned to support systems change and policy efforts (therefore having a broader impact beyond the individuals reached) and/or builds a community’s protective factors to support children and their families. Whenever First 5 LA chooses to support direct service work, it will be time-limited, with a pre-determined exit plan so First 5 LA does not become the long-term funder for that service – consistent with the Board-approved Governance Guidelines. Furthermore, First 5 LA will need to identify a broader policy position for how the organization wants to consider and respond to emerging opportunities that may require immediate attention because they present a chance to leverage funding from another source.

**Lever #3: Going Broad → Going Deep**

**Description.** This lever does not pertain to the concept of investing in a large number or diverse set of programs in order to have a broad reach across the County. ‘Going broad’ in this context refers to approaches to impact that have a broad or extensive reach, thus affecting large numbers of people. In the context of direct services, ‘going broad’ often means that the intervention will have a low level of intensity or a ‘light touch’ on each individual reached. As for systems and policy change efforts, ‘going broad’ refers to having a community- or population-level affect by shifting the ways that systems integrate and function to better serve a community/population and creating policies that support better outcomes for a community/population. ‘Going deep’ refers to approaches to impact that are more high intensity, but affect a smaller number of people.
**Home position.** The activities that First 5 LA supports will generally seek to have a broad impact, affecting large numbers of people.

**Conditions which may influence deviation from the home position.** First 5 LA could fund intensive (or ‘deep’) efforts that target high-risk and high-need communities only when the results can be used to drive broader systems change and inform policy. These types of investments will include companion research, evaluation and a communications strategy to understand what works to best serve these communities.

**Rationale.** By supporting and engaging in efforts that affect a broad number of children 0-5 and their families, First 5 LA will advance the first Strategic Imperative of achieving maximum return on investment and greatest possible impact.

**Implications for decision-making.** First 5 will endeavor to achieve a broad impact by supporting efforts that directly change community awareness as well as public and political will in ways that promote First 5 LA’s goals and priority outcomes. First 5 LA will need to consider how future work that ‘goes deep’ can be aligned to support systems change and policy efforts that will have a broader impact beyond the individuals reached.

**Lever #4: Individual Focus → Family/Community Focus**

**Description.** This lever for impact was modified from the original wording presented to the Board on April 10th, per the recommendation of the small group of Commissioners that was asked to develop a home position and conditions for deviation. *Single Impact → Multiple Impacts* was modified to *Individual Focus → Family/Community Focus* to clarify this lever’s focus on the unit of impact that First 5 LA is trying to create for children 0-5. Previously, ‘multiple impacts’ was used to describe both engagement of families and communities and efforts that had an effect on multiple issues simultaneously, such as nutrition, breastfeeding, and home safety.

Approaches to impact can focus on individuals—children, the mother, father, caregiver, etc.—or can focus on multiple individuals such as those who comprise a family or community. For example, approaches that focus on the individual target and address the needs of the individual in isolation of their larger context. Approaches that focus on families address the needs of the child as well as the caregivers, while approaches that focus on communities address the larger context within which families live.

**Home position.** Activities that First 5 LA supports must always include components to strengthen families and, whenever possible, should include components to improve community capacity.

**Conditions which may influence deviation from the home position.** It is recommended that there be no deviation from this home position. First 5 LA will ensure that all future investments include some level of family engagement. First 5 LA will also prioritize efforts that build the capacity of communities to support children and their families.
Rationale. Supporting efforts that focus on families and communities as a means of achieving outcomes for children 0-5 and their families advances the first Strategic Imperative of achieving maximum return on investment and greatest possible impact.

Implications for decision-making. First 5 LA will not prioritize approaches to achieving strategic goals and outcomes that do not have a family or community focus. Efforts that are intended to primarily improve outcomes for children will need to include an element in the approach that addresses the family context at a minimum, and ideally the community context whenever feasible. Furthermore, First 5 LA will prioritize efforts that intentionally build families’ and communities’ protective factors.

Lever #5: Growing Local Models ➔ Supporting Evidence-Based Models
Description. Approaches to achieving impact can span a spectrum from creating new models and promoting best or promising practices that grow out of local experience on the one end to, on the other end, identifying, translating, and scaling up models that are evidence-based—tested and proven through rigorous research to be effective in achieving a given set of results for a given population.

Home position. First 5 LA will identify and scale evidence-based practices (EBPs) to achieve its strategic goals and outcomes.

Conditions which may influence deviation from the home position. In cases where there are not evidence-based practices available, First 5 LA could consider best or promising practices based on available evaluation information, staff knowledge, and community experience. Such models must have the potential to achieve community or systems-level impact (vs. individual impact) and/or help inform policy change.

Rationale. Supporting evidence-based practices will advance the first Strategic Imperative by achieving the greatest possible impact for children 0-5 and their families as these models have demonstrated effectiveness. By learning from (and where appropriate scaling) local implementation of evidence-based practices, First 5 LA will further advance the first Strategic Imperative by maximizing return on its investments for the broadest possible numbers of children 0-5 and their families in the County.

Implications for decision-making. First 5 LA will need to research and identify available evidence-based practices to address its strategic goals and outcomes. Implementation of EBPs will require assessment of fidelity to the model and formative evaluation to understand lessons learned to inform systems change and policy efforts.

Lever #6: Go it Alone ➔ Start with Partnership
Description. First 5 LA works with an array of partners, including those that inform and support program design and implementation as well as those that support sustainability and scale (e.g. county or state agencies, elected officials, etc.). The focus of this lever for impact is on the latter type of partner: those that support sustainability and scale. First 5 LA has the option to begin efforts independently, invite partners in sustainability and scale to participate in a limited way after initial design and implementation, bring partners of sustainability and scale on mid-course once there are early signs of progress, or form partnerships with potential agents of sustainability and scale (e.g. policy makers,
government agencies, or private payors) at the earliest stage of conceptualization and design.

**Home position.** First 5 LA will engage partners in sustainability and scale at the earliest possible stage of designing and engaging in any given approach to impact.

**Conditions which may influence deviation from the home position.** First 5 LA may consider making a lead investment – with the intention to cultivate partners as early in the design and implementation process as possible – if efforts to identify potential partners are unsuccessful, or there is an urgent need with a unique opportunity to contribute to significant impact on strategic goals and outcomes.

**Rationale.** Forming partnerships at the earliest stage of conceptualization and design supports the third Strategic Imperative to align First 5 LA’s goals to its long-term financial projections and strategy.

**Implications for decision-making.** First 5 LA will consider potential approaches to creating impact through the filter of whether or not there are sustainability and scale partners with whom an effort can be designed and launched from the outset. This will require ongoing familiarity with the funding context and policy landscape for the goal and outcome areas within which First 5 LA is working, building capacity for initiating and managing partnerships over time, and considering what are its absolute positions regarding how an effort should be designed and implemented as well as acceptable points of compromise to effectively engage in the negotiations that partnership inevitably require.
Strategic Plan 2015-2020: Focusing for the Future Commission Update

Board of Commissioners Meeting
May 8, 2014
Goals of today’s presentation

• Approve the Commissioner / Program & Planning Committee members’ recommended “home positions” for the six levers for impact
• Discuss next steps
Why do we need a Strategic Imperative (SI) and the six levers for impact?

• The Listening, Learning and Leading (L3) initiative as well as other key reports completed in 2013, conclude that First 5 LA lacks clarity, direction and focus for impact

• The Long-Term Financial Projections show diminishing reserves and revenues, which requires strategic choices around how to use resources effectively to achieve impact

• The Governance Guidelines establish Commission commitment to financial accountability, strategic focus and impact
First 5 LA’s Board of Commissioners endorsed a Strategic Imperative to anchor strategic planning

• Maximize return on the Commission’s future investments to achieve mission and greatest possible impact for children 0-5 and their families

• Determine a clear, well-defined focus for First 5 LA

• Align goals to long-term financial projections and strategy
To advance the Strategic Imperative, six levers for impact were identified

• Invest in approaches that are **upstream** (prevention and early intervention) ↔ invest in approaches that are **downstream** (tertiary/targeted intervention)

• Fund **direct services** ↔ advance **systems and policy change**

• **Going broad** (low-touch, low-impact approaches with a broad reach) ↔ **Going deep** (intensive, high-impact approaches with a targeted reach)

• Support approaches with an **individual focus** (e.g. benefit the parent or child only) ↔ support approaches with **family or community focus** (e.g. contribute to outcomes supporting parent and child)

• Grow **untested local models** ↔ leverage **evidence based models**

• **Go it alone** ↔ engaging efforts that leverage a partnership from the start
Where do the SI and the six levers for impact come from?

• The SI and six levers for impact represent important strategic choices for Commission members to consider in order to achieve impact

• Align with findings from L3 and other data as well as the strategic plan jumpstart staff session facilitated by the Drucker School of Management

• They also reflect best practices in literature defining clear strategy for funders
Commissioners have identified “home positions” and conditions for deviation for each of the six levers of impact

- “Home positions” for each of the six levers articulate First 5 LA’s identity through this next strategic plan
  - Define where on the continuum First 5 LA can have the most impact and add unique value given position, resources and capacities
  - Provide policy guidance to staff for assessing future opportunities

- Conditions for deviation provide “guardrails” for the Board and staff to use when determining whether or not to operate on a different point of each continuum
First 5 LA Commissioner recommended home positions for the six levers for impact

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### Lever #1: Upstream (Prevention) ↔ Downstream (Intervention)

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| The activities First 5 LA supports will generally fall on the upstream side of the continuum | • When support of downstream activity is indirect, for example, through policy change, systems improvement, or capacity building for providers, working on the downstream side of continuum  
• When activity includes an upstream component that engages and builds the capacity of the family or community to address downstream problem |
## Lever #2: Systems and Policy Change ↔ Direct Services

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• When direct service focuses on upstream issues/conditions and is delivered in a manner that builds a community’s capacity to support children and their families |
Lever #3: Going Broad ↔ Going Deep

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<td>The activities First 5 LA supports will generally seek to have a broad impact, affecting large numbers of people</td>
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Lever #4: Family/Community Focus ↔ Individual Focus

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| Activities that First 5 LA supports must always include components to strengthen families and, whenever possible, should include components to improve community capacity | • It is recommended there be no deviation from this home position  
• First 5 LA will ensure that all future investments include some level of family engagement and will prioritize efforts that build the capacity of communities to support children and their families |
Lever #5: Supporting Evidence-Based Models ↔ Growing Local Models

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| First 5 LA will identify and scale evidence-based practices to achieve its strategic goals and outcomes | • First 5 LA could consider best or promising practices based on available evaluation information, staff knowledge, and community experience in cases where there are not evidence-based practices available  
• Such models must have the potential to achieve community or systems-level impact (vs. individual impact) and/or help inform policy change |
# Lever #6: Start with Partnership ↔ Go it Alone

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Next Steps

- **May 19th Program & Planning Committee/Special Meeting of Commission:** Use the Strategic Imperative and approved home positions for the six levers for impact to review/refine vision, goals, outcomes, pathways, and target population
- **June 12th Board of Commissioners:** Approve Commissioner recommendations on vision, goals, and target population
- **June 23rd Program & Planning Committee/Special Meeting of Commission and June 30th Board Retreat:** Refine outcomes and pathways for change
The “Gradients of Agreement” tool will help decision-making during the strategic planning process.