



KAREN BASS
MAYOR

March 7, 2024

Fix The City, Inc.
VIA E-MAIL: (legal@fixthecity.org)

Re: California Public Records Act Request

Dear Fix The City, Inc.,

This letter responds to your California Public Records Act ("CPRA") request, dated October 16, 2023 to the Office of the Mayor of Los Angeles ("Office") seeking the following:

- All Communications between Transportation Commission members and the Mayor or Mayor's office in general.
- All Communications between Transportation Commission members and Councilmember Yaroslavsky and/or Council District 5 in general.

The full text of your request is enclosed with this letter ("Request").

Enclosed, please find non-exempt records responsive to your Request. Some of the responsive records contained personal contact information, and so have been redacted pursuant to Government Code section 7928.300. No responsive records have been withheld. Your Request is now closed.

Sincerely,
/s/
AMINAH WILLIAMS
Office of Mayor Karen Bass

Attachment

To: Eric Eisenberg[REDACTED]@gmail.com]
From: thomas.arechiga@lacity.org
Sent: Mon 10/16/2023 5:22:23 PM
Subject: A Letter From Mayor Bass
Received: Mon 10/16/2023 5:22:23 PM
[Eric Eisenberg Letter from Mayor Bass.pdf](#)

Good morning,
Please see the attached letter from Mayor Karen Bass.

Sincerely,
Thomas



KAREN BASS
MAYOR

October 16, 2023

Dear Eric Eisenberg:

Thank you for your service on the Board of Transportation Commissioners. Los Angeles is a stronger city because of the willingness of so many of its diverse and talented residents who dedicate their time and energy to making our city a better place.

This letter is to inform you that I will be naming a new person to your position on the Board. Therefore, your appointment on the Board will end effective as of the date on this letter.

Thank you again for your service to the City of Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

KAREN BASS
Mayor

KB:tga

To: chris.thompson@lacity.org[chris.thompson@lacity.org]
From: Erin Pak
Sent: Sat 10/14/2023 12:05:25 AM
Subject: Are you in the pictures?
Received: Sat 10/14/2023 12:05:26 AM



Gala Photos

Click on the button above, then select the individual photo, and look for the three dots in the upper right corner of your screen to download.

Fueled by the inspiration from our gala? Eager to make a lasting impact?

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- Like and share our posts.

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- Sign up to be notified when we have upcoming volunteer opportunities, such as our annual Holiday Toy Giveaway, Back-to-School Resource Fair, and Lunar New Year Lunch for patients and ADHC participants. Email EA@lakheir.org to sign up.

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Sent by erinpak@lakheir.org powered by



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To: chris.thompson@lacity.org[chris.thompson@lacity.org]
From: Erin Pak
Sent: Wed 10/4/2023 9:35:34 PM
Subject: Worthy Of Your Attention... See You Tomorrow!
Received: Wed 10/4/2023 9:35:35 PM



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Eric Kim

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Executive Vice President, Current Programs, CBS Entertainment and CBS Studios



Kia America

Corporate Leadership Award

James Bell

Head of Corporate Communications and Public Relations



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To: Mercedes Marquez[mercedes.marquez@lacity.org]; Jenna Hornstock[jenna.hornstock@lacity.org]
From: Zachary Seidl
Sent: Mon 7/24/2023 8:24:49 PM
Subject: Fwd: RELEASE: Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky Announces New Interim Housing Project at 2377 Midvale Ave
Received: Mon 7/24/2023 8:25:17 PM

FYI

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky** <Councilmember.Yaroslavsky@lacity.org>
Date: Mon, Jul 24, 2023 at 11:48 AM
Subject: RELEASE: Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky Announces New Interim Housing Project at 2377 Midvale Ave
To: Zack Seidl <zachary.seidl@lacity.org>

Today, Los Angeles City Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky unveiled plans for a new interim housing project on L.A.'s Westside.

Email not displaying correctly? [View it in your browser.](#)



leo.daube@lacity.org

RELEASE:

LOS ANGELES - Today, Los Angeles City Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky unveiled plans for a new interim housing project on L.A.'s Westside. Located on an underutilized city-owned parking lot at the intersection of Pico Blvd. and Midvale Ave, the project will add desperately needed interim beds to the Fifth Council District's homeless housing supply. When Councilmember Yaroslavsky took office, there were fewer than 100 interim housing units available for the district's 1,300 unhoused individuals.

"Anyone who has walked or driven on the Westside can tell you that the increase in the number of people living in tents is alarming," said Councilwoman Yaroslavsky. "We cannot keep waiting for the problem to solve itself – we need real solutions that we know work, and we need them quickly. While thousands of units of permanent housing are being constructed across the City, no interim units are in the pipeline in Council District 5. We need interim solutions now that we know will work."

In the last decade, homelessness in Los Angeles has more than doubled, with more than 46,000 Angelenos lacking a stable and secure place to sleep on a given night. Over 70% of those individuals and families are unsheltered, meaning they are sleeping in tents, parks, on sidewalks and in cars, because of the city's ongoing lack of both interim and permanent housing.

"It is imperative that we have housing solutions in every area of the city, which is why I am pleased to support Councilwoman Yaroslavsky's initiative to add much needed interim housing on L.A.'s Westside. While permanent housing is always the goal to house Angelenos living on our streets, we must continue to bring people inside to confront the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles and to prevent 5 people from dying on our streets every day. I applaud Councilwoman Yaroslavsky's effort to bring much needed interim housing to her district," said Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass.

The goal of the project is to act as a link between street homelessness and permanent housing, with a team of mental health and substance use disorder specialists, permanent housing navigation support, and employment assistance to aid people in re-establishing stable lives. Participants will be provided with ensuite bathrooms, storage and laundry facilities, and three meals per day. The project is designed to serve adults currently residing on the streets in neighborhoods near the facility.

The project will be constructed by [LifeArk](#), a Los Angeles-based company that creates innovative, high-quality modular structures. The unique design of its prefabricated structures allows the project to be built extremely quickly, with construction estimated to take just a few months.

"LifeArk is honored to partner with Council District 5 and LA Family Housing to bring an innovative housing solution to the Westside providing safe, dignified homes for those transitioning out of homelessness," said Charles Wee, Founder and CEO of LifeArk.

Once opened, operations will be led by [LA Family Housing](#), a national leader in helping people transition out of homelessness and poverty. In its dual role as a homeless service provider and affordable housing developer, LA Family Housing delivers well-managed housing enriched with a suite of supportive services that enable people to transition out of homelessness and regain personal stability long-term.

"LA Family Housing is excited to expand our work into Council District 5 by providing supportive services to those transitioning out of homelessness at 2377 Midvale," said Stephanie Klasky-Gamer, President and CEO of LA Family Housing. "We are proud to collaborate with Councilwoman Yaroslavsky, LifeArk, and the community surrounding this project on LA's Westside to provide more housing and resources to those most in need in the city."

The project will include 24/7 on-site security services to create a safe environment for participants of the project as well as the surrounding community, while helping bring more Angelenos off the street. The project is expected to break ground before the end of this year and open by 2024.

"This is exactly the kind of resource we need on the Westside. Our group of community volunteers is out working with homeless men and women every day, offering support and connecting them to services. But there is only so much we can do because there is simply nowhere for people to go. This new interim housing will help us bring more people off the streets and into housing," said Sean McMillan, President of West LA Homeless.

To set up an interview with Councilmember Yaroslavsky, LifeArk, or LA Family Housing, please contact leo.daube@lacity.org

####

councildistrict5.lacity.gov



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To: Gabby Maarse[gabby.maarse@lacity.org]
Cc: Michelle Tiliano[michelle.tiliano@lacity.org]
From: Mercedes Marquez
Sent: Fri 7/21/2023 9:02:29 PM
Subject: Re: For your approval
Received: Fri 7/21/2023 9:02:40 PM

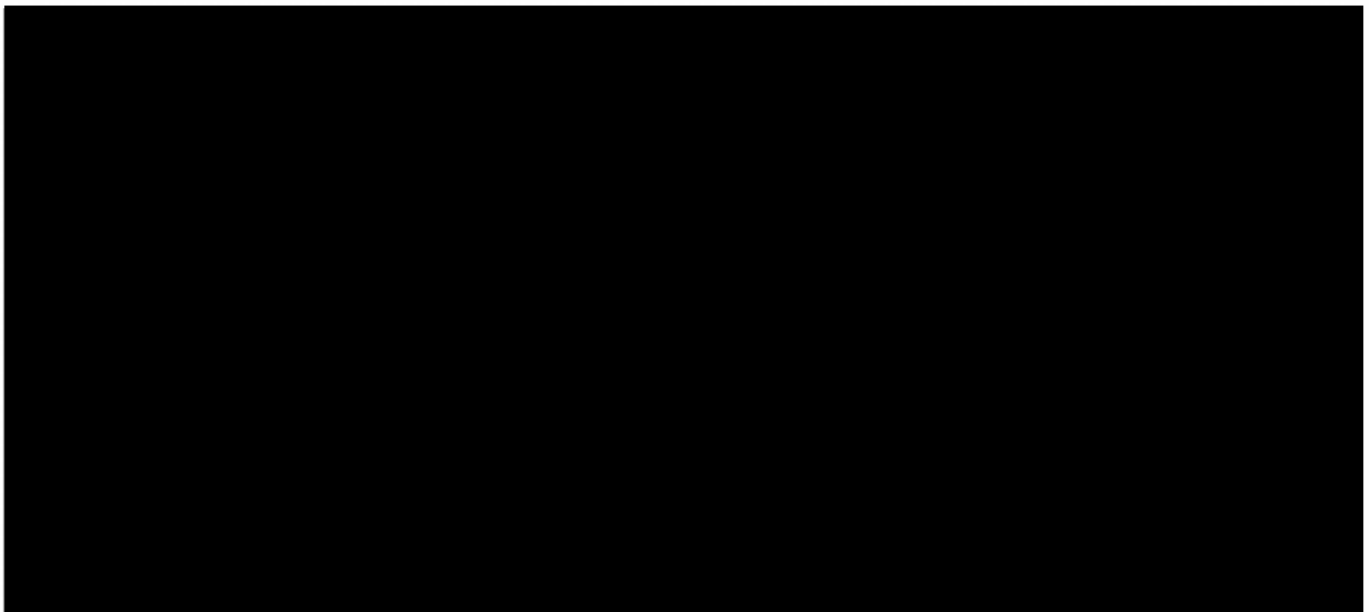
I like it

Sent from my iPad

On Jul 21, 2023, at 1:01 PM, Gabby Maarse <gabby.maarse@lacity.org> wrote:

Hey Mercedes,
Can you take a look at this and let me know if you approve? Its for CD5 Midvale project

July 24, 2023



In-Person Information Session

5:30-7:00 pm

Thursday, August 3, 2023

Temple Isaiah Community Room

10345 W Pico Blvd

Virtual Information Session

10:00-11:00 am

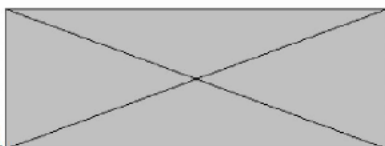
Sunday, August 6, 2023

To RSVP for one or both of these meetings, and to learn more about the project in general, visit

councildistrict5.lacity.gov/Midvale.

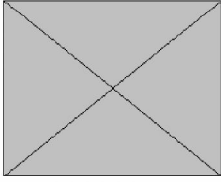
Thank you for your continued support as we work together to bring an end to our homelessness crisis across the city.

All the best,



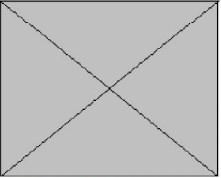
Karen Bass (TBC) Katy Yaroslavsky
MAYOR COUNCILWOMAN, FIFTH DISTRICT

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Zach Seidl
Deputy Mayor of Communications
he/him
Office of Mayor Karen Bass
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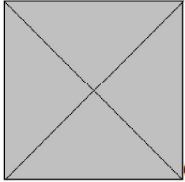
Gabby Maarse
Deputy Press Secretary
Office of Mayor Karen Bass
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To: Councilmember Raman[councilmember.raman@lacity.org]; Councilmember Krekorian[councilmember.krekorian@lacity.org]
Cc: CAO Release - Mayor Submissions[cao.release-mayor-submissions@lacity.org]; Mercedes Marquez[mercedes.marquez@lacity.org]; Clerk.HousingandHomelessness@lacity.org[Clerk.HousingandHomelessness@lacity.org]; Mandy Morales[mandy.morales@lacity.org]
From: Lilian Sacba
Sent: Fri 10/13/2023 3:53:25 PM
Subject: CAO REPORT - HOMELESSNESS EMERGENCY DECLARATION - 2023-24 FIRSTQUARTERLY REPORT
Received: Fri 10/13/2023 3:53:39 PM
[20231013 CAO HOMELESSNESS EMERGENCY DECLARATION - 2023-24 FIRST QUARTERLY REPORT.pdf](#)

ATTACHED.

--

Lilian Sacba



Office of the City Administrative Officer

Tel: (213) 978-7641 | **Email:** lilian.sacba@lacity.org

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

0220-06162-0000

Date: October 13, 2023

To: Paul Krekorian, Council President
City Council

Nithya Raman, Chair
Housing and Homelessness Committee

From: Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer
Office of the City Administrative Officer



Subject: **HOMELESSNESS EMERGENCY DECLARATION - 2023-24 FIRST
QUARTERLY REPORT**

SUMMARY

On December 12, 2022, the Mayor declared a local emergency on homelessness with a sunset of six months subject to renewal by the City Council. On July 7, 2023 the Mayor revised the local emergency declaration, which included the amendments to the reporting requirements. Per the Los Angeles Administrative Code 8.33 Local Housing and/or Homelessness Emergency, the City Administrative Officer, the Los Angeles Housing Department, and the Department of City Planning are to report to the City Council on the status and the progress of the emergency declaration. The City Council will then review the reports and determine if the emergency continues to exist. This report provides highlights on the metrics as reported by various agencies and attached memos from the Department of City Planning and the Los Angeles Housing Department on the status of shelter interventions relative to the Declaration. Lastly, this report provides an overview of the nine key performance indicators established by the Mayor in addressing the emergency, which the status is further discussed in this report for the performance period from December 12, 2022, through September 30, 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

Note and file.

BACKGROUND

The Mayor declared a local emergency on homelessness on December 12, 2022. The City Council continued to renew the declaration at least every 30 days for six months. On July 7, 2023, the Mayor reissued the housing and homelessness declaration as a homelessness crisis still remained, prompting an amendment to the Los Angeles Administrative Code (LAAC) to create a path for any Mayor of Los Angeles to streamline City processes and procedures to

address the crisis (C.F. 23-0652), to mobilize local resources, coordinate inter-agency response, accelerate procurement of housing units with the assistance of the City Administrative Office (CAO), Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD), and the Department of City Planning (DCP). The Mayor is authorized to declare a Section 8.33 emergency on housing and homelessness if any one of three criteria are present:

1. Housing supply is projected to be at least 40 percent below the annual housing production goals as established in the City's Regional Housing Needs Assessment;
2. There exists more than twice the number of unhoused people in the City of Los Angeles than the number of interim beds; or
3. A citywide increase in unhoused individuals by more than 20 percent in a single year as reported in the annual point in time count (PIT).

Additionally, the LAAC 8.33 instructs the CAO, DCP, and LAHD to provide a status report on the homelessness emergency declaration on a quarterly basis. The CAO is responsible for coordinating the Mayor's Office with monthly reporting on the status of the Homelessness Emergency Account and the Inside Safe Initiative. The CAO's Office has continued to provide monthly reports to the City Council and Mayor on the status of the funds and program with the most recent report providing data as of September 15, 2023 (Attachment 1).

As part of the homelessness emergency declaration, the Mayor also issued Executive Directive No. 1 (ED 1) Expedition of Permits and Clearances for Temporary Shelters and Affordable Housing Types. The homelessness emergency declaration along with ED 1 allows housing projects to be reviewed and expedited by City departments such as the DCP (Attachment 2) and the LAHD (Attachment 3), whose status reports are hereby attached for reference. Additionally, in the Mayor's Declaration of Local Housing and Homelessness Emergency dated July 7, 2023, the Mayor established nine key performance indicators in addressing the emergency, which is further discussed in this Report for the performance period from December 12, 2022, through September 30, 2023.

DISCUSSION

As previously mentioned, the Mayor is authorized to declare a Section 8.33 emergency on housing and homelessness if any one of three criteria are present in the City. According to the Department of City Planning (DCP), the City is 60.3 percent below the annual production goal for the current eight-year Regional Housing Need Allocation cycle of 2021-2029, thus supporting the first declaration criteria in which the housing supply is at least 40 percent below the annual housing production goal. Secondly, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority reports that 17,600 interim beds are open and occupiable and the recently released Point-In-Time count reported that 46,260 unhoused individuals reside within the City, which is more than twice the number of interim beds, thus meeting the second declaration criteria in which the number of unhoused people are more than twice the amount of available interim beds. To measure the progress made by the emergency declaration, nine key performance indicators are further discussed below:

Key Performance Indicators

1. Decrease in the number and size of encampments

As of September 29, 2023, the Mayor's Office reports that the Inside Safe Initiative has held 26 operations across 14 council districts since the declaration. The 26 operations have placed 1,648 individuals in interim or permanent supportive housing. During the reporting period, the Inside Safe Field Intervention Team was established and has provided outreach and engagement services to Inside Safe participants throughout the entire process. Additionally, the City and County have partnered together to provide health-related services for participants.

2. Regulatory relief from other jurisdictions and within Los Angeles City agencies to create flexibility to address the crisis

Sole Source Contract

Per the Los Angeles Administrative Code 8.33, the Mayor may suspend competitive bidding restrictions for contracts entered into by City departments and offices in response to the emergency. As such, the City has entered into 36 booking agreements and four occupancy agreements with various motels to provide interim housing for Inside Safe participants.

Housing Production

The DCP reports that a total of 5,427 housing units were permitted by the Department of Building and Safety (DBS) from January 1, 2023, through September 30, 2023. Additionally, DCP notes that should current trends continue, an additional 1,809 units are projected to be issued permits through the end of the calendar year for a total of 7,236 units.

Expedited Approvals

Under Executive Directive 1, which aims to streamline the approval of all affordable housing development, there have been 97 cases for a total of 7,923 proposed affordable housing units submitted to DCP. Of the 97 cases, 43 cases have been completed for a total of 3,320 units approved. The average processing time for cases is approximately 47 days. The LAHD has prioritized coordinating with the DCP to streamline affordable housing projects and will submit reports to the DCP for future reporting.

3. Relaxation in the restraints that limit the ability of the City's proprietary departments to create flexibility to address the crisis

In order to support the implementation of ED 1, the Department of Water and Power (LADWP) launched Project Powerhouse to reduce the time and cost to deliver power to affordable housing projects. Project Powerhouse expedites the engineering and construction process, and fully covers the cost of electrical line extension. Since March 2023, LADWP reports that 37 projects that provide 2,199 affordable housing units have benefitted from expedited approvals for power connection, and 34 projects are benefitting from LADWP covering costs of public

right-of-way power improvements. The estimated savings to these projects is approximately \$15.2 million. Overall, LADWP has reported a decrease of eight percent in the development review, engineering, and construction timeline.

4. Increased housing placements

As previously noted, the Inside Safe Initiative has had 26 operations, in which 1,648 participants were connected to interim or permanent housing.

5. Increased starts on new affordable housing options

The DCP and LAHD collaborated on the City of Los Angeles 2022 Annual Housing Element Progress Report, which was submitted to the California Department of Housing and Community Development in April. The reporting period is from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022. As reported to the State, 3,280 affordable units were permitted, including 2,150 units for very low income households, 1,042 for low income households, and 88 for moderate income households.

6. An increase in temporary and permanent housing units

As previously noted, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority reports that the interim housing bed inventory has increased to 17,600 from the 16,521 that was previously reported in July 2023. The inventory includes interim housing beds, safe parking, and motel vouchers issued for Inside Safe participants.

As part of the Inside Safe Initiative, the Mayor's Office has partnered with 40 motels to provide temporary housing for participants. Under the Declaration, the Mayor's Office has executed 36 booking agreements with motels and four occupancy agreements. In relation to housing unit production, the DCP reports that a total of 5,427 housing units were permitted by the DBS from January 1, 2023, through September 30, 2023.

7. Increased outside aid through access to mental health and substance use beds

On July 31, 2023, the Mayor released the Opioid and Tobacco Settlement Funds Substance Use Disorder Pilot Program Proposal, which details the use of funds allocated in the FY 2023-24 Adopted Budget to assist people experiencing homelessness with substance use disorder. The pilot program will connect interim housing participants with substance use disorder to potential inpatient treatment programs with residential beds. The Mayor's Office will work with Council Offices, 16 services providers, five treatment centers, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health for program implementation.

8. A decrease in the number of persons being evicted from existing housing units

As reported by the Mayor's Office, there have been 9,881 Unlawful Detainer Filings from June 1, 2023, through September 30, 2023. This data is confined to Unlawful Detainer/Residential and does not include substance abuse or wrongful eviction.

9. A decrease in the number of persons falling into homelessness

Performance data relative to the decrease in the number of persons falling into homelessness is still in process and will be addressed in a future report.

Attachments:

1. Homelessness Emergency Account - General City Purposes Fund Seventh Status Report
2. Quarterly Housing Production Report and Addressing the Local Housing and Homelessness Emergency
3. Los Angeles Housing Department Memorandum

cc: The City Council
The Honorable Karen Bass, Mayor
Mercedes Márquez, Office of the Mayor

MWS:ECG:KML:MP 16240028

FORM GEN. 160

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

0220-06083-0007

Date: September 27, 2023

To: Paul Krekorian, Council President
City Council

Nithya Raman, Chair
Housing and Homelessness Committee

Bob Blumenfield, Chair
Budget, Finance and Innovation Committee

From: Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer 
Office of the City Administrative Officer

Subject: **HOMELESSNESS EMERGENCY ACCOUNT - GENERAL CITY PURPOSES
FUND SEVENTH STATUS REPORT (C.F 22-1545) AS OF FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER
15, 2023**

On January 18, 2023, the City Council and Mayor approved the motion (C.F. 23-0033) to establish the Homelessness Emergency Account (HEA) to address the City's homelessness crisis and approved the transfer of \$23,462,698.25 from the COVID-19 Emergency Response account and \$26,537,301.75 from the Additional Homeless Services - General City Purposes account for a total of \$50,000,000. The City Council and Mayor also authorized the City Administrative Officer to spend the funds as directed by the Mayor, and to provide reports to Council on the expenses incurred and purposes for which the funds were used.

During the annual budget process for FY 2023-24, the Council and Mayor approved an additional \$250 million in funding. An initial allocation of \$65.7 million was appropriated at the beginning of the fiscal year to the HEA with the remaining balance appropriated to the Inside Safe Reserve Fund account. If the available uncommitted balance in the HEA is below \$25 million during the fiscal year, the CAO is instructed to provide a memo to the Mayor, Council, and Controller requesting the Controller to effectuate a transfer within 10 business days of receipt. A transfer of \$25 million from the Inside Safe Reserve Fund account will be completed until the \$184.3 million has been allocated to the HEA. The Council may change this transfer instruction with a majority vote, subject to the Mayor's veto. Regular reporting is required to continue the automatic transfer of funds from the Inside Safe Reserve Fund account for this fiscal year.

- 2 -

DISCUSSION

As of September 15, 2023, a total of \$54,796,726 has been expended for FY 2023-24 costs. The paid expenses for this fiscal year primarily consist of hotel and motel invoices as well as costs associated with the Mayfair Hotel acquisition, such as an escrow deposit, rehabilitation costs, and fund loans that will be reimbursed. Based on known obligations to date, the account is expected to have an unencumbered balance of \$27,548,219.19 by the end of the first quarter and is not expected to need a transfer from the Inside Safe Reserve Fund. It is important to note that the cash balance is based only on information provided to the CAO's Office as of September 15, 2023. Attachment 1 provides a summary of expenditures and anticipated obligations through September 30, 2023, for the Homelessness Emergency Account. Attachment 2 provides budgeted categories for the \$250 million approved in the FY 2023-24 budget.

The CAO's and Mayor's Offices are working with Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to project individual service provider costs through June 30, 2024. Additional programmatic planned expenditures will be included in future reports as they are identified.

Inside Safe Metrics

Regular reporting on the outcomes achieved through the use of funds related to housing individuals is required and is included in this report. The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) has developed a data module within the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) to track key metrics for Inside Safe. Attachment 3 includes a one-page summary of Inside Safe outcomes as of September 15, 2023, prepared by LAHSA as well as additional breakdowns of the participant status by Council Districts and other pertinent metrics. The current housing retention rate of the program is estimated to be 84 percent. These numbers may change as LAHSA continues to work on further reconciling service provider data with HMIS entries to resolve duplicate placements and other discrepancies as well as refining the new Inside Safe data module.

The Mayor's Office reports that one Inside Safe operation was completed between August 19 and September 15, 2023. Between September 12 and 13, an estimated 52 people from encampments along Aetna Street in Council District (CD) 6 were housed in Inside Safe motel rooms. The total for this reporting period is an estimated 52 people. Additional information is included in Attachment 4.

Inside Safe Motel and Hotel Invoicing

As of September 15, 2023, the motel invoices received to date include 676 invoices from 40 individual hotels, totaling 98,900 hotel room nights. The current hotel room interim housing stock based on invoices received through September 15, 2023 is 745 rooms, which includes rooms for service providers and security. It does not account for double or multiple occupants sharing a room. Including the 481 rooms in LA Grand, the total hotel room interim housing stock is 1,226 rooms. The number of individual hotels has more than doubled since the CAO's first report

- 3 -

ending March 31, 2023, from 17 to 40 hotels. The average increase in monthly invoices over the last few months is approximately 32.76%.

The invoice process involves sites submitting invoices to the CAO's Office for review by both Service Providers and CAO staff. Once the review is complete, the CAO submits the invoice to the Mayor's Office for payment approval and subsequently to the City Clerk for payment processing. If payments exceed a certain amount, the City Attorney's Office will review as well; however, this step is not necessary if there is a booking agreement (i.e. contract) with the hotel location. Once a booking agreement is executed with a hotel owner, payment processing is completed quicker than when a booking agreement is not in place. As of September 15, 2023, there were 36 executed booking agreements and one executed occupancy agreement. A booking agreement is executed with a hotel that confirms a fixed nightly rate, but hotel rooms may fluctuate given the number of participants at a location and room availability at a given time. An occupancy agreement includes a fixed nightly rate as well as a guaranteed number of rooms regardless if they are filled or not. The Mayor's Office is working with Service Providers and hotels/motels to ensure that rooms are consistently filled and closely monitored to ensure that vacant rooms are not empty for long periods of time. The Mayor's Office and the General Services Department (GSD) are taking the lead on this effort with the City Clerk's Office completing the entries into the City's Financial Management System (FMS). Finally, the Controller's Office remits payment to the motel owners. The CAO has implemented an internal approval system to help streamline submissions to the Mayor's Office for approval and City Clerk for processing.

Facility expenses incurred to date total \$51,012.28, including property improvements, repairs/damages, and valuation reports.

LA Grand Hotel

On February 24, 2023, the CAO released the Revised Sixteenth Roadmap Report (C.F. 20-0841-S31), which authorized the extension of the LA Grand Hotel lease from February 1, 2023, through February 1, 2024, for use as interim housing. The lease covers a total of 481 rooms with a rate of \$154/night, which includes meals. Lease costs expended through June 30, 2023, were \$8,749,680.83. Estimated remaining lease costs through February 1, 2024, are projected to be \$13,194,609.16, which may increase based on occupancy. The City is obligated to pay a minimum monthly cost based on an occupancy rate of 85 percent. The current occupancy is 318 individuals as of September 15, 2023.

Mayfair Hotel

On August 18, 2023, Council approved the acquisition of the Mayfair Hotel for Inside Safe. The site has 294 rooms with a three-level 183 parking space garage which is located in Council District 1. It was previously used as a part of Project RoomKey (PRK). A cash flow loan of \$42,879,270 was authorized from the HEA for reimbursement from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Fund (\$27,687,000), Proposition HHH Fund (\$5,192,270), and the Municipal Housing Finance Fund (MHFF) (\$10,000,000). Non-reimbursable costs from the HEA will total

- 4 -

\$15,633,100 and include escrow costs transferred to the General Services Department (GSD) for escrow (\$1,000,000), CBRE contracted costs for due diligence and project management (\$266,100), first year of operations costs, which includes utilities, facility management, and other associated expenses for building upkeep (\$5,067,000), and rehab costs and associated project management (\$9,300,000).

LAHSA Service Provider Contracts

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) and the Mayor's Office are involved in ongoing assessments of service provider budgets, with an estimated total of \$16,088,774 allocated to twelve service providers (including LAHSA administrative costs) from the beginning of the program through September 30, 2023. Budgets for FY 2022-23 have been leveraged by LAHSA and service providers using other existing funds for homelessness services and LAHSA has reported this information per the CAO and Mayor's Offices' request. This information has been included in the recent year-end status report. To date, two supportive services-specific invoices have been submitted to the City for reimbursement from the Homelessness Emergency Accountant. The Mayor's Office and LAHSA have been meeting regularly to understand the Service Provider budgets for the remainder of this fiscal year and plan to come to a consensus shortly. LAHSA is planning to release a procurement in the coming months to provide an opportunity for new service providers to participate in the Inside Safe Program.

Since June 1, 2023, Weingart has been providing services at the LA Grand and will continue through January 31, 2024. The negotiated amount for the Weingart contract is \$9,019,449.

The Inside Safe program model also includes housing fairs, which provide staffing, necessary materials, and Uber rides to clients to visit different housing options. No additional housing fairs occurred since the last report. So far, 17 housing fairs have been held, which cost approximately \$59,459.45 total to date. The Mayor's Office has approved \$20,000 from the HEA for these costs. Of the 17 events, four were considered mobile events that included county, state, and federal agencies to assist participants with obtaining birth certificates, Department of Public Social Services benefits (Cal-Fresh, General Relief, Medi-Cal, etc.), social security cards, and DMV identification readily available onsite. One housing fair has been held since the start of the fiscal year and is included in the stated total. The primary objective of these housing fairs is to simplify the process of moving someone into permanent housing by bringing together all the necessary resources under one roof. Services are offered to help individuals with lease up, such as obtaining an ID, birth certificate or social security card, or locating an apartment.

LAHSA continues to work with providers to ensure all exit data is entered into HMIS and is up to date and has committed to providing reconciled and verifiable exit data for Inside Safe regular reporting.

- 5 -

City Department Costs

LAPD has submitted for reimbursement a total of 92.7 overtime hours related to Inside Safe since the beginning of the fiscal year, at the cost of \$8,162.74. The projected straight line costs based on last year's expenditures is approximately \$273,000. Primarily, LAPD has been providing support for, and ensuring the safety of, City staff and Inside Safe participants. To date, there have been zero arrests during the initial phase of operations.

Should you require any additional information, please contact Kendra Leal, Senior Administrative Analyst II, at kendra.leal@lacity.org.

RECOMMENDATION

Note and file.

cc: The City Council
 The Honorable Karen Bass, Mayor
 Mercedes Márquez, Office of the Mayor
 Sharon Tso, Chief Legislative Analyst
 Kenneth Mejia, City Controller
 Hydee Feldstein Soto, City Attorney
 Dr. Va Lecia Adams Kellum, Chief Executive Officer, LAHSA

Attachments:

1. FY 2023-24 Homeless Emergency Account Expenses
2. FY 2023-24 Inside Safe Budget Categories and Breakdown
3. Inside Safe Program Metrics as of September 15, 2023
4. Appendix from Mayor's Office of Housing & Homelessness Solutions

MWS:ECG:SBL:KML 16240022

Attachment 1: FY 2023-24 Homeless Emergency Account Expenses

Current Assets	
Cash Available July 1, 2023	\$65,700,000.00
FY23 HEA Cash Reappropriation	\$31,856,857.11
Revised Cash Available	\$97,556,857.11
Less Liabilities/Expenses through September 15, 2023	
Mayfair Escrow	\$1,000,000.00
Mayfair Rehabilitation Costs	\$9,300,000.00
Mayfair CDBG Loan ³	\$27,687,000.00
Mayfair Prop HHH Loan ²	\$5,192,270.00
Mayfair MHFF Loan ²	\$10,000,000.00
FY24 Motel Invoices Paid	\$1,617,456.00
FY23 Motel Invoices Paid	\$2,810,961.88
Revised Cash Available	\$39,949,169.23
Less Anticipated Liabilities/Expenses through September 30, 2023 ¹	
LAPD Overtime (est.)	\$27,000.00
LA Grand Lease (est.)	\$8,019,479.00
LAHSA Service Providers	\$1,646,998.00
Motel Invoices (est.)	2,707,473.04
Anticipated Cash Available	\$27,548,219.19

¹ Project HomeKey 3 has \$31M budgeted; however, a transfer timeline has yet to be determined.

² Fund loans are anticipated to be reimbursed from Prop HHH and MHFF prior to September 30, 2023.

³ Fund Loan from CDBG is anticipated to be reimbursed in October 2023.

Attachment 2: FY 2023-24 Inside Safe Budget Categories and Breakdown

Interim Housing		Comments
Motel Nightly Rentals	\$92,000,000	\$150 per night estimate due to reaching capacity of 2-star motel inventory
Operating Expenses	\$18,000,000	Includes insurance, damage mitigation, incidentals, furnishings
<i>subtotal</i>	<i>\$110,000,000</i>	
Service Provider Support Services		
Street Engagement	\$6,000,000	Staff costs: long-term, on-going/pre-operation outreach efforts to build relationships with PEH prior to coming indoors
Case Management	\$16,000,000	Staff costs: includes individual case management in motels as well as housing navigators
Indirect	\$16,000,000	Overhead to include support staff, facility costs (rent, utilities)
Resident Monitors	\$10,000,000	Each motel has resident monitor to support PEH and liaise with motel staff
Food	\$13,000,000	\$21 per person, per day (meal delivery services, grocery store gift cards)
Storage	\$1,000,000	Includes storage rental for PEH surrender belongings
<i>subtotal</i>	<i>\$62,000,000</i>	
Permanent Stay		
Move-In Support	\$13,000,000	Includes landlord incentive, security deposit, furnishing, utility deposit, and other move-in costs
Rental Assistance	\$18,000,000	2-year Time-limited subsidies (\$1,833per month) for 400 people transitioning from motels to PSH pipeline
<i>subtotal</i>	<i>\$31,000,000</i>	
Acquisition		
Motel Acquisition	\$47,000,000	This \$47M would leverage \$31M in Project HomeKey 3 funding. The City could acquire 3-4 larger motels (154 rooms total) and fully fund 5 years of operations and maintenance.
Total	\$250,000,000	

Inside Safe

Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority Report

Updated September 15, 2023. Please disregard all previous reports.

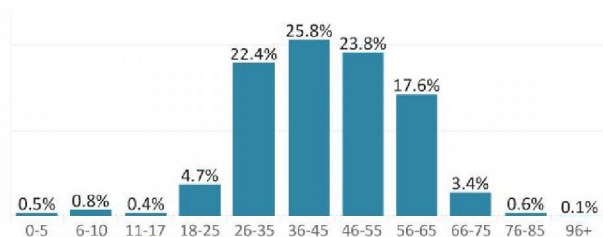
25 Encampment Operations	1,606 Individuals Served	1,574 Entered Interim Housing	84% Housing Retention	12% Permanently Housed
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Current Status of Clients Who Entered Interim Housing

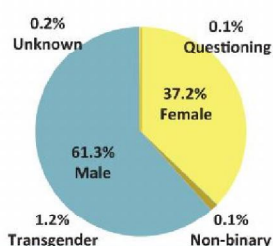
162 Currently Permanently Housed	Permanent Housing	Time Limited Subsidy	116 (7.4%)
		Permanent Supportive Housing	17 (1.1%)
		Reunified	8 (0.5%)
		Exited to Subsidized Housing	21 (1.3%)
1,149 Currently in Interim Housing	Interim Housing	Motel	1,030 (65.4%)
		Other Interim Housing	66 (4.2%)
		ABH	26 (1.7%)
		Tiny Home	27 (1.7%)
263 Program Exits	Returned to Homelessness		153 (9.7%)
	Returned to Homelessness - Working with Providers		90 (5.7%)
	Incarcerated		9 (0.6%)
	Medical or Psychiatric facility		3 (0.2%)
	Deceased		8 (0.5%)

Demographics

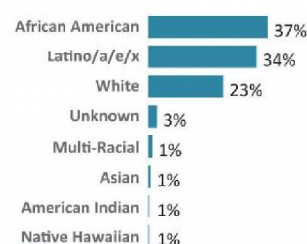
Age



Gender



Race & Ethnicity



Individuals Served: Includes all clients who were engaged on the day of the encampment. In addition to the encampment operations, Inside Safe also includes clients who were living in other ad hoc encampments throughout the city since January 2023 and clients that were living in the LA Grand on Feb 1, 2023, when transition from a PRK site. The nonspecific encampment-based clients comprise 323 individuals.

Entered Interim Housing: Includes only clients who entered interim housing. This cohort is the basis for all reporting.

Housing Retention: The percentage is calculated by dividing the sum of people who are Currently Permanently Housed and Currently in Interim Housing by the number of people who entered Interim Housing. This figure excludes clients that have passed away as they did not voluntarily exit the programs.

Returned to Homelessness - Working with Providers: This includes clients who have left interim or permanent housing, but who are currently still engaging with outreach and housing programs.

Returned to Homelessness: Clients who have left the program and are not active in any other homeless services program in HMIS.

Data Quality:

The report includes only data that providers have entered into HMIS. Providers have up to 72 hours after an interaction with, or a change in status of, a client to make a record in HMIS. Due to the dynamic nature of the program and its participants, this process may take longer than 72 hours. There may also be additional activities that have yet to be captured in HMIS. LAHSA and service providers strive for complete, accurate, and timely data in HMIS. The Data Management team at LAHSA is actively collaborating with providers to resolve any data discrepancies. The identified data discrepancies we are currently working to resolve include: Discrepancies in total clients served at winter shelter sites and 19 clients who have rental assistance recorded, but no move in date or address recorded. These individuals will not be counted as permanently housed until a move in date is recorded.

Percentage Permanently Housed: Calculated from all clients who entered interim housing who have not exited from program.

Duplicative Clients: As a note there have been 16 clients who have been involved in more than one resolution. They are deduplicated in the total count.

Attachment 3: Inside Safe Program Metrics as of September 15, 2023

Table 1. Inside Safe Participant Breakdown by Council District as of September 15, 2023 ¹

CD	Total Participants ²	Motels + LA Grand	ABH	THV	Other Interim Housing	Permanent Placements	Other Exits, dispositions, or in Data Reconciliation
2	44	9	3	18	1	2	11
3	44	31	1	0	2	1	9
4	29	22	0	0	2	2	3
5	69	49	3	0	0	6	11
6	44	40	0	3	0	0	1
7	50	46	2	0	1	0	1
8	86	60	0	0	0	19	7
9	135	105	0	0	5	11	14
10	41	40	0	0	0	1	0
11	160	81	3	0	0	43	33
12	56	50	0	0	1	0	5
13	138	116	1	0	6	7	8
14	277	192	1	0	4	16	64
15	119	85	2	2	0	10	20
N/A	298	117	10	4	46	44	77
Total¹	1,590	1,043	26	27	68	162	264

¹ This information may change pending further updates from LAHSA. Table only used for diagnostics.

² Table includes 16 duplicative clients as noted by LAHSA.

Table 2. Inside Safe Program Metrics as of September 15, 2023

Number of Encampment Operations	25
Number of Targeted Inside Safe Efforts ¹	7
Number of Council Districts	14
Number of Initial Placements ²	1,574
Number of Arrests During Initial Encampment Operations	0
Number of Housing Fairs To Date	17
Pounds of Waste Removed	340,968

¹ Includes scattered encampment relief efforts to move PEH into hotel rooms as well as transitioning Augmented Winter Shelter and Project Roomkey transfers into Inside Safe.

² This amount may change pending further updates from LAHSA.

Attachment 3: Inside Safe Program Metrics as of September 15, 2023

Table 3. Inside Safe Encampment Operations by Council District as of September 15, 2023

Council District	No. of Operations
Council District 2	1
Council District 3	1
Council District 4	1
Council District 5	2
Council District 5	1
Council District 7	1
Council District 8	3
Council District 9	3
Council District 10	1
Council District 11	3
Council District 12	1
Council District 13	3
Council District 14	2
Council District 15	2
Total Operations as of September 15, 2023	25

Attachment 4: Appendix from Mayor's Office of Housing & Homelessness Solutions

Introduction

This appendix was created to provide programmatic and policy updates. This report provides additional information on Inside Safe and related matters.

Waivers from HUD to Bring Angelenos Inside Faster

With support from the Mayor's Office, HACLA successfully petitioned the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Public and Indian Housing and Community Planning and Development Departments, and the following waivers were implemented by HACLA in late August and early September: 1) tenant self-certification of Social Security Number, date of birth, disability, and income; and 2) landlord self-certification of initial inspection within the Continuum of Care program. They apply to all HACLA homeless assistance programs, including all Continuum of Care grants awarded to the agency.

Per HACLA, the waivers will help expedite the processing for tenant-based voucher issuance and permanent supportive housing project-based voucher leasing, effectively reducing the application processing time by two weeks to several months. Eligibility documentation is now valid for 120 days. In the Continuum of Care program, the landlord self-certification of initial inspection will allow those new contracts to be executed much more quickly, reducing the processing time for that phase of work for that group by similar time periods. The Mayor's Office has been informed that cities across the country are looking to replicate this model.

In September, HACLA was notified that HUD also approved the Agency's request for an increase in the voucher payment standard (VPS) for its tenant- and project-based voucher programs, allowing the VPS to be set at 120% of the new Fair Market Rents (FMRs) citywide. Comparable increases to Small Area FMRs (SAFMRs) for high opportunity areas were approved as well. The new VPS's take effect October 1, 2023 for new housing contracts. The published rates are the maximum contract rent allowable if supported by a rent comparability study. Increased FMRs allow voucher holders to access a greater number of apartments and neighborhood markets. The adjusted citywide voucher payment standard is as follows:

BEDROOM(S)	VOUCHER PAYMENT STANDARDS
Studio	\$2,132
1	\$2,407
2	\$3,052
3	\$3,915
4	\$4,320
5	\$4,968
6	\$5,616

State Encampment Resolution Grant (ERF-2)/LA Grand Hotel Update

The Mayor's Office began work in January 2023 with the Housing for Health division of LA County Department of Health Services (DHS) on a joint application to the State of California's second round of Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF-2). In June 2023, the State announced the \$60M grant award, at which time the stakeholders began to prepare for the July 1, 2023 funding start date. City, County, Weingart Center and other stakeholders are utilizing awarded funds to fulfill the proposals of the Skid Row Action Plan to service high-acuity Skid Row residents over the next three years.

According to the Weingart Center, as of September 22, 2023, there are 317 participants enrolled in the LA Grand program. All residents have been assessed for acuity levels. 50% of residents qualify for inclusion in the ERF grant program based on the grant criteria, which include: 1) originating from Skid Row, and 2) a demonstrated high level of physical, mental, substance use disorder and/or behavioral need. These higher-acuity Skid Row participants will transfer to the Mayfair Hotel when renovations are completed. Given that the LA Grand has a 481-room capacity, we will fill remaining vacancies with Skid Row residents who match the ERF-2 grant criteria.

Lower-acuity and non-Skid Row residents who currently reside at the LA Grand but do not qualify for inclusion in the ERF grant program will transition to permanent housing or alternate interim housing destinations before January 31, 2024, when the LA Grand lease expires. Weingart Center, LAHSA, County DHS and the Mayor's Office are working together to establish a demobilization plan for these residents, with weekly demobilization planning calls to begin in October 2023.

Grants


Several new funding sources have been secured by the City of Los Angeles to aid in encampment resolution and the construction of affordable housing. At the end of August, LAHD was awarded \$156.9M in state grant funds under the Round 7 Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program, marking the seventh year in a row that the LA Housing Department (LAHD) has received this funding. Over \$99.2M of these funds will go to the production of 466 units of affordable housing that will include the Peak Plaza Apts in CD 9, HHH New Hampshire and Crenshaw Crossing in CD 10, and the Downtown Women's Center Campus Expansion in CD 14.

Additionally, on August 25, 2023, HACLA was awarded \$35.7M from the Department of Housing and Community Development's Infill Infrastructure Grant Program, a program that supplies grants through an over-the-counter process to serve as gap funding in the development of infill housing. The funds secured by this grant will fund the construction of five multi-family rental projects and two homeownership opportunities, totaling 665 new units of affordable housing across the city.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: October 5, 2023

TO: Matthew Szabo
City Administrative Officer
City Administrative Officer

FROM: Vincent P. Bertoni, AICP 
Director
Los Angeles City Planning

**SUBJECT: QUARTERLY HOUSING PRODUCTION REPORT AND ADDRESSING
THE LOCAL HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS EMERGENCY**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information on the City's housing production as it relates to the annual production goals as established in the Housing Element. Additionally, it seeks to assess the progress in addressing the Local Housing and Homelessness Emergency pursuant to LA Administrative Code 8.33.

LA Administrative Code (LAAC) 8.33(b)(i) allows the Mayor to declare a Local Housing and Homelessness emergency when the City's housing production is projected to fall short by at least 40 percent of its annual goals as established in the Housing Element. For the eight-year Housing Element planning period, the City's total housing production goal, or Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) Allocation, as established in the City's 2021-2029 Housing Element, is 456,543 units. On an annualized basis, the housing production goal is 57,080 units per year. To meet the 40 percent criterion, the City must produce a total of 34,248 units per year.

According to the most recent housing progress report, which was submitted to the California Housing and Community Development (HCD) on April 1, 2023, housing production during the current eight-year Housing Element planning period is as follows:

2021 (October 15 - December 31)	2022 (January 1 - December 31)	Annualized Average
4,014 units	23,422 units	22,705 units

The City's current annual housing production averages 22,705 units per year. This production amount is 60.3 percent below the City's annual goals established by the Housing Element, which exceeds the minimum 40 percent threshold that would allow the Mayor to declare the existence of a local housing and homelessness emergency.

The Department has received monthly permit data through the end of the third quarter (September) of the 2023 calendar year from Los Angeles Building and Safety (LADBS). According to the provided data, there were a total of 1,780 housing units permitted in the third quarter of 2023, bringing the total to 5,427 total units issued through the third quarter of calendar year 2023. If current trends persist, it is projected that permits for an estimated 7,236 units will be issued for CY 2023. The breakdown by quarter is as follows:

DBS Dwelling Units on Issued Permits (2023 YTD)	
2023 Q1	1,869
2023 Q2	1,778
2023 Q3	1,780
2023 Q4 (Estimated)	1,809
Estimate for 2023	7,236

In order to exceed the 40 percent housing production threshold stipulated in LAAC 8.33, permits for the year 2023 would need to see an increase of over 44 percent compared to the levels recorded in 2022. However, the reality is that there has been a substantial decline in permitting for new housing. Based on the available data, projections indicate that housing production in 2023 is expected to be less than one-third of what it was in 2022. Consequently, it is evident that the City is not on track to meet the housing production goals set forth by the LAAC and Executive Order.

With regards to the progress in addressing the emergency, City Planning is implementing the Mayor's Executive Directive 1 (ED 1) to streamline approvals of 100% affordable housing developments. The ED 1 has been effective in facilitating the processing of affordable housing. as of September 25, 2023, the planning case activity for ED 1 can be summarized as follows:

- There have been a total of 7,923 proposed affordable housing units, of which 3,320 units have been approved (it is not known whether any of these have received building permits and are therefore counted above).
- There have been 97 cases filed, out of which 43 cases have been successfully completed, leaving 54 cases pending.
- On average, the total processing time for these cases is 47 days.

For any questions regarding this matter, please contact Matt Glesne, Senior City Planner, at matthew.glesne@lacity.org.

c: Paul Krekorian, Los Angeles City Council President
 Jenna Hornstock, Deputy Mayor, Office of the Mayor Karen Bass
 Kevin Keller, Senior Advisor, Office of the Mayor Karen Bass
 Azeen Khanmalek, Director of Affordable Housing Production, Office of the Mayor Karen Bass
 Nene Ogbechie, Executive Officer of Housing, Office of the Mayor Karen Bass
 Edwin Gipson, Assistant City Administrative Officer, City Administrative Officer
 Kendra Leal, Senior Administrative Analyst, City Administrative Officer
 Mindy Pothongsunun, Administrative Analyst, City Administrative Officer

Ann Sewill, General Manager
Tricia Keane, Executive Officer

Daniel Huynh, Assistant General Manager
Anna E. Ortega, Assistant General Manager
Luz C. Santiago, Assistant General Manager

City of Los Angeles



Karen Bass, Mayor

LOS ANGELES HOUSING DEPARTMENT
1200 West 7th Street, 9th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Tel: 213.808.8808
housing.lacity.org

October 5, 2023

Matthew W. Szabo
City Administrative Officer
200 Main St., Suite 1500
Los Angeles, CA 90012

The Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD) respectfully submits this memorandum, consistent with the requirements of the Mayor's Local Housing and/or Homelessness Declaration of Emergency, codified as Section 8.33 (f) of the Los Angeles City Charter. Since the issuance of the Mayor's Declaration and approval by Council, LAHD has worked closely with the Department of City Planning, as well as the CAO and other City departments, to expedite and monitor affordable and supportive housing development and production. LAHD will continue its collaboration and monitoring activities with these departments.

Moving forward, LAHD's reporting, relative to Section 8.33 (f), will be provided through the Department of City Planning.

Thank you,

Ann Sewill
General Manager
Los Angeles Housing Department

CC:

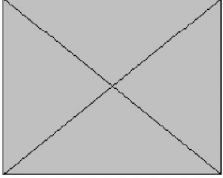
Mercedes Marquez, Chief of Homelessness and Housing, Office of the Mayor
Jenna Hornstock, Deputy Mayor of Housing, Office of the Mayor
Nene Ogbechie, Executive Officer of Housing, Office of the Mayor
Azeen Khanmalek, Director of Housing Production, Office of the Mayor
Kevin Keller, Senior Advisor, Office of the Mayor
Edwin Gipson, Office of the City Administrative Officer
Kendra Leal, Office of the City Administrative Officer
Mindy Pothongsunun, Office of the City Administrative Office

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To: Mercedes Marquez[mercedes.marquez@lacity.org]
From: Leigh Hoffman-Kipp
Sent: Wed 10/11/2023 10:37:31 PM
Subject: 8.33 Report
Received: Wed 10/11/2023 10:37:46 PM
[3pm Wed HED - 2023-24 - 1st QPR.docx](#)
[DWP Powerhouse.pdf](#)

Latest draft -

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Leigh Hoffman-Kipp (she/her)
Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives
Housing and Homelessness Solutions
Office of Mayor Karen Bass
[Sign up for updates from the Mayor here](#)

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

0220-06162-0000

Date:

To: Paul Krekorian, Council President
City Council

Nithya Raman, Chair
Housing and Homelessness Committee

From: Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer
Office of the City Administrative Officer

Subject: **HOMELESSNESS EMERGENCY DECLARATION - 2023-24 FIRST
QUARTERLY REPORT**

SUMMARY

On December 12, 2022, the Mayor declared a local emergency on homelessness with a sunset of six months subject to renewal by the City Council. Per the Los Angeles Administrative Code 8.33 Local Housing and/or Homelessness Emergency, the City Administrative Officer, the Los Angeles Housing Department, and the Department of City Planning are to report to the City Council on the status and the progress of the emergency declaration. The City Council will then review the reports and determine if the emergency continues to exist. Attached to this report are memos from the Department of City Planning and the Los Angeles Housing Department on the status of shelter interventions under the Declaration. Lastly, this Report provides an overview of the nine key performance indicators established by the Mayor in addressing the emergency, which the status is further discussed in this Report for the performance period from December 12, 2022 through September 30, 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

Note and file.

BACKGROUND

The Mayor declared a local emergency on homelessness on December 12, 2022. The City Council continued to renew the declaration at least every 30 days for six months. On July 7, 2023 the Mayor reissued the housing and homelessness declaration as a homelessness crisis still remained, prompting an amendment to the Los Angeles Administrative Code (LAAC) to create a path for any Mayor of Los Angeles to streamline City processes and procedures to address the crisis (C.F. 23-0652), to mobilize local resources, coordinate inter-agency

response, accelerate procurement of housing units with the assistance of the City Administrative Office (CAO), Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD), and the Department of City Planning (DCP). The Mayor is authorized to declare a Section 8.33 emergency on housing and homelessness if any one of three criteria are present:

1. Housing supply is projected to be at least 40 percent below the annual housing production goals as established in the City's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA);
2. There exists more than twice the number of unhoused people in the City of LA than the number of interim beds; or
3. A citywide increase in unhoused individuals by more than 20 percent in a single year as reported in the annual point in time count (PIT).

Additionally, the LAAC 8.3.3. instructs the CAO, DCP, and LAHD to provide a status report on the homelessness emergency declaration on a quarterly basis. The CAO is responsible for assisting the Mayor's Office with monthly reporting on the status of the Homelessness Emergency Account and the Inside Safe Initiative. The CAO's Office has continued to provide assistance and monthly reports to the City Council and Mayor on the status of the funds and program with the most recent report providing data as of September 15, 2023 (Attachment 1).

As part of the homelessness emergency declaration, the Mayor also issued Executive Directive No. 1 (ED 1) Expedition of Permits and Clearances for Temporary Shelters and Affordable Housing Types. The homelessness emergency declaration along with ED 1 allows housing projects to be reviewed and expedited by City departments such as the DCP (Attachment 2) and the LAHD (Attachment 3), whose status reports are hereby attached for reference. Additionally, in the Mayor's Declaration of Local Housing and Homelessness Emergency dated July 7, 2023, the Mayor established nine key performance indicators in addressing the emergency, which is further discussed in this Report for the performance period from December 12, 2022 through September 30, 2023.

DISCUSSION

Relative to the housing and homelessness emergency criteria, the first and second criteria continue to be present and thus support the Mayor's declaration of the emergency. According to the Department of City Planning (DCP), the City is 60.3 percent below the annual production goal for the current eight-year RHNA cycle of 2021-2029. The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority reports that 17,600 interim beds are open and occupiable and the recently released PIT count was 46,260 unhoused individuals in the City, which is more than twice the number of interim beds.

Key Performance Indicators

1. Decrease in the number and size of encampments - MO

As of September 29, 2023, Inside Safe has held XX operations across XX council districts since the declaration. The XX operations have placed XX individuals in interim or permanent supportive housing. During the reporting period, the Inside Safe Field Intervention Team was

established and has provided outreach and engagement services to Inside Safe participants throughout the entire process. Additionally, the City and County have partnered together to provide health-related services for participants.

2. Regulatory relief from other jurisdictions and within Los Angeles City agencies to create flexibility to address the crisis - Planning and MO

Sole Source Contract

Per the Los Angeles Administrative Code 8.3.3, the Mayor may suspend competitive bidding restrictions for contracts entered into the City department and offices in response to the emergency. As such, the City has entered into **XX** amount of sole source contracts with various motels to provide housing for Inside Safe participants.

Housing Production

The DCP reports that a total of 5,427 housing units were permitted by the Department of Building and Safety (DBS) from January 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023. Additionally, DCP notes that should current trends continue, an additional 1,809 units are projected to be issued permits through the end of the calendar year for a total of 7,236 units.

Expedited Approvals

Under Executive Directive 1, which aims to streamline the approval of all affordable housing development, there have been 97 cases for a total of 7,923 proposed affordable housing units submitted to DCP. Of the 97 cases, 43 cases have been completed for a total of 3,320 units have been approved. The average processing time for cases is approximately 47 days. The LAHD has prioritized continuing coordinating with the DCP to streamline affordable housing projects and will submit reports to the DCP for future reporting.

3. **Relaxation in the restraints that limit the ability of the City's proprietary departments to create flexibility to address the crisis - MO/DWF**
4. **Increased housing placements - MO/LAHS**
5. **Increased starts on new affordable housing options - DCP/LAHD**
6. **An increase in temporary and permanent housing units - MO/LAHS/LAHD**

As previously noted, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority the number of interim housing bed inventory has increased to 17,600 from 16,521 that was previously reported in July 2023. The inventory includes interim housing beds, safe parking, and motel vouchers issued for Inside Safe participants.

As part of the Inside Safe Initiative, the Mayor's Office has partnered with 40 motels to provide temporary housing for participants. Under the Declaration, the Mayor's Office has executed 36 booking agreements with motels and one occupancy agreement. In regards to housing units, The DCP reports that a total of 5,427 housing units were permitted by the DBS from January 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023.

7. Increased outside aid through access to mental health and substance use beds - MO

On July 31, 2023, the Mayor released their Opioid and Tobacco Settlement Funds Substance Use Disorder Pilot Program Proposal, which details the use of funds allocated in the 2023-24 Adopted Budget to assist people experiencing homelessness with substance use disorder. The pilot program will connect interim housing participants with substance use disorder to potential inpatient treatment programs with residential beds. The Mayor's Office will work with Council Offices, 16 services providers, five treatment centers, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health for program implementation.

8. A decrease in the number of persons being evicted from existing housing units - LAHD

9. A decrease in the number of persons falling into homelessness- MO

Attachments

1. Homelessness Emergency Account - General City Purposes Fund Seventh Status Report
2. Quarterly Housing Production Report and Addressing the Local Housing and Homelessness Emergency
3. Los Angeles Housing Department Memorandum

MWS:ECG:KML:MP 16240028



Cutting Red Tape - LADWP Project Powerhouse

238 projects

are currently in the expedited design and construction phases.

- 36 projects benefiting from expedited approvals for power connection, with 2145 affordable housing units
- 34 projects, with many more in the queue, that will benefit from LADWP covering costs of public right-of-way power.
- The savings to these projects is approximately \$15.2 million.

LADWP has cut the development review, engineering, and construction timeline by **87%**.

Design:

48 Days

Construction:

40 Days

UPDATED 9/7

10



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman
Council Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232
(310) 253-5851

Staff Report

File #: 22-997, Version: 1

Item #: A-1.

CC - ACTION ITEM: Discussion and Direction Regarding Housing Programs, Housing Options and Outreach/Approaches to Address Homelessness, Including: (1) Proposed Development of 12 Modular Units of Interim Housing at the Venice Parking Lot (9415-25 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles) and 22 Modular Units of Interim Housing or Permanent Supportive Housing at the Virginia Parking Lot (10555 Virginia Ave., Culver City); (2) Direct Housing Program/Master Leasing; (3) Pallet Homes Programming; and (4) Outreach to the Unhoused Population and Approaches to Addressing Homeless Encampments.

Contact Person/Dept.: Tevis Barnes/CDD and Christina Stoffers/CDD

Phone Number: 310-253-5780

Meeting Date: May 3, 2022

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Attachments: Yes ☒ No ☐

Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒ **Date:**

Commission Name:

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - Advisory Committee on Housing and Homelessness (04/28/2022); Landlord Tenant Mediation Board (04/28/2022); City Council (04/28/2022)

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (04/28/2022)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council discuss and provide direction regarding (1) the proposed development of 12 modular units of interim housing at the Venice Parking Lot (9415-25 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles) and 22 modular units of interim housing or permanent supportive housing at the Virginia Parking Lot (10555 Virginia Ave., Culver City); (2) direct housing program/master leasing; (3) pallet homes programming; and (4) outreach to the unhoused population and approaches to addressing homeless encampments.

BACKGROUND

At the February 28, 2022 City Council meeting, Council Member Eriksson asked to agendaize a discussion about providing safe paths of travel for students and children walking to and from school under freeway overpasses and near unsheltered people living in encampments. Mayor Lee and Council Member Fisch agreed to hold an overall discussion about the City's policies and programs, and other potential policies and programs, to address homelessness, which received support from the City Council to place on a future agenda.

DISCUSSION

Since the formation of the Homelessness Ad Hoc Committee in 2004 (renamed the Advisory Committee on Housing and Homelessness in 2021), the City has made increasing investments in staff time and capital and operating funds to address and prevent homelessness. Recognizing that homelessness is the result of multiple systems failures, the City has continued to invest in numerous programs to address the root causes of housing and homelessness, including adopting the Plan to Prevent and Combat Homelessness in 2018 (2018 Plan) (Attachment 1).

The Need for Coordinated Efforts Across Levels of Government

To better understand the impacts and limitations of the City's programs, it helps to contextualize Culver City within the greater Los Angeles County region, a city system within a larger county system. Homelessness is a regional, statewide, and national issue. The full eradication of homelessness requires a coordinated structural response across federal, state, and local governments to fully address how the lack of living wage jobs, affordable housing, and affordable health and mental health care, as well as the factors of youth aging out of foster care, and incarceration, can lead people toward housing insecurity and potentially into homelessness. Homelessness also disproportionately impacts Black, brown and indigenous and other already marginalized communities.

Once someone falls into homelessness, another intricate network of services must come together in a coordinated fashion to help lift them out of this state. Since Culver City is part of Los Angeles County's Continuum of Care (CoC) for homelessness services, the City is reliant and dependent on Los Angeles County (County) for some aspects of countywide welfare and social services, such as outreach and mental health care. Additionally, since the City has regulatory authority over land use, City leadership has had the foresight to continue investing in housing programs within the City's power to address housing and homelessness within its boundaries.

Housing Programs and Options

The City's 2018 Plan solidified and focused the City's efforts on concrete goals and actions. Since the City is part of the CoC, the goals and actions outlined in the Plan are aligned with the County's

action plan and strategies. While the City relies on County Health Departments to provide health and mental health services, the City is building out and investing in the infrastructure to prevent people from falling into homelessness and to support people who are currently experiencing homelessness within City boundaries. This is not an exhaustive list of the City's programs, but meaningful highlights include:

- Formation of the Advisory Committee on Housing and Homelessness (ACOH), an appointed body of City residents and representatives from the business and supportive service community whose goal is to identify and advocate for solutions to end homelessness and methods and means for improving the quality of housing and life for all individuals.
- Construction of Upward Bound House in 2009 to house unsheltered families and children.
- Adoption of permanent rent control and tenant protections in 2020.
- Investment in two rounds of an emergency rental assistance program for people experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.
- Enactment of the eviction moratorium to support tenants from eviction due to financial hardship from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Acquisition and future rehabilitation of two motels in the City to provide 76 units of interim and supportive housing.
- Development of a mobile crisis intervention program to meet the behavioral and mental health needs of the City's entire community.
- Development of a Safe Parking program for unsheltered people living in vehicles.
- Continuation of emergency motel voucher and rapid rehousing programs.
- Continued investigation of Venice and Virginia parking lots for the development of modular interim and permanent supportive housing.
- Continued development of current and future affordable housing programs and policies.
- Continued and expanded homelessness outreach and engagement through St. Joseph Center and City teams to build rapport for service connection.

While these are Culver City's efforts, they are performed in close collaboration with local and regional partners. Staff works closely with the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative office, the westside cities through the Westside Cities Council of Governments, and in coordination with staff from the City of Los Angeles Council Districts 11 and 5. The City's efforts are developed in alignment with larger regional and local strategies and pursued in lockstep, as much as possible, with neighboring jurisdictions, as homelessness and the impacts of homelessness are regional.

There are other housing options and programs staff has begun to review and research but have not yet funded or implemented, including:

- **Modular Housing Project:** Modular housing vendor, United Dwellings was asked to prepare preliminary concept plans for the Venice and Virginia parking lots for repurposing as modular interim and/or permanent supportive housing sites in order to determine the feasibility of modular housing on the properties. United Dwellings manufactures modular housing units and distributes them throughout the region. Each of the project sites would include one administration/services/food service building for client intake and services and one separate ADA compliant bathroom trailer located adjacent to a proposed common area, consistent with

the "reasonable accommodations" provisions of the California Building Code, and a common area of up to 2,500 square feet.

Venice Lot: Per the preliminary plans for the Venice lot, up to 12 residential units could be provided and all of the units would be one-bedroom and 315 square feet in area. Some of the units could be designed as duplexes for site efficiency. Each unit is served by its own solar panels for water heating and contains its own bathroom. A laundry area may also be provided for each unit or there may be a common laundry area. The project for the Venice lot is located in the City of Los Angeles and would require interest and cooperation by Los Angeles to entitle and construct the modular units. The Venice project would not contribute to the City's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) requirement but would contribute toward addressing homelessness solutions in the area. The preliminary project cost estimate for the Venice lot would be approximately \$2,650,000. The cost per unit is estimated at \$175,000 for 12 residential units plus one unit for client intake, which totals approximately \$2,275,000 plus the cost for utilities that are estimated at \$375,000. The project is also subject to prevailing wage.

Virginia Lot: The Virginia lot project can accommodate up to 22 residential units and one client intake unit initially, with 30 onsite parking spaces to remain, pending expiration of existing parking leases, and would consist of a development program similar to the Venice lot described above. The total estimated project cost would be approximately \$4,400,000 including utilities. The project is also subject to prevailing wage.

Preliminary concept plans for the two modular housing projects are included as Attachments 2 (Venice) and 3 (Virginia) to this report.

- **Pallet Housing:** Pallet housing is a type of shelter for unhoused persons as they transition out of homelessness and into more permanent housing. Representatives from the organization Pallet Shelters made an informational presentation at the joint City Council and ACOHH Meeting on April 19, 2021. No motion was made to pursue the program. Several Southern California communities such as Banning, Riverside, Redondo Beach and North Hollywood have installed pallet facilities. The pallet shelters being utilized in southern California that staff has reviewed are approximately 64 square feet and may contain one or several beds. According to staff research, the expected median stay is three to six months. Elizabeth Rugg, Los Angeles Community Development Consultant, from Pallet Shelter will give a presentation at the May 3, 2022, Special City Council meeting on pallet home programming to address homelessness.

- **Direct Housing/Master Leasing:** There are also housing approaches that could be explored further, such as Direct Housing (Housing First), which advocates supplying social services with housing accommodations, without preconditions and barriers to entry (such as sobriety, treatment, or service participation requirements). Such programs include providing rental assistance or master-leasing units for the highest users of emergency and homeless outreach services. The ACOHH has discussed this type of approach in the past. Dr. Anna Laven, Executive Director of the Bakersfield Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative, will give a presentation at the May 3, 2022 Special City Council meeting on how Bakersfield achieved “functional zero” for chronic homelessness through Direct Housing/Master Leasing.

Interim and Supportive Housing/Project Homekey

The City continues to respond to the homelessness crisis by investing in the acquisition of two motels on Sepulveda Boulevard for the purpose of creating 76 housing units for people experiencing chronic homelessness. The City was recently notified that it was awarded \$26.7 million in State funds from Project Homekey. These housing units will be the first interim and permanent supportive housing units ever created in Culver City and will be one of few such projects on the westside of Los Angeles County. While the motel reuse project is being implemented, the City will continue to move forward on the programs outlined above and in the 2018 Plan. An update regarding Project Homekey will also be presented during the May 3, 2022 Special City Council Meeting.

Outreach to the Unhoused Population and Approaches to Addressing Homeless Encampments

In addition to housing options and programs, the 2018 Plan also includes several targeted efforts of outreach to unhoused people. City staff, the Police Department’s mental health evaluation team, and the City’s contract provider St. Joseph’s Center continue to provide outreach to people living in encampments throughout the City to offer services, education, and support. Soon the City will have a mobile crisis intervention program, comprised of social worker, emergency medical technician, and case manager, that can serve to provide additional and proactive support to people needing service connection. This degree of engagement is important to maintain trust and rapport between individuals and service providers.

The City’s overall outreach investments include weekly clean-ups throughout the City, including the Washington Boulevard and Venice Boulevard freeway underpasses, and municipal buildings (including the Senior Center) to remove debris from public rights-of-way where unhoused persons are currently living/sleeping. The St. Joseph outreach team also works with these unhoused individuals to educate them on the benefits and importance of maintaining safe and accessible pedestrian walkways and building entryways. This has been a challenging issue.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and on-going regional housing pressures, the number of people experiencing homelessness and living on the sidewalk has grown. To alleviate concerns that the tents and shelters in the area may make it more difficult for pedestrians to use the sidewalk, at the March 28, 2022 City Council Meeting, the City Council authorized the Public Works Director/City

Engineer to design a temporary sidewalk extension (called a “bulbout”) along the north side of Washington Boulevard under the 405 Freeway to increase pedestrian access, subject to Caltrans review and approval of the project. On April 25, 2022, the City was informed by Caltrans that the City’s proposed project was rejected.

As a result, the City has increased its outreach efforts in this and other areas to offer services, including shelter (in the form of motel vouchers). We are RALLY (RALLY), a communications firm retained to help develop outreach and messaging surrounding homelessness, will give a presentation at the May 3, 2022 Special Council Meeting to discuss homeless outreach.

It is the City’s goal that continued outreach efforts, including those through the future mobile crisis intervention program, will assist with moving unhoused persons into interim and/or permanent supportive housing within the Homekey Project.

Summary

Considering all the above and understanding how the City’s role is embedded within the County system, the City has been tackling the regional crisis and is limited by its role and authority as a local government agency. Culver City is one of 88 cities within the County system and is subject to the priorities and changes within County government. The complex nature of homelessness also poses a challenge of providing unique and customized care to individuals experiencing homelessness. It takes time, continued investment, and a coordinate structural response to enact the change and course correction needed to turn around the failed systems that have led people to fall into homelessness in the first place.

Culver City continues to demonstrate a commitment to caring for its most vulnerable residents by steadily investing in a localized infrastructure of services, programs, and supports. The City remains a vocal presence in regional discussions advocating for additional funding and provides feedback on informing strategies and programs to addressing homelessness.

Staff recommends the City Council discuss the above housing options and programs, and current outreach and approaches to addressing homeless encampments, and provide additional and specific direction to staff to reinforce existing efforts, change or revisit strategies or programs, or other areas of input to be studied and implemented.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There is no fiscal impact associated with discussion of this item. Future programs may create a fiscal impact, which would be evaluated at that time.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2022-05-03_ATT 1_Plan to Combat and Prevent Homelessness

2. 2022-05-03_ATT 2_Venice Lot Modular Housing Concept
3. 2022-05-03_ATT 3_Virginia Lot Modular Housing Concept

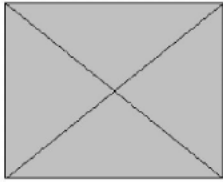
MOTION

That the City Council:

1. Discuss housing programs, housing options and outreach/approaches to address homelessness, including:
 - a. Proposed development of 13 modular units of interim housing at the Venice Parking Lot (9415-25 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles) and 24 modular units of interim housing or permanent supportive housing at the Virginia Parking Lot (10555 Virginia Ave., Culver City);
 - b. Direct housing program/master leasing;
 - c. Pallet homes programming; and
 - d. Outreach to the unhoused population and approaches to addressing homeless encampments; and
2. Provide direction to the City Manager as deemed appropriate.

To: Joan Lee[joan.e.lee@lacity.org]; Elliott Layne[elliott.layne@lacity.org]; Allen Moret[allen.moret@lacity.org]
Cc: Jean Ansolabehere[jean.ansolabehere@lacity.org]
From: Joyce Dominguez
Sent: Mon 10/2/2023 11:15:41 PM
Subject: Fwd: HODG and no response from MKB office
Received: Mon 10/2/2023 11:15:41 PM

FYI



Joyce Dominguez

Executive Officer to the Chief of Housing and Homelessness Solutions
Office of Mayor Karen Bass

[Sign up for updates from the Mayor here](#)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Leigh Hoffman-Kipp <leigh.hoffman-kipp@lacity.org>

Date: Mon, Oct 2, 2023 at 3:53 PM

Subject: Fwd: HODG and no response from MKB office

To: Zachary Seidl <zachary.seidl@lacity.org>, Clara Karger <clara.karger@lacity.org>, Joyce Dominguez <joyce.dominguez@lacity.org>, Christopher Vargas <christopher.vargas@lacity.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Leigh Hoffman-Kipp <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, Oct 1, 2023 at 9:43 PM

Subject: HODG and no response from MKB office

To: Leigh Hoffman-Kipp <leigh.hoffman-kipp@lacity.org>

I should reach out, ask MM

Begin forwarded message:

From: Hang Out Do Good | HODG <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Date: October 1, 2023 at 9:04:18 PM PDT

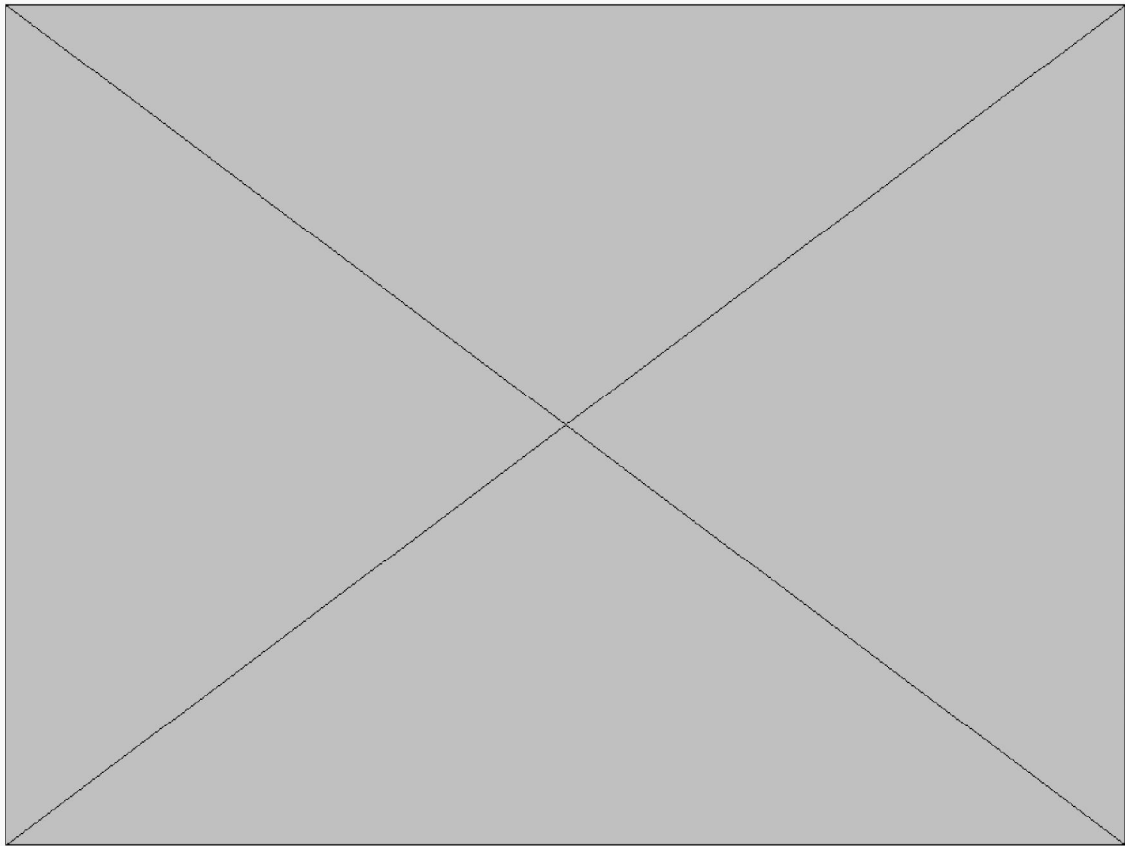
To: suzi <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Subject: Guess who has a guest?

Reply-To: [REDACTED]@gmail.com

Hi there. I just heard that Ballots Over Broadway was SO GOOD and that it didn't rain! Yay! I hope you all got a chance to hear those insanely talented performers. Thank you to everyone who made it happen, especially Jessica S.

A while back, before I left for our dreamy Rhode Island sabbatical -- this is where I am right now --



-- The Providence Athenium. It's a writer's fantasy -- anyway, before we got here, I solicited you all to become GUEST WRITERS of this newsletter. Not surprisingly, because you guys are fucking awesome, you delivered. So today, we have our first guest writer, and I am very excited.

I don't know if you saw [the article](#) last week in the NY Times about **The States Project** and how it is filling the void the DCCC has left unfilled in state legislatures across the country. One thing the article did NOT get right is who the heart and soul of The States Project is. Because it's not the 2 dudes who are highlighted and whose photo is in the article. No, the beating heart of this wildly successful org is a delightful, wicked smart children's book author from Brooklyn.

From the moment I met **MELISSA WALKER** in Helen's apartment way back when, I was hooked. Unlike so many organizers, Melissa knows how to tell a story that's gripping and undeniable -- it's what she does for a living. The one she is telling now is about the important work The States Project and The Los Angeles Giving Circle -- which is how HODG specifically participates in The States Project -- are doing. Please meet -- and read -- our first guest writer, MELISSA WALKER!

"Thank you all for welcoming this update about The States Project and about your own Los Angeles Giving Circle (LAGC) to which you have consistently brought HODG's hard work and unique sparkle. Last year, y'all helped us flip Michigan and hold crucial ground in Arizona to keep us one seat away from a power shift.

The results were huge, especially the session in Michigan, where the new majority ended right to work laws to strengthen unions, safeguarded LGBTQ+ rights by ensuring that 400,000 LGBTQ+ Michiganders have equal protection from discrimination, protected abortion access by repealing Michigan's unpopular 1931 statute criminalizing abortion care, and advanced gun safety with universal background checks, safe gun storage laws, and red flag laws.

This year, LAGC is focused on Virginia. The rightwing is two seats away from the majority in the Virginia State Senate. In the House of Delegates, we need to flip 3 seats to shift power. These tipping point seats will be decided on the margins, by hundreds of votes, so LAGC's focus here matters immensely! Thank you!

And... States Project Giving Circles like LAGC will raise more this year for Virginia than the DNC has given (you may have heard they're in for \$1.5M). We're contributing more than the DNC from living rooms (and lovely backyards like Sarah's). That's YOU. You're a big part of this top VA investment. 💎

I've gone on long enough, but I do want to share a video from a recent States Project event so you can see and hear some of who and what tactics LAGC is supporting. It's 5 minutes long. Grab a snack and a seltzer and watch it anyway. You'll see VA House candidate Kimberly Pope Adams talk about being a part of The States Project's Door Knocking Challenge (candidates earn financial contributions based on the number of doors they personally knock). She tells a gripping story and lays out the (very high) stakes."



DOOR KNOCKING CHALLENGE PROJECT

Read more about the impact of The States Project in The NY Times.

Contribute to and become a member of the LOS ANGELES GIVING CIRCLE (LAGIC)

Thank you, Melissa and thank all of you who have already contributed to The Los Angeles GIVING CIRCLE. If you haven't given yet, and want to know more, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or to Melissa. We are happy to chat more about how supporting at the State level is the most powerful and meaningful way we can support Democracy. **Melissa Walker:** melissa@statesproject.org

And now for some more powerful + meaningful HODG actions you can join over the next few days:

1. PARTICIPATE IN A SERIOUS DISCUSSION ABOUT HOMELESSNESS IN LA with MAYOR KAREN BASS

This is no meet n' greet. This isn't a fundraiser. This is a serious, data-driven convo about homelessness, and I think you all need to attend. For real. Normally I wouldn't push so hard, but questions must be asked and answered, and this event is a place to do just that.

This Convo is being organized by serious, DATA-DRIVEN people, people who are in the thick of this problem including **Jill Bauman**, CEO of Imagine LA, a non-profit dedicated to ending the cycle of homelessness and **Janey Rountree**, the ED of the California Policy Lab at UCLA and someone whose work I admire. (She and her team of researchers use computer modeling to predict who is most likely to become homeless, so county officials can intervene before it happens) Like I said, serious, data-driven people.*

The Mayor will be there to answer questions. I have many. Like about the fact that we are spending bucketloads of money on Inside-Safe, but how many of those folks are actually staying in those motels etc? And what about the long term solutions? Why hasn't the Mayor jumped on the LCI bandwagon? Lindsay and I met with her one-on-one at Pan Quotidien on Larchmont a year ago. She gave us the thumbs up. We never heard from her or her office again. How is she helping the city build more affordable

housing?

I am sure you have lots of questions too. The Mayor needs to hear them. And answer them. Please show up and ask them.

* Not only will there be serious people at this event, there will be beautiful architecture! It's at the Wilshire Ebell which is just a fabulously old LA venue and well worth the trip and time.

HOMELESSNESS IN LOS ANGELES

A convo with Mayor Karen Bass

with

Janey Rountree (UCLA's California Policy Lab) & Jill Bauman (ImagineLA)

Wednesday, OCT 4

Arrival: 8am

Program begins 8:30am

The Wilshire Ebell

741 S. Lucerne Blvd. HANCOCK PARK

Tickets: \$20 (if you can't -- or don't want to -- pay, please let me know and I will deal. No one should not attend because of \$)

RESERVE YOUR SPOT: Homelessness in LA: A convo with Mayor Karen Bass

2. HUDDLE UP WITH HODG & CATCH UP WITH THE EVENTS OF THE WEEK & WITH EACH OTHER

OMG. I had the nicest time last Tues huddling up on zoom with y'all. We talked about the abortion shit show in Beverly Hills, the immigration debacle on our borders, and how Chris Bubser once again proves to be my hero, by trying to get a no-car zone in the center of Mammoth.

Zero clue what we'll talk about this go around, but if you're feeling disconnected and in need of some good conversation, please join. You can bring an agenda, or not. You can stay for 10 minutes, or longer. Just come and say hi!

THE TUES NIGHT HODG HUDDLE

Tuesday, Oct 4

8pm (PT) - until whenever

On ZOOM

Register for HODG Huddle

3. SUPPORT REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM IN BEVERLY HILLS

Have y'all heard what's going on with the abortion clinic in Bev Hills? If not, here's the Cliff Notes version: [Dupont Clinic](#), an abortion clinic based in DC, was planning on opening an office in Bev Hills. They chose BH because the city council claimed to be supportive of reproductive freedom. Turns out they aren't.

Dupont Clinics leased a space in a medical building at 8920 Wilshire (where my dentist's office is!) Dupont poured money into renovating the space for procedures, including late term abortions, when a group of anti-repro rights radicals began protesting out front. Not wanting any disturbances in their town, the BH City Council AND the owner of the building conspired with or caved to – it's not clear which – the extremists and revoked Dupont's lease, thereby limiting abortion access for BH residents, Angelenos, and women across the country *. If this infuriates you as much as it does me, there are a few things you can do:

a. Sign The Petition: HODG member **GAY ABRAMS** has put together a petition that she intends to present to the Beverly Hills City Council Meeting on TUESDAY, OCT 3rd. Please sign it. YOU DO NOT NEED TO LIVE IN BEVERLY HILLS TO SIGN.

b. Pass the Petition along to everyone that you know in your community, your state and across the country. *DuPont Clinic is one of only 13 clinics across the country who offer the medical care for women who find themselves in these challenging and dire situations. Many would have traveled to this clinic from other states.

c. Join Gay Abrams at the Beverly Hills City Council Meeting on Oct. 3rd, at 7 P.M. BOTH BEVERLY HILLS AND LOS ANGELES RESIDENTS should attend. A strong showing will indicate that we won't succumb to coercion from extremist groups. If you plan on attending, please reach out to **Gay** at bhforchoice@gmail.com

PROTECT ABORTION ACCESS IN BEVERLY HILLS

Attend Beverly Hills City Council Meeting

Council Chamber

455 North Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills

Tuesday, Oct 3

7pm

If you can attend, please reach out to Gay at: bhforchoice@gmail.com

SIGN PETITION HERE

4. SHOW UP IN SUPPORT OF INTERIM HOUSING IN WEST LA

Remember a couple weeks ago, I told you about Helen's experience at the meeting about the **Midvale Interim Housing** that Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky is planning to build in West LA? And how intense the opposition was? Even though if built, this would be THE ONLY INTERIM HOUSING IN DISTRICT 5? And how all the opposition was about one thing – parking – which means people care more about parking than they do about homeless people, which I guess shouldn't be surprising, but it is because it's so effing depressing. Anyway, the reason I am bringing all this up is because –

– this Wednesday, **LA City Council's Housing and Homeless Committee is meeting to hear about the Midvale Interim Housing Project.** There will be lots of folks there opposing this much needed housing. There needs to be some folks showing up in support. Helen and Moira agree. Which is why they're going. Will you go too?

The meeting is right smack in the middle of the day – the council clearly hopes nobody will show up -- If you are free in the middle of the day on Wed**, and you are willing

to say something like “Hi, I’m _____ and I live in District 5 and I support the Midvale Interim Housing Project because – then pick on: a.) it would be the only interim housing in the district. b.) other interim housing projects have been built in similar neighborhoods and have not had any uptick of crime or nuisances and I’m sure the same will happen here. c.) District 5 needs to do our part in helping make LA more livable for everyone. Or d.) come up with your own spin! Please support the Midvale housing project – then you should totally join Helen and Moira and hopefully others downtown.

**** While it's preferable that residents of District 5 show, it would be great if everyone went and showed their support. (To know what district you are in GO [HERE](#).**

SUPPORT MIDVALE INTERIM HOUSING

At LA City Council’s Housing + Homeless Committee Meeting

Wed, Oct 4

2:30pm

John Ferraro Council Chamber

Room 340

CITY HALL

200 N spring st 90012

If you plan to attend, reach out to Helen: hm.eigenberg@gmail.com

5. LEARN ABOUT HOUSING AND HOW WE CAN DO IT BETTER

Speaking of housing...

... You are probably beyond sick of me yammering on about the Livable Communities Initiative. That is because it’s the best solution I know to our housing crisis. If you’ve heard of a better one, please let me know. Until then, I’m all in on the LCI and you should be too. Which is why I want you all to come to --

-- **The LCI/California YIMBY’s Town Hall.** It’s hosted by the LCI -- because we are trying hard to build coalitions -- and is an opportunity for us all to share our thoughts and visions on how California can support more housing and, at the same time, more inclusive, climate smart communities. This will be an event full of ideas

that will hopefully leave you thinking and re-considering how are city might work.

Email konstantin@cayimby.org with questions.

**The LCI invites you to
A LCI/CA-YIMBY TOWN HALL**

Saturday, Oct 7

11am - 1pm

Lindsay's House

231 S Plymouth Blvd.

HANCOCK PARK

Light snacks + refreshments will be served.

RSVP to LCI/CA-YIMBY Town Hall

6. SPREAD THE LCI GOSPEL

One last thing about housing, and the LCI...

... The more we've look around the LA area, the more it seems that pockets of Burbank would be perfect Livable Communities. But unlike most of you, the folks of Burbank don't know what the LCI is. So we are spreading the word the best way we know how – by talking to people, face to face. Yep, that's right! We are going old school. It has been working! And we'd love your help!

This month we'll be at the **Burbank Farmers Market** on Saturday, Oct 14. We would love you to join, and help at the booth. You don't have to be an LCI or housing expert. Just someone who cares. And we -- meaning Pegah!! -- will be there with you the whole time, to walk you through everything you need to know.

LOOKING FOR LCI VOLUNTEERS

**To help spread the word
At the Burbank Farmers Market**

Saturday Oct 14

8am - 12pm (you don't have to be there the whole time!)

If you're interested in helping, please reach out to Pegah at livablecommunitiesla@gmail.com.

Also, if you'd like to host an LCI zoom or in-person gathering with your peeps, please also reach out to Pegah and we will set something up: livablecommunitiesla@gmail.com.

7. IT'S A HYGIENE DRIVE TO SUPPORT SAFE PARKING LA!!

You guys know about **Safe Parking LA**, right? The non-profit that provide safe parking for folks whose only source of shelter is their car? They use underutilized parking lots where they supply security and sanitation as well as case management services and other support. How awesome is that? What's not awesome is that right now they are **in short supply of hygiene items**.

This action is being organized by HODG'S COMMISSIONER OF COLLECTION DRIVES, Rhonda Hayter! I was so stoked when Rhonda let me know that we are supporting Safe Parking LA. I learned about Safe Parking LA when TIOH was considering turning their parking lot into safe parking. Sadly, the congregation voted against it. They were worried about insurance and school children seeing people living in their cars, which they wouldn't because the safe parking residents need to leave way before the children even get to school, but there's always a reason to say no, right? It was truly one of the most disappointing decisions my synagogue has made and I think about it all the time as an example of how fear can make well meaning people do the wrong thing and turn their backs on "the stranger." Anyway –

– I have always loved this organization so thank you Rhonda for making this happen, and thank you to everyone who participates! Which I hope is all of you. If you have questions, **call Rhonda at: 323-804-1698**.

****** Ooo, I almost forgot something super cool: HODG member, and my neighbor and friend, Scott Sale FOUNDED Safe Parking LA. Just saying.

**HYGIENE +
A COLLECTION DRIVE FOR SAFE PARKING LA**

We are collecting the following items for Safe Parking LA:

Travel-size shampoo + conditioner

Body wash

Lotion

Hygiene wipes

Toothbrushes

Toothpaste

Deodorant

Sunscreen

Bottled water

Vehicle sunshades

Light blankets/Throws/Fleece

Please drop off on MY LAWN

153 S. Norton Ave

ON SUNDAY Oct 8 or SUNDAY Oct 15

8am - 11:30am

OR

Order supplies online and have them delivered to:

Rhonda Hayter

1238 Meadowbrook Ave.

LA, CA 90019.

Learn about SAFE PARKING LA

8. BAIL LINDSAY OUT & WRITE SOME POSTCARDS AT HOME

Like me, Lindsay S. bites off more than she can chew a lot of the times. For example: she took on the task of writing 240 postcards by herself. Yes, Lindsay, ENVIRONMENTAL VOTER PROJECT is a wonderful organization that identifies people who care passionately about the climate but are low-propensity voters, and pushes them to vote. BUT 240 postcards? By Oct 4th? You need our help!

Lindsay has 200 postcards left. She's put them in postcard packets in the hopes that

some of you will swing by her house and pick up a packet, write the cards and toss them in the mail by Oct 4. Each packet will have everything you need for this task -- addresses, stamps, scripts, etc. I thank you for your help with this. So does Lindsay.

HELP LINDSAY FINISH HER ENVIRONMENTAL VOTER PROJECT POSTCARDS

**Pick up packets at Lindsay's
231 S. Plymouth Blvd, HANCOCK PARK.**

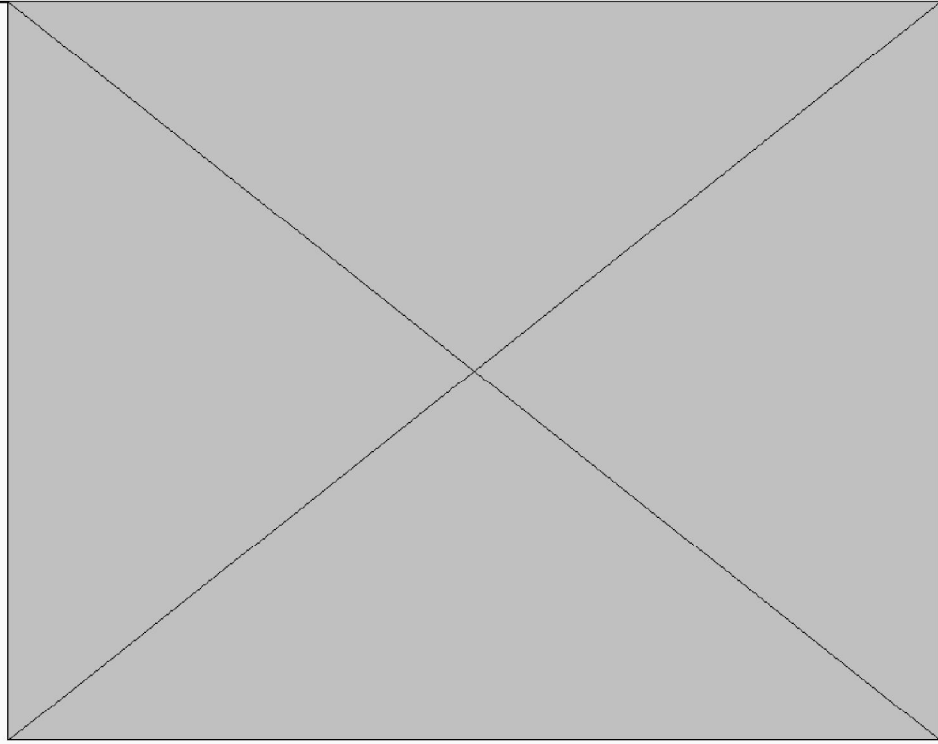
Mail by Oct 4

**Text Lindsay before you go, to make sure there are packets
left: 323-899-4961.**

That's all we have for now. If you're ever lost and wondering what's going on, don't forget, you can always go to the CALENDAR on our website. Thanks to Pegah, it has most of this stuff on it for easy reference.

The HODG Calendar

Have a great week.
I'm missing you terribly and am
hopeful that I'll get to see you on Zoom on Tues!
Until then I'll have to suffer with this:



xoxo
J

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Our mailing address is:

Jennifer Levin

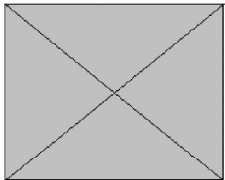
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Leigh Hoffman-Kipp (she/her)

Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives

Housing and Homelessness Solutions

Office of Mayor Karen Bass

[Sign up for updates from the Mayor here](#)

To: Zachary Seidl[zachary.seidl@lacity.org]; Clara Karger[clara.karger@lacity.org]; Joyce Dominguez[joyce.dominguez@lacity.org]; Christopher Vargas[christopher.vargas@lacity.org]
From: Leigh Hoffman-Kipp
Sent: Mon 10/2/2023 10:53:20 PM
Subject: Fwd: HODG and no response from MKB office
Received: Mon 10/2/2023 10:53:34 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Leigh Hoffman-Kipp [REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Oct 1, 2023 at 9:43 PM
Subject: HODG and no response from MKB office
To: Leigh Hoffman-Kipp <leigh.hoffman-kipp@lacity.org>

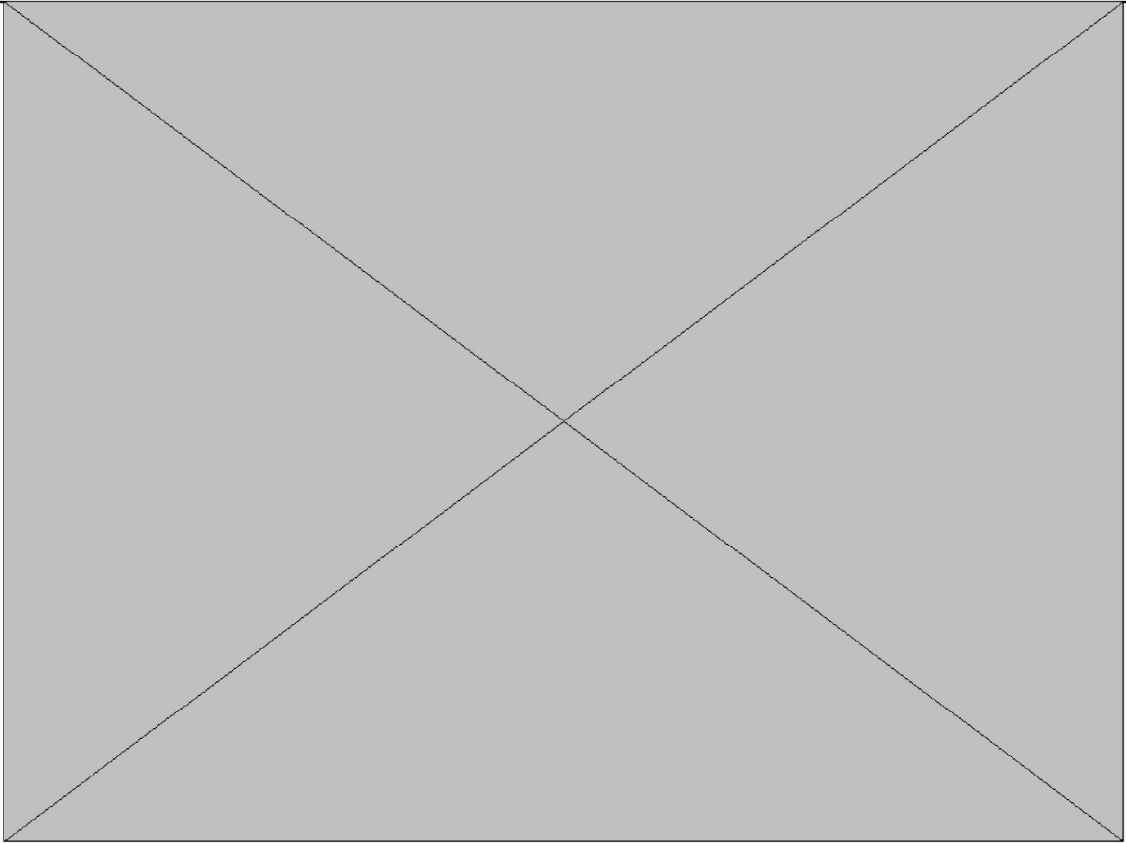
I should reach out, ask MM

Begin forwarded message:

From: Hang Out Do Good | HODG [REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Date: October 1, 2023 at 9:04:18 PM PDT
To: suzi [REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Subject: Guess who has a guest?
Reply-To: [REDACTED]@gmail.com

Hi there. I just heard that Ballots Over Broadway was SO GOOD and that it didn't rain! Yay! I hope you all got a chance to hear those insanely talented performers. Thank you to everyone who made it happen, especially Jessica S.

A while back, before I left for our dreamy Rhode Island sabbatical -- this is where I am right now --



-- The Providence Athenium. It's a writer's fantasy -- anyway, before we got here, I solicited you all to become GUEST WRITERS of this newsletter. Not surprisingly, because you guys are fucking awesome, you delivered. So today, we have our first guest writer, and I am very excited.

I don't know if you saw [the article](#) last week in the NY Times about **The States Project** and how it is filling the void the DCCC has left unfilled in state legislatures across the country. One thing the article did NOT get right is who the heart and soul of The States Project is. Because it's not the 2 dudes who are highlighted and whose photo is in the article. No, the beating heart of this wildly successful org is a delightful, wicked smart children's book author from Brooklyn.

From the moment I met **MELISSA WALKER** in Helen's apartment way back when, I was hooked. Unlike so many organizers, Melissa knows how to tell a story that's gripping and undeniable -- it's what she does for a living. The one she is telling now is about the important work The States Project and The Los Angeles Giving Circle -- which is how HODG specifically participates in The States Project -- are doing. Please meet -- and read -- our first guest writer, MELISSA WALKER!

"Thank you all for welcoming this update about The States Project and about your own [Los Angeles Giving Circle \(LAGC\)](#) to which you have

consistently brought HODG's hard work and unique sparkle. Last year, y'all helped us flip Michigan and hold crucial ground in Arizona to keep us one seat away from a power shift.

The results were huge, especially the session in Michigan, where the new majority ended right to work laws to strengthen unions, safeguarded LGBTQ+ rights by ensuring that 400,000 LGBTQ+ Michiganders have equal protection from discrimination, protected abortion access by repealing Michigan's unpopular 1931 statute criminalizing abortion care, and advanced gun safety with universal background checks, safe gun storage laws, and red flag laws.

This year, LAGC is focused on Virginia. The rightwing is two seats away from the majority in the Virginia State Senate. In the House of Delegates, we need to flip 3 seats to shift power. These tipping point seats will be decided on the margins, by hundreds of votes, so LAGC's focus here matters immensely! Thank you!

And... States Project Giving Circles like LAGC will raise more this year for Virginia than the DNC has given (you may have heard they're in for \$1.5M). We're contributing more than the DNC from living rooms (and lovely backyards like Sarah's). That's YOU. You're a big part of this top VA investment. 💎

I've gone on long enough, but I do want to share a video from a recent States Project event so you can see and hear some of who and what tactics LAGC is supporting. It's 5 minutes long. Grab a snack and a seltzer and watch it anyway. You'll see VA House candidate Kimberly Pope Adams talk about being a part of The States Project's Door Knocking Challenge (candidates earn financial contributions based on the number of doors they personally knock). She tells a gripping story and lays out the (very high) stakes."



DOOR KNOCKING CHALLENGE PROJECT

Read more about the impact of The States Project in The NY Times.

Thank you, Melissa and thank all of you who have already contributed to The Los Angeles GIVING CIRCLE. If you haven't given yet, and want to know more, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or to Melissa. We are happy to chat more about how supporting at the State level is the most powerful and meaningful way we can support Democracy. **Melissa Walker:** melissa@statesproject.org

And now for some more powerful + meaningful HODG actions you can join over the next few days:

1. PARTICIPATE IN A SERIOUS DISCUSSION ABOUT HOMELESSNESS IN LA with MAYOR KAREN BASS

This is no meet n' greet. This isn't a fundraiser. This is a serious, data-driven convo about homelessness, and I think you all need to attend. For real. Normally I wouldn't push so hard, but questions must be asked and answered, and this event is a place to do just that.

This Convo is being organized by serious, DATA-DRIVEN people, people who are in the thick of this problem including **Jill Bauman**, CEO of Imagine LA, a non-profit dedicated to ending the cycle of homelessness and **Janey Rountree**, the ED of the California Policy Lab at UCLA and someone whose work I admire. (She and her team of researchers use computer modeling to predict who is most likely to become homeless, so county officials can intervene before it happens) Like I said, serious, data-driven people.*

The Mayor will be there to answer questions. I have many. Like about the fact that we are spending bucketloads of money on Inside-Safe, but how many of those folks are actually staying in those motels etc? And what about the long term solutions? Why hasn't the Mayor jumped on the LCI bandwagon? Lindsay and I met with her one-on-one at Pan Quotidien on Larchmont a year ago. She gave us the thumbs up. We never heard from her or her office again. How is she helping the city build more affordable housing?

I am sure you have lots of questions too. The Mayor needs to hear them. And answer

them. Please show up and ask them.

* Not only will there be serious people at this event, there will be beautiful architecture! It's at the Wilshire Ebell which is just a fabulously old LA venue and well worth the trip and time.

HOMELESSNESS IN LOS ANGELES

A convo with Mayor Karen Bass

with

Janey Rountree (UCLA's California Policy Lab) & Jill Bauman (ImagineLA)

Wednesday, OCT 4

Arrival: 8am

Program begins 8:30am

The Wilshire Ebell

741 S. Lucerne Blvd. HANCOCK PARK

Tickets: \$20 (if you can't -- or don't want to -- pay, please let me know and I will deal. No one should not attend because of \$)

RESERVE YOUR SPOT: Homelessness in LA: A convo with Mayor Karen Bass

2. HUDDLE UP WITH HODG & CATCH UP WITH THE EVENTS OF THE WEEK & WITH EACH OTHER

OMG. I had the nicest time last Tues huddling up on zoom with y'all. We talked about the abortion shit show in Beverly Hills, the immigration debacle on our borders, and how Chris Bubser once again proves to be my hero, by trying to get a no-car zone in the center of Mammoth.

Zero clue what we'll talk about this go around, but if you're feeling disconnected and in need of some good conversation, please join. You can bring an agenda, or not. You can stay for 10 minutes, or longer. Just come and say hi!

THE TUES NIGHT HODG HUDDLE

Tuesday, Oct 4

8pm (PT) - until whenever

On ZOOM

Register for HODG Huddle

3. SUPPORT REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM IN BEVERLY HILLS

Have y'all heard what's going on with the abortion clinic in Bev Hills? If not, here's the Cliff Notes version: [Dupont Clinic](#), an abortion clinic based in DC, was planning on opening an office in Bev Hills. They chose BH because the city council claimed to be supportive of reproductive freedom. Turns out they aren't.

Dupont Clinics leased a space in a medical building at 8920 Wilshire (where my dentist's office is!) Dupont poured money into renovating the space for procedures, including late term abortions, when a group of anti-repro rights radicals began protesting out front. Not wanting any disturbances in their town, the BH City Council AND the owner of the building conspired with or caved to – it's not clear which – the extremists and revoked Dupont's lease, thereby limiting abortion access for BH residents, Angelenos, and women across the country *. If this infuriates you as much as it does me, there are a few things you can do:

- a. Sign The Petition:** HODG member **GAY ABRAMS** has put together a petition that she intends to present to the Beverly Hills City Council Meeting on TUESDAY, OCT 3rd. Please sign it. YOU DO NOT NEED TO LIVE IN BEVERLY HILLS TO SIGN.
- b. Pass the Petition along** to everyone that you know in your community, your state and across the country. *DuPont Clinic is one of only 13 clinics across the country who offer the medical care for women who find themselves in these challenging and dire situations. Many would have traveled to this clinic from other states.
- c. Join Gay Abrams at the Beverly Hills City Council Meeting on Oct. 3rd, at 7 P.M.** BOTH BEVERLY HILLS AND LOS ANGELES RESIDENTS should attend. A

strong showing will indicate that we won't succumb to coercion from extremist groups. If you plan on attending, please reach out to **Gay** at bhforchoice@gmail.com

PROTECT ABORTION ACCESS IN BEVERLY HILLS

Attend Beverly Hills City Council Meeting

Council Chamber

455 North Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills

Tuesday, Oct 3

7pm

If you can attend, please reach out to Gay at: bhforchoice@gmail.com

SIGN PETITION HERE

4. SHOW UP IN SUPPORT OF INTERIM HOUSING IN WEST LA

Remember a couple weeks ago, I told you about Helen's experience at the meeting about the **Midvale Interim Housing** that Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky is planning to build in West LA? And how intense the opposition was? Even though if built, this would be THE ONLY INTERIM HOUSING IN DISTRICT 5? And how all the opposition was about one thing – parking – which means people care more about parking than they do about homeless people, which I guess shouldn't be surprising, but it is because it's so effing depressing. Anyway, the reason I am bringing all this up is because –

– this Wednesday, **LA City Council's Housing and Homeless Committee is meeting to hear about the Midvale Interim Housing Project**. There will be lots of folks there opposing this much needed housing. There needs to be some folks showing up in support. Helen and Moira agree. Which is why they're going. Will you go too?

The meeting is right smack in the middle of the day – the council clearly hopes nobody will show up -- If you are free in the middle of the day on Wed**, and you are willing to say something like “Hi, I'm _____ and I live in District 5 and I support the Midvale Interim Housing Project because – then pick on: a.) it would be the only interim housing in the district. b.) other interim housing projects have been built in similar

neighborhoods and have not had any uptick of crime or nuisances and I'm sure the same will happen here. c.) District 5 needs to do our part in helping make LA more livable for everyone. Or d.) come up with your own spin! Please support the Midvale housing project – then you should totally join Helen and Moira and hopefully others downtown.

**** While it's preferable that residents of District 5 show, it would be great if everyone went and showed their support. (To know what district you are in GO [HERE](#).**

SUPPORT MIDVALE INTERIM HOUSING

At LA City Council's Housing + Homeless Committee Meeting

Wed, Oct 4

2:30pm

John Ferraro Council Chamber

Room 340

CITY HALL

200 N spring st 90012

If you plan to attend, reach out to Helen: hm.eigenberg@gmail.com

5. LEARN ABOUT HOUSING AND HOW WE CAN DO IT BETTER

Speaking of housing...

... You are probably beyond sick of me yammering on about the [Livable Communities Initiative](#). That is because it's the best solution I know to our housing crisis. If you've heard of a better one, please let me know. Until then, I'm all in on the LCI and you should be too. Which is why I want you all to come to --

-- **The LCI/California YIMBY's Town Hall.** It's hosted by the LCI -- because we are trying hard to build coalitions -- and is an opportunity for us all to share our thoughts and visions on how California can support more housing and, at the same time, more inclusive, climate smart communities. This will be an event full of ideas that will hopefully leave you thinking and re-considering how are city might work.

Email konstantin@cayimby.org with questions.

The LCI invites you to
A LCI/CA-YIMBY TOWN HALL

Saturday, Oct 7

11am - 1pm

Lindsay's House

231 S Plymouth Blvd.

HANCOCK PARK

Light snacks + refreshments will be served.

RSVP to LCI/CA-YIMBY Town Hall

6. SPREAD THE LCI GOSPEL

One last thing about housing, and the LCI...

... The more we've look around the LA area, the more it seems that pockets of Burbank would be perfect Livable Communities. But unlike most of you, the folks of Burbank don't know what the LCI is. So we are spreading the word the best way we know how – by talking to people, face to face. Yep, that's right! We are going old school. It has been working! And we'd love your help!

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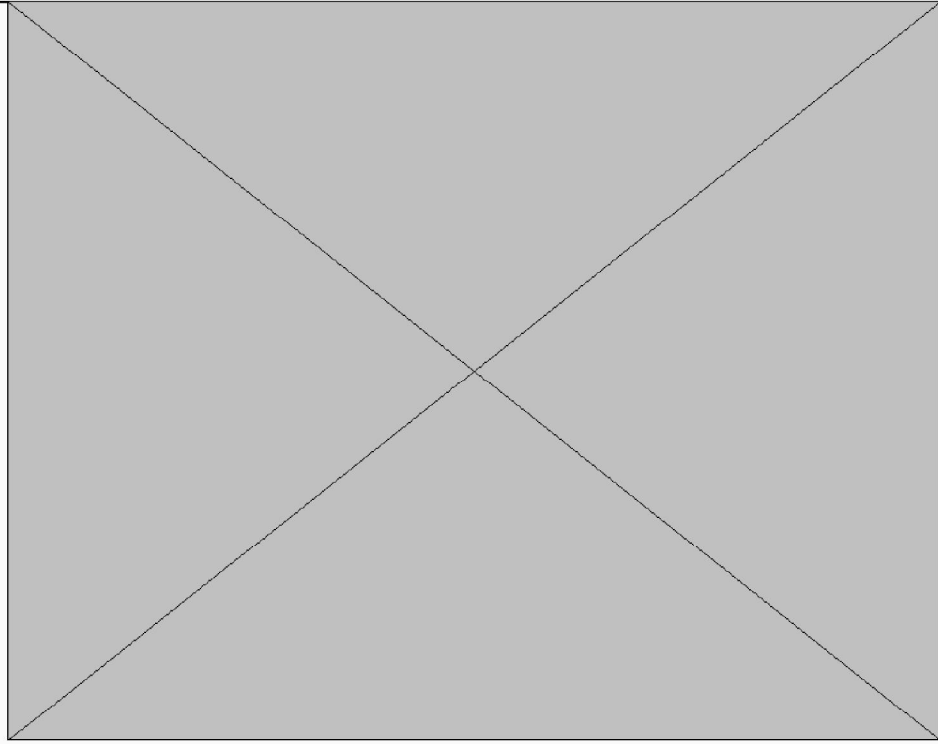
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The HODG Calendar

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XOXO
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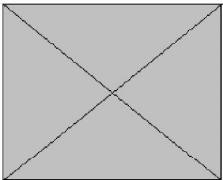
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To: calvin.sung@lacity.org[calvin.sung@lacity.org]
From: team@mg.zencity.io
Sent: Wed 7/26/2023 2:02:12 PM
Subject: Daily News Digest for Los Angeles, CA
Received: Wed 7/26/2023 2:02:13 PM



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25 Jul 2023 10:01 AM

Hollywood residents plead for help as homeless take over, ‘naked’ people ‘running around’ near schools

...around” near multiple schools remained at a local councilman’s discretion. (Video: ABC 7) Within walking distance of the famed Grauman’s Chinese Theatre in Los, renamed TCL Chinese Theatre, several schools are... tents cannot be removed without the authorization of Los...

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LA measure to put homeless in hotels heads to ballot, hotel union continues strike

(The Center Square) – The Los Council unanimously voted to place a measure on the... measure, each hotel would be mandated to tell the city...

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MEDIA ADVISORY: U.S. EPA, Mayor Bass Announce Millions in Revitalization Funding for Los Angeles

PRESS INVITED Los Angeles – On Thursday, July 27, U.S. Environmental Protection... Agency (EPA) Regional Administrator Martha Guzman and Los...

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Fear grips LA tenants who do not have the back rent due August 1

...the pandemic. "I'm afraid. You never know," she said. Granillo was among about 100 people who gathered outside the Stanley Mosk Courthouse in downtown Los Angeles on Tuesday, July 25, for a rally organized by the... first 18 months of the pandemic. Early this year, the Los Angeles City Council adopted a sweeping package of tenant... Feb. 1, 2023. But tenant rights advocates say many Angelenos haven't completely recovered from the pandemic. Those... organizer with Debt Collective and a member of the

Los Angeles...

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Mayor Bass: Dozens dead on Metro this year

Los Karen Bass says L.A.'s Metro system continues to ... the new chair of Metro's board of directors. The mayor...

Mayor Bass: Dozens dead on Metro this year

Los Karen Bass says L.A.'s Metro system continues to ... the new chair of Metro's board of directors. The mayor...

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Los Angeles - Latest - Google News



How We Found What the City of L.A. Didn't: Landlords Renting Low-Cost Housing to Tourists

This story was produced in partnership with ProPublica's Local Reporting Network . Read part one and part two of the investigation... hotels. On her first day in office last December, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass declared a state of emergency over... Hollywood." "Experience the effervescent spirit of Los Angeles with a stay at El Patio Inn, your gateway to the ... great restaurants, shops and tourist attractions that Los Angeles...

How We Found What the City of L.A. Didn't: Landlords Renting Low-Cost Housing to Tourists

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Los Angeles announces new Westside interim housing project

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Interim housing planned for city parking lot at 2377 Midvale Avenue

...Interim housing planned for city parking lot at 2377 Midvale Avenue Steven Sharp Tue, 07/25/2023 - 10:30 A city-owned parking lot in West [Los Angeles](#) is set to be converted into interim housing, 5th ... 2377 Midvale AvenueGoogle Maps LifeArk, a [Los Angeles](#)-based which manufactures modular structures, has ... announced in the wake of the most recent Greater [Los Angeles](#) Homeless Count, which found that the number of unhoused... media: [Twitter](#) / [Facebook](#) / [LinkedIn](#) / [Threads](#) / [Instagram](#) West [Los Angeles](#)...

Interim housing planned for city parking lot at 2377 Midvale Avenue

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Metro touts continued growth in ridership of public transportation

... of year-over-year growth, the agency announced Tuesday. "I'm excited that people continue to return to our buses, trains and rideshare services," [Los Angeles](#) Mayor and Metro Board Chair Karen Bass said in a ... in June

2019. The agency, alongside the city of [Los Angeles](#), installed more than 30 miles of bus priority lanes,... together the A, L, and E lines, and made getting around [Los Angeles](#) easier and more fun," Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins said in a statement. "Our riders can now easily visit downtown restaurants and events, and travel through...

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KAREN BASS
MAYOR

March 7, 2024

Fix The City, Inc.
VIA E-MAIL: (legal@fixthecity.org)

Re: California Public Records Act Request

Dear Fix The City, Inc.,

This letter responds to your California Public Records Act ("CPRA") request, dated September 5, 2023 to the Office of the Mayor of Los Angeles ("Office"). A copy of your request is attached to this letter ("Request").

Enclosed, please find non-exempt records responsive to your Request. Some of the responsive records contained drafts, deliberative discussions, personal contact information, and attorney-client communications, and so have been redacted and/or withheld pursuant to Government Code sections 7928.300, 7922.000 and 7927.705. Your Request is now closed.

.

Sincerely,
/s/
LUZ PORTILLO
Legal Coordinator
Office of Mayor Karen Bass

Attachment

Office of the Mayor
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: California Public Records Act Request

Sent via email to mayor.helpdesk@lacity.org

September 5, 2023

Pursuant to the California Public Records Act (CPRA) (Government Code Section 6250 et seq.), I am writing to request access to and copies of public records as described below:

As used in this CPRA, the term "Project" refers to:

- The 2377 Midvale project, Lot 707, and/or the use of Lot 707 for interim housing.
- The creation and passage of LAAC 8.33.
- The creation, issuance, implementation or reliance on of any executive order, declaration of any crisis, or declaration of any emergency related to homelessness or affordable housing.

The time period for this request spans from November 1, 2022, to the present unless otherwise specified.

I request all records relative to the Project:

- whether stored on City devices or personal devices.
- whether stored in City offices or at non-City locations.
- whether transmitted using City email or SMS accounts or personal email or SMS accounts.

Information Types Sought:

1. Written Documents:

- Correspondence (letters, memos, emails) related to the Project.
- Meeting minutes and agendas concerning the Project.
- Contracts and agreements associated with the Project.
- Reports and studies pertaining to the Project.
- Policies, procedures, and guidelines relevant to the Project.
- Training manuals for personnel involved in the Project.
- Notes and drafts associated with the Project's planning or execution.
- Application forms and licenses for vendors or services related to the Project.
- Bids and proposals for the Project.

2. Electronic Documents and Databases:

- Emails and associated attachments concerning the Project.
- Text messages about the Project.
- Calendar entries for meetings or deadlines related to the Project.
- Spreadsheets and data analysis concerning the Project.
- Database records and reports about the Project.
- Electronic logs (e.g., access logs, change logs) for the Project.

3. Photographs and Images:

- Digital photos related to the Project.
- Scanned images of documents concerning the Project.
- Aerial photographs of the Project's location or sites.
- Satellite images relevant to the Project.

4. Videos and Audio Recordings:

CPRA-03-11-Mayor-000086

- Surveillance footage concerning the Project.
- Body camera footage related to the Project.
- Dashcam recordings concerning the Project.
- Audio recordings of meetings, interviews, or other events related to the Project.
- Voicemails about the Project.
- Podcasts or other official recordings relevant to the Project.

5. **Maps, Plans, and Blueprints:**

- Geographic Information System (GIS) data related to the Project.
- Architectural plans and blueprints of the Project.
- Infrastructure maps concerning the Project.
- Land use maps relevant to the Project.

Specific Requests:

- All Information related to any contact with LifeArk, Boss Cubez, Dignity Moves, Connect Homes concerning the Project.
- All Information related to any guidelines regarding sole-sourcing tied to either the 2019 shelter crisis emergency declaration or Mayor Bass's emergency declarations.
- All Information regarding Scott Sale concerning the Project or LifeArk.
- All Information regarding MA Consulting & Engineering MACE, LLC concerning the Project.
- All Information regarding Anis Mohsen concerning the Project.
- All Information sent from/to any and all other council offices or from/to the Mayor's office relating to the creation of LAAC 8.33.
- All Information related to contracts for which competitive bidding restrictions enumerated in Charter Section 371(e)(6) and Los Angeles Administrative Code Sections 10.15 and 10.17 entered into by City departments and offices in response to the emergency declaration under 8.33.
- For Executive Directive 1 (12/16/22 Version):
 - All rules, regulations, orders and directives issued.
 - All Projects impacted by the rules, regulations, orders and directives.
 - All instances where competitive bidding has been suspended and supporting documentation as to why the suspension was deemed necessary and competitive proposals or bidding was not reasonably practicable or compatible with the City's interests.
 - All instances of the commandeering of property deemed necessary to meet interim and temporary housing needs and bind the City for the fair value thereof.
 - All instances of requiring emergency service of any City officer or employee and requisition necessary personnel or material of any City department or agency.
 - All instances of any action relative to the procurement of construction contracts, service provider contracts, supplies, and equipment for homelessness facilities to safeguard life, health or property.
 - All guidelines, processes or other rules created by other city departments in response to the order.
 - Any resolution sent to council to approve or disapprove the resolution.
 - Any council action related to an initial approval of the directive/order and subsequent approvals.
- For Executive Directive 3 (2/10/23 Version):
 - All rules, regulations, orders and directives issued.
 - All Projects impacted by the rules, regulations, orders and directives.
 - All instances where competitive bidding has been suspended and supporting documentation as to why the suspension was deemed necessary and competitive proposals or bidding was not reasonably practicable or compatible with the City's interests.
 - All instances of the commandeering of property deemed necessary to meet interim and temporary housing needs and bind the City for the fair value thereof.

- All instances of requiring emergency service of any City officer or employee and requisition necessary personnel or material of any City department or agency.
- All instances of any action relative to the procurement of construction contracts, service provider contracts, supplies, and equipment for homelessness facilities to safeguard life, health or property.
- All guidelines, processes or other rules created by other city departments in response to the order.
- Any resolution sent to council to approve or disapprove the resolution.
- Any council action related to an initial approval of the directive/order and subsequent approvals.
- For Executive Directive 3 (7/7/23 Version):
 - All rules, regulations, orders and directives issued.
 - All Projects impacted by the rules, regulations, orders and directives.
 - All instances where competitive bidding has been suspended and supporting documentation as to why the suspension was deemed necessary and competitive proposals or bidding was not reasonably practicable or compatible with the City's interests.
 - All instances of the commandeering of property deemed necessary to meet interim and temporary housing needs and bind the City for the fair value thereof.
 - All instances of requiring emergency service of any City officer or employee and requisition necessary personnel or material of any City department or agency.
 - All instances of any action relative to the procurement of construction contracts, service provider contracts, supplies, and equipment for homelessness facilities to safeguard life, health or property.
 - All guidelines, processes or other rules created by other city departments in response to the order.
 - Any resolution sent to council to approve or disapprove the resolution.
 - Any council action related to an initial approval of the directive/order and subsequent approvals.
- For Executive Directive 1 (6/12/23 Version):
 - All rules, regulations, orders and directives issued.
 - All Projects impacted by the rules, regulations, orders and directives.
 - All instances where competitive bidding has been suspended and supporting documentation as to why the suspension was deemed necessary and competitive proposals or bidding was not reasonably practicable or compatible with the City's interests.
 - All instances of the commandeering of property deemed necessary to meet interim and temporary housing needs and bind the City for the fair value thereof.
 - All instances of requiring emergency service of any City officer or employee and requisition necessary personnel or material of any City department or agency.
 - All instances of any action relative to the procurement of construction contracts, service provider contracts, supplies, and equipment for homelessness facilities to safeguard life, health or property.
 - All guidelines, processes or other rules created by other city departments in response to the order.
 - Any resolution sent to council to approve or disapprove the resolution.
 - Any council action related to an initial approval of the directive/order and subsequent approvals.
- For the Declaration of Local Housing and Homelessness Emergency (7/7/23):
 - All rules, regulations, orders and directives issued.
 - All Projects impacted by the rules, regulations, orders and directives.
 - All instances where competitive bidding has been suspended and supporting documentation as to why the suspension was deemed necessary and competitive proposals or bidding was not reasonably practicable or compatible with the City's interests.
 - All instances of the commandeering of property deemed necessary to meet interim and temporary housing needs and bind the City for the fair value thereof.
 - All instances of requiring emergency service of any City officer or employee and requisition necessary personnel or material of any City department or agency.
 - All instances of any action relative to the procurement of construction contracts, service provider contracts, supplies, and equipment for homelessness facilities to safeguard life, health or property.

- All guidelines, processes or other rules created by other city departments in response to the order.
- Any resolution sent to council to approve or disapprove the resolution.
- Any council action related to an initial approval of the directive/order and subsequent approvals.
- For the Housing and Homelessness Emergency Action Plan (8/4/23):
 - All rules, regulations, orders and directives issued.
 - All Projects impacted by the rules, regulations, orders and directives.
 - All instances where competitive bidding has been suspended and supporting documentation as to why the suspension was deemed necessary and competitive proposals or bidding was not reasonably practicable or compatible with the City's interests.
 - All instances of the commandeering of property deemed necessary to meet interim and temporary housing needs and bind the City for the fair value thereof.
 - All instances of requiring emergency service of any City officer or employee and requisition necessary personnel or material of any City department or agency.
 - All instances of any action relative to the procurement of construction contracts, service provider contracts, supplies, and equipment for homelessness facilities to safeguard life, health or property.
 - All guidelines, processes or other rules created by other city departments in response to the order.

I understand there may be fees associated with the duplication of these records. Please provide an estimate of these fees before proceeding. If any record or portion thereof is deemed exempt from disclosure, please cite the specific exemption and provide a log of such records.

I look forward to your response within the 10-day period as stipulated by the CPRA. Should you have questions, require an extension or require clarification, please contact me at Legal@FixTheCity.Org.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

To: Carolyn Martin [REDACTED]@gmail.com]
Bcc: mayor.staff@lacity.org[mayor.staff@lacity.org]
From: mayor.staff@lacity.org
Sent: Tue 8/15/2023 1:01:40 PM
Subject: TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2023 MEDIA COVERAGE
Received: Tue 8/15/2023 1:02:25 PM

LOS ANGELES MAYOR KAREN BASS

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[FOX LA: Clarence Avant 'Godfather of Black Music' dies at 92](#)

[BILLBOARD: Clarence Avant Remembered: Bill Clinton, Quincy Jones, Pharrell & More Pay Tribute](#)

[MY NEWS LA: Clarence Avant, 'Black Godfather,' Dies at His Home in Los Angeles](#)

[CBS LA: Clarence Avant, legendary recording-industry executive, dies at age 92](#)

[KTLA: Clarence Avant, nicknamed the 'Godfather of Black Music,' dies at 92: Reports](#)

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LAUSD

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[NBC SACRAMENTO 'Mob of criminals' stole up to \\$100k worth of merchandise at Los Angeles mall, police say](#)

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LOS ANGELES

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HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

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PUBLIC SAFETY

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OTHER

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[KFI: Fire Damages Residential Property in Highland Park Area](#)
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LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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CLARENCE AVANT

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[DAILY NEWS: Clarence Avant, 'Godfather of Black Music,' dies at his home in Los Angeles](#)
[ABC LA: Clarence Avant, music executive known as 'Godfather of Black Music,' dies at 92](#)
[BILLBOARD: Clarence Avant, Former Motown Chairman and 'Godfather of Black Music,' Dies at 92](#)
[PEOPLE: Clarence Avant, 'Godfather of Black Entertainment' Dead at 92](#)
[THE HILL: Clarence Avant, 'Black Godfather' of entertainment, and benefactor of athletes and politicians, dies](#)
[LA MAGAZINE: Clarence Avant, Entrepreneur and 'The Godfather of Black Music,' Dies at 92](#)
[WASHINGTON POST: Clarence Avant, music executive known as 'Black Godfather,' dies at 92](#)

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MAYOR KAREN BASS

CLARENCE AVANT

LA TIMES

Clarence Avant saluted by Obamas, Clintons, Questlove: 'Skillful, savvy, warm, and wise'

BY NARDINE SAAD

Clarence Avant, the influential music industry veteran and record producer known as "the Black Godfather," was saluted Monday as a savvy dealmaker whose wisdom and compassion influenced generations of musicians — and politicians.

Avant died Sunday at age 92, and as word of his death spread, past U.S. presidents, luminaries and contemporaries paid their respects.

Former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton paid their respects in a statement posted on X, commemorating the friend and fundraiser who helped Bill Clinton secure his position as commander in chief in the 1990s.

"He also used his success to open doors of opportunity to new generations of entrepreneurs and promoters. He was skillful, savvy, warm, and wise. It was impossible to spend time with Clarence Avant and not come away feeling more positive and wanting to follow his example. Hillary and I just loved him.

"We give thanks for his long, good life and our decades of friendship, and we're grateful that his legacy will endure — in the music he helped bring into the world, and in all those who were touched by his compassion, mentorship, and generosity."

Former President Obama and his wife, Michelle Obama, called Avant one of their "favorite people" and said they were grateful for his "wise counsel" and friendship.

"He exemplified a certain level of cool and street smarts that allowed him to move confidently into worlds that nobody had prepared him for,

never doubting he could figure it out," the Obamas said in a statement.

"Clarence was part of a generation that served as a bridge from a time when there was very little opportunity for Black people to a time when doors began to open. He demanded the world make room, and he paved the way for the rest of us."

Roc Nation, the entertainment giant co-founded by rapper Jay-Z, described Avant as "our cultural Godfather" in a statement posted on X.

"Throughout his life, he burst through doors and tore down ceilings, changing lives and providing opportunities for generations. A true pioneer, a mentor and a champion, Clarence Avant is and always will be a giant among us," the company wrote, sharing photos of Avant alongside Jay-Z, Diddy, Sony Music Chairman Jon Platt and other industry leaders.

"I think in the present we SAY that achievements & reward\$ are what will make us happy. But man if I can impact like 1/10th of the lives Clarence Avant did then my life on this plane wasn't in vain," musician and "Summer of Soul" filmmaker Questlove wrote on Instagram.

"I mean watch The Black Godfather if you need a refresher on WHY he was one of the most impactful humans in the 20th/21st century," the Oscar-winning documentary filmmaker added. "my first Idol: Bill Withers came as a courtesy thru him — I mean who sees gold in a 40 yr old everydayman whose 1st lp cover was really him taking a lunch break from his airplane toilet installer — Clarence did. Who gave Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis the keys to the kingdom after Prince tried to bet the farm they'd be nobodies after he fired em? — Clarence.

"I mean we can go on: I didn't know Obama's presidency started with Clarence! A human so impactful that the impacted started impacting future impactors. This is what life is about," he wrote. "An exemplary life. Rest in power and thank you to Clarence Avant."

Rapper T.I. said he couldn't believe the news of Avant's death when he woke up Monday: "RIP to The Black Godfather Clarence Avant, thank you for all the wisdom you've shared and the path you paved for artists like myself," he wrote on Instagram.

"Thank you Mr. Avant for proudly and fully making space for us to dream big," read a tweet on BET's X account.

Lucian Grainge, chairman and chief executive of Universal Music Group, said the "incomparable visionary" would be remembered "as both a brilliant catalyst and protector of culture. His understated yet powerful influence transcended music, spanning the worlds of entertainment, sports and politics. I am profoundly grateful for his friendship and mentorship."

The Rev. Jesse Jackson memorialized the pioneer as "the go-to guy for many of us in the music industry," including Berry Gordy of Motown Records and Al Bell of Stax Records.

"He helped promote their careers and expand their businesses," Jackson wrote in a tweet, also noting Avant's discovery of Withers. "He was a great friend and I admired him greatly. What a mighty tree. My wife Jackie & our family send our sincere & fervent prayers to Nicole & Alexander. Rest in heavenly peace."

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said that Avant leaves a legacy "that will inspire music and culture forever," noting his lasting signature on the City of Angels, as well as that of his late wife, Jacqueline Avant, who was slain in her home in December 2021.

"Mr. Avant gave so much to Los Angeles — producing a sound that influenced generations while ceaselessly fighting for civil rights and equal treatment under the law," she said in a statement. "I had the great fortune to have been able to engage Mr. Avant in insightful and valuable conversations about the top issues that our city and nation were facing and I will always be grateful for the time we shared. Mr. and Mrs. Avant changed Los Angeles with their vision, their spirit and their philanthropy. My thoughts are with the Avant family and all who mourn this massive loss."

In a statement to The Times, famed record producer Clive Davis wrote that Avant "was truly one of a kind."

"His passing is a great loss of someone who is irreplaceable. [Clarence's] extraordinary contribution to music and the barriers he broke throughout his career are unrivaled. He was the mentor to all Black executives in the music industry for decades, providing invaluable guidance and support while always standing up for equal rights. Clarence was humane and fair and inspired love and respect from all who knew him. I personally loved him and will miss him forever."

"With the passing of Clarence Avant the world has lost an icon, his family has lost their patriarch, and I lost a dear friend," Motown Records co-founder Berry Gordy said in a statement to The Times. "Clarence earned his reputation as the Black Godfather for good reason. People, especially musicians and artists, went to him when they were in trouble and one way or another, he would fix the problem."

"Clarence was continuously engaged in the things that made a difference. He loved politics and was very involved with many charities," he said. "Our Black Godfather may be gone — but he will never be forgotten."

In a lengthy statement, musician and designer Pharrell Williams said that Avant was "a visionary and a transcendent spirit" who was not only a "Godfather to the Black dream" but also "a Godfather to the American dream."

"He is the ultimate example of what change looks like, what architecting change looks like, and what the success of change looks like. He stared adversity in the face in climates and conditions that weren't welcoming to people that looked like him. But through his talent and relentless spirit in the pursuit to be the best of the best, he garnered the support and friendship of people who otherwise wouldn't look in our direction," he wrote in an Instagram story. "He showed them what we can be, what we can do, and how much more we can all achieve if you give us opportunity."

He added: "It's my hope and wish that others will see what he's done and try to go even further, because that's what he wanted and that's

why he did what he did. He wanted to inspire. While running an extraordinary race in his lifetime, he passed the baton to us. The question now is how we're going to honor him and what we will do with the baton. I give honor to GOD, my savior, and I give honor to his family, friends, and the countless people who have been impacted by his presence and time on this planet."

Diddy called Avant an "irreplaceable force in the music industry," describing him as a mentor and personal friend "whose influence is unparalleled."

"His visionary approach and unwavering dedication broke barriers for black artists, propelling them to new heights. As we honor this trailblazer, we are reminded of his enduring legacy that continues to live on, inspiring a generation of artists and shaping the industry," he said in a statement to Billboard.

Quincy Jones told Billboard, "There will never be enough words to express how much Clarence Avant meant" to him: "He was my dearest friend, my brother, my confidant, my mentor, and my counsel for more than 60 years. Clarence always told me the truth in every aspect of my life, even when he knew I didn't want to hear it...and in this business we all know what a rarity that is. There will never be another like Clarence Avant, and I will miss his presence every day."

NBA legend Magic Johnson also remembered Avant as a "great friend" whose "accomplishments speak for themselves."

"As a former music manager, he founded two record labels and purchased the first fully black-owned radio station," he tweeted. "He consulted many major studios in the 1970s and advised Presidents Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, George Bush and Barack Obama. He also served as chairman of the board at Motown Records, promoted Michael Jackson's BAD tour and is responsible for discovering many of the most incredible music artists we know today."

Avant, who served as a board member for the Legal Defense Fund from 1982 to 2004 and as director and director emeritus since 2005, also was commemorated by the civil rights law organization.

"We mourn the loss of Clarence Avant, who for decades made giant contributions to American culture, music and politics," LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai S. Nelson said. "He most certainly will go down in history as someone who quietly, yet powerfully, improved the lives of millions of Black people who likely never heard of him."

"Whenever the LDF asked Mr. Avant for help, whether it was to make a connection, raise money, or to use his clout to advance an important civil rights issue, Clarence Avant answered that call and more," she added. "We grieve this loss keenly and send his many loved ones our condolences."

Avant is survived by his son, Alex Avant, and daughter, Nicole Avant — film producer and former U.S. ambassador to the Bahamas — and her husband, Netflix co-chief executive and chief content officer Ted Sarandos. The family announced the patriarch's death on Monday.

"Clarence leaves behind a loving family and a sea of friends and associates that have changed the world and will continue to change the world for generations to come," they said in a statement to The Times. "The joy of his legacy eases the sorrow of our loss."

NBC LA

Entertainment industry legend Clarence Avant, the 'Black Godfather,' dies at 92

By Jonathan Lloyd and Hillel Italie

Entertainment industry legend Clarence Avant, a manager, producer and mentor who became known as the 'Black Godfather' in the worlds of music, politics, and sports, died Sunday at his Los Angeles home, his family says.

He was 92.

"It is with a heavy heart that the Avant/Sarandos family announce the passing of Clarence Alexander Avant," the family said in a statement issued by his children, Nicole and Alex, and son-in-law Ted Sarandos, Netflix co-CEO. "Through his revolutionary business leadership, Clarence became affectionately known as 'The Black Godfather' in the worlds of music, entertainment, politics, and sports. Clarence leaves behind a loving family and a sea of friends and associates that have changed the world and will continue to change the world for generations to come. The joy of his legacy eases the sorrow of our loss. Clarence passed away gently at home in Los Angeles on Sunday, August 13, 2023."

Born in North Carolina, Avant rose to prominence in the entertainment industry after starting out as a talent manager in the 1950s. His clients included singers Sarah Vaughan and Little Willie John and composer Lalo Schiffrin, who wrote the theme to "Mission: Impossible."

He married wife Jacqueline in 1967 and moved to Los Angeles in the late 1960s, working at Venture Records in Southern California and founded L.A.-based Sussex Records and Avant Garde Broadcasting.

He would go on to work with some of the biggest names in the world of music, providing management services, guidance and inspiration to the likes of Jay-Z, Diddy, L.A. Reid and Babyface. He founded two record labels, and helped guide the careers of Bill Withers, Sixto Rodriguez, and Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis.

Avant, a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, became the chairman of the board of Motown Records in the 1990s and was the first African-American board member of PolyGram. He launched the first fully Black-owned radio stations in Los Angeles and was a consultant to MGM and ABC in the 1970s.

"Everyone in this business has been by Clarence's desk, if they're smart," Quincy Jones once said of Avant.

Avant's achievements were both public and behind the scenes, as a name in the credits, or a name behind the names. Born in a segregated hospital in North Carolina, he became a man of lasting and wide-ranging influence, in part by minding two pieces of advice from an early mentor, the music manager Joe Glaser: Never let on how much you know, and ask for as much money as possible, "without stuttering."

The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame described the 2021 inductee as "cool, savvy, confident, and fearless — someone who made the seemingly impossible possible."

Avant's influence extended to the sports worlds and some of history's most consequential athletes. He is credited with persuading Jim Brown to launch an acting career after a successful NFL career. Avant also produced a TV special for boxing great Muhammad Ali.

When baseball great Henry Aaron was on the verge of surpassing Babe Ruth as the game's home run champion, in 1974, Avant made sure that Aaron received the kind of lucrative commercial deals often elusive for Black athletes, starting with a personal demand to the president of Coca-Cola.

Aaron would later tell The Undefeated that everything he had become was "because of Clarence Avant."

In a tweet, Lakers great Magic Johnson called Avant a game-changing legend.

"He knew how to touch every individual he met and meet them where they were in order to get them where they needed to be," Johnson said.

As he rose in the entertainment industry, Avant became more active politically. He was an early supporter of Tom Bradley, the first Black mayor of Los Angeles, and served as executive producer of "Save the Children," a 1973 documentary about a concert fundraiser for the Rev. Jesse Jackson's "Operation PUSH."

"Clarence Avant leaves a legacy that will inspire music and culture forever," LA Mayor Karen Bass said in a statement. "Mr. Avant gave so much to Los Angeles — producing a sound that influenced generations while ceaselessly fighting for civil rights and equal treatment under the law. I had the great fortune to have been able to engage Mr. Avant in insightful and valuable conversations about the top issues that our city and nation were facing and I will always be grateful for the time we shared. Mr. and Mrs. Avant changed Los Angeles with their vision, their spirit and their philanthropy. My thoughts are with the Avant family and all who mourn this massive loss."

Bill and Hillary Clinton issued a joint statement saying Avant brought artists and their music to millions of people.

"He also used his success to open doors of opportunity to new generations of entrepreneurs and promoters," they said. "He was skillful, savvy, warm and wise. It was impossible to spend time with him and not come away feeling more positive and wanting to follow his example. We just loved him."

In 2021, Jacqueline Avant was shot and killed during a robbery at the couple's Trousdale Estates home in Beverly Hills. Clarence Avant was not injured.

Jacqueline Avant served as president of the Neighbors of Watts, a support group that focused on child care. She was also on the board of directors of UCLA's International Student Center. She was also a member of the board for the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts.

FOX LA

Clarence Avant 'Godfather of Black Music' dies at 92

By Kelli Johnson

LOS ANGELES - Clarence Avant, known as the "Godfather of Black Music," has passed away at the age of 92, according to reports.

The music genius is credited for launching the careers of fellow music legends Quincy Jones, Bill Withers and many others.

While the Rock and Roll Hall of Famer is best known for his contributions to the music industry, his legacy extends into the worlds of sports, entertainment and politics.

"It is with a heavy heart that the Avant/Sarandos family announce the passing of Clarence Alexander Avant," the statement provided to Variety by his children, Nicole and Alexander, and son-in-law Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos said.

"Through his revolutionary business leadership, Clarence became affectionately known as 'the Black Godfather' in the worlds of music, entertainment, politics, and sports. Clarence leaves behind a loving family and a sea of friends and associates that have changed the world and will continue to change the world for generations to come. The joy of his legacy eases the sorrow of our loss. Clarence passed away gently at home in Los Angeles on Sunday, August 13, 2023."

Avant was born in a segregated hospital in North Carolina in 1931 and from a young age, he had his eyes set on Hollywood. Music manager Joe Glaser took Avant under his wing and became a mentor to him early in his career. Glaser managed artists such as Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday.

He broke in as a manager in the 1950s, with such clients as singers Sarah Vaughan and Little Willie John and composer Lalo Schiffrin, who wrote the theme to "Mission: Impossible." In the 1970s he was an early patron of Black-owned radio stations and, in the 1990s, headed Motown after founder Berry Gordy Jr. sold the company.

He also started such labels as Sussex and Tabu, with artists including Withers, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, the S.O.S Band and an obscure

singer-songwriter, Sixto Rodriguez, who decades later became famous through the Oscar-winning documentary "Searching for Sugarman."

Other work took place more quietly. Avant brokered the sale of Stax Records to Gulf and Western in 1968, after being recruited by Stax executive Al Bell as a bridge between the entertainment and business industries. He raised money for Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, helped Michael Jackson organize his first solo tour and advised Narada Michael Walden, L.A. Reid and Babyface and other younger admirers.

"Everyone in this business has been by Clarence's desk, if they're smart," Quincy Jones liked to say of him.

"Clarence Avant leaves a legacy that will inspire music and culture forever. Mr. Avant gave so much to Los Angeles — producing a sound that influenced generations while ceaselessly fighting for civil rights and equal treatment under the law," LA Mayor Karen Bass said in a statement.

Mayor Bass continued to write, "I had the great fortune to have been able to engage Mr. Avant in insightful and valuable conversations about the top issues that our city and nation were facing and I will always be grateful for the time we shared. Mr. and Mrs. Avant changed Los Angeles with their vision, their spirit and their philanthropy. My thoughts are with the Avant family and all who mourn this massive loss."

Avant helped running back Jim Brown transition from football to acting and produced a primetime television special for Muhammad Ali. When baseball great Henry Aaron was on the verge of surpassing Babe Ruth as the game's home run champion, in 1974, Avant made sure that Aaron received the kind of lucrative commercial deals often elusive for Black athletes, starting with a personal demand to the president of Coca-Cola.

Aaron would later tell The Undeclared that everything he had become was "because of Clarence Avant."

Avant received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2016.

The Avant family tragically lost their matriarch, Mrs. Jacqueline Avant, after she was shot and killed at their Beverly Hills home in Dec. 2021. She was 81 at the time of her passing and her convicted killer was sentenced to three life terms.

BILLBOARD

Clarence Avant Remembered: Bill Clinton, Quincy Jones, Pharrell & More Pay Tribute

By Chris Eggertsen

On Sunday (Aug. 14), the music industry lost a titan when Clarence Avant — dubbed the "Godfather of Black Music" — died at his home in Los Angeles at age 92.

"Clarence leaves behind a loving family and a sea of friends and associates that have changed the world and will continue to change the world for generations to come," Avant's family said in a statement. "The joy of his legacy eases the sorrow of our loss."

That legacy looms large: In the wake of Avant's passing, artists, executives and political leaders have been reacting to the loss of the legendary executive, who helped launch the careers of important talents such as Whitney Houston, Janet Jackson, Bill Withers, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, Sean "Diddy" Combs and Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds. Avant also mentored younger executives who became industry heavyweights themselves — among them, Antonio "L.A." Reid and Sony Music Publishing chairman/CEO Jon Platt.

Avant's contributions to the industry were so profound that he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2021 and was honored by the Recording Academy with the Grammy Salute to Industry Icons award in 2019, among numerous other honors. But his contributions to the culture extended beyond music into various other realms, including politics (he famously slept in the Lincoln Bedroom in the White House after he helped Bill Clinton get elected) and sports, working with athletes such as Jim Brown (whom he helped transition into a Hollywood acting career), Jackie Robinson and Muhammad Ali.

Unsurprisingly, Avant's death prompted a flood of tributes from luminaries across multiple spheres. Below you can find them all.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass: "Mr. Avant gave so much to Los Angeles — producing a sound that influenced generations while ceaselessly fighting for civil rights and equal treatment under the law.

My thoughts are with the Avant family and all who mourn this massive loss."

MY NEWS LA

Clarence Avant, 'Black Godfather,' Dies at His Home in Los Angeles

Clarence Avant, a prominent figure in the music industry, has died at his home in Los Angeles on Sunday at the age of 92, according to media reports. No cause of death was provided.

Avant, who was called the "Godfather of Black Music," had an influential career in sports, politics and entertainment, working with U.S. presidents and Hall of Fame athletes, in addition to music.

His family said in a statement provided to Variety, "It is with a heavy heart that the Avant/Sarandos family announce the passing of Clarence Alexander Avant," said the statement from his children, Nicole and Alexander and son-in-law Ted Sarandos. "Through his revolutionary business leadership, Clarence became affectionately known as 'the Black Godfather' in the worlds of music, entertainment, politics, and sports. Clarence leaves behind a loving family and a sea of friends and associates that have changed the world and will continue to change the world for generations to come. The joy of his legacy eases the sorrow of our loss. Clarence passed away gently at home in Los Angeles on Sunday, August 13, 2023.

"Top artists and executives like Quincy Jones, JayZ, Whitney Houston, Pharrell Williams, Lionel Richie, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, Sean

Combs, L.A. Reid, Suzanne de Passe, Kenny 'Baby Face' Edmonds, Jon Platt, Irving Azoff, Snoop Dogg, Reginald Hudland, Benny Medina and Queen Latifah all credit Avant for his inspiration and guidance," the family statement said.

Avant was a nightclub manager, and was the manager for Lalo Schiffrin and Jimmy Smith in the 1960s. He founded two record labels, and help guide the careers of Bill Withers, Sixto Rodriguez, and Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis.

He became the chairman of the board of Motown Records in the 1990s and was the first African-American board member of PolyGram.

He launched the first fully Black-owned radio stations in Los Angeles and was a consultant to MGM and ABC in the 1970s.

He was an advisor and worked in official capacity for Presidents Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, George Bush and Barack Obama.

Avant was credited with persuading Jim Brown to launch an acting career after a successful NFL career, and served as a mentor to music figures, L.A. Reid and Baby Face, Sylvia Rhone, Jheri Busby and Jimmy Iovine.

He was born in Greensboro, North Carolina on Feb. 25, 1931 and moved to Los Angeles in the late 1960s. He formed his own record company, Sussex Records and purchased KAGB-FM, which was the only Black-owned radio station in Los Angeles at the time.

His wife, Jacqueline, was shot to death in a burglary attempt at the couple's home in Beverly Hills in December 2021. She was 81. They were married in 1967 and had two children, Nicole Avant and Alex Avant.

Nicole Avant is a former U.S. ambassador, political advisor and film producer, and is married to Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos. Alex Avant is an agent, producer and actor based in Los Angeles.

Ariel Maynor pleaded guilty to the murder of Jacqueline Avant, attempted murder and possession of a firearm by a felon and was sentenced to a minimum of 150 years in prison in 2022.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said in a statement Clarence Avant left a legacy "that will inspire music and culture forever."

"Mr. Avant gave so much to Los Angeles — producing a sound that influenced generations while ceaselessly fighting for civil rights and equal treatment under the law. I had the great fortune to have been able to engage Mr. Avant in insightful and valuable conversations about the top issues that our city and nation were facing and I will always be grateful for the time we shared," she said. "Mr. and Mrs. Avant changed Los Angeles with their vision, their spirit and their philanthropy. My thoughts are with the Avant family and all who mourn this massive loss."

CBS LA

Clarence Avant, legendary recording-industry executive, dies at age 92

Recording-industry executive Clarence Avant died Sunday at age 92, his family and representatives confirm.

"It is with a heavy heart that the Avant/Sarandos family announce the passing of Clarence Alexander Avant. Through his revolutionary business leadership, Clarence became affectionately known as 'The Black Godfather' in the worlds of music, entertainment, politics, and sports," Nicole Avant, Ted Sarandos and Alex Avant said in a statement. "Clarence leaves behind a loving family and a sea of friends and associates that have changed the world and will continue to change the world for generations to come. The joy of his legacy eases the sorrow of our loss. Clarence passed away gently at home in Los Angeles on Sunday, August 13, 2023. He was 92."

Clarence Avant was also known as the "Godfather of Black Music" who worked with the likes of Louis Armstrong, the SOS Band, Jimmy Jam, Terry Lewis, and Babyface.

"Top artists and executives like Quincy Jones, JayZ, Whitney Houston, Pharell Williams, Lionel Richie, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, Sean Combs, L.A. Reid, Suzanne de Passe, Kenny 'Baby Face' Edmonds, Jon Platt, Irving Azoff, Snoop Dogg, Reginald Hudland, Benny Medina and Queen Latifah all credit Avant for his inspiration and guidance," the family statement said.

Avant was born February 25, 1931 in Greensboro, North Carolina. He was inducted in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and has been awarded the Industry Icon Award at the Grammys, and he has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

In the 1960s, Avant managed the careers of blues artist Little Willie John, the prolific "Mission Impossible" theme composer Lalo Schiffrin, the great Sarah Vaughan, the jazz organist Jimmy Smith and jazz producer Creed Taylor.

His record-breaking deal for Taylor with A&M Records motivated then Mercury Records President Quincy Jones to meet with Avant and the two have been "best friends and brothers" ever since, according to Jones, according to the statement.

In 1968, Avant orchestrated the sale of the legendary Stax Records, which was second only to Motown in its sales and influence. In the 1960s, Avant met Jacqueline Gray, who he married in 1967. "They started a family that would grow to include his daughter Nicole Avant, a former U.S. Ambassador, political advisor, film producer and philanthropist, who is married to Netflix Co-CEO Ted Sarandos and son Alex Avant, a talent representative for a major Los Angeles based agency," the statement said.

In Los Angeles in the 1970s, Avant formed his record company, Sussex Records, and signed the legendary Bill Withers. Avant purchased KAGB-FM, making it the only Black-owned FM radio station in Los Angeles at the time. He guided the careers of such figures as boxer Muhammad Ali, NFL Hall-Of-Famer Jim Brown and baseball pioneer Jackie Robinson, according to the family statement. Avant was the promoter of Michael Jackson's "Bad" tour, Jackson's first ever solo world tour. In 1993 Avant became the chairman of Motown Records after its sale to Polygram.

Avant is the subject of the documentary film "The Black Godfather," available on Netflix.

Flowers are set to be placed on Avant's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1 p.m. Monday, at 6363 Hollywood Blvd.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass issued statement Monday: "Clarence Avant leaves a legacy that will inspire music and culture forever. Mr. Avant gave so much to Los Angeles -- producing a sound that influenced generations while ceaselessly fighting for civil rights and equal treatment under the law. I had the great fortune to have been able to engage Mr. Avant in insightful and valuable conversations about the top issues that our city and nation were facing and I will always be grateful for the time we shared. Mr. and Mrs. Avant changed Los Angeles with their vision, their spirit and their philanthropy. My thoughts are with the Avant family and all who mourn this massive loss."

Jacqueline Avant, Clarence's wife, was shot to death in December 2021 in a home invasion in Beverly Hills. The Avants were married for 54 years. The assailant later pleaded guilty to murder, attempted murder and possession of a firearm by a felon, and was sentenced to a minimum of 150 years in prison in 2022.

KTLA

Clarence Avant, nicknamed the 'Godfather of Black Music,' dies at 92: Reports

by: Tony Kurzweil

Recording industry insider Clarence Avant, who garnered the nickname of the "Godfather of Black Music," died at his Los Angeles home Sunday night, according to reports.

His death was announced by family members and reported by Variety and The Hollywood Reporter. No cause of death was given.

"It is with a heavy heart that the Avant/Sarandos family announce the passing of Clarence Alexander Avant," a quote from his family said in the Variety report. "Through his revolutionary business leadership, Clarence became affectionately known as 'the Black Godfather' in the worlds of music, entertainment, politics, and sports."

Avant's death comes about a year and a half after his wife, philanthropist Jacqueline Avant, was fatally shot by an intruder who entered their Beverly Hills home on Dec. 1, 2021.

Her killer, 30-year-old Ariel Maynor, was arrested and then found guilty of first-degree murder in April of 2022. Maynor was sentenced to 190 years to life in prison.

Avant, who managed countless musical talents, and advised producers and artists, was the subject of the 2019 Netflix documentary "The Black Godfather."

Clarence Avant leaves behind daughter Nicole, who is married to Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos, and son Alexander.

"Mr. Avant gave so much to Los Angeles — producing a sound that influenced generations while ceaselessly fighting for civil rights," L.A. Mayor Karen Bass said.

Former President Barack Obama called Avant one of his "favorite people."

"He exemplified a certain level of cool and street smarts that allowed him to move confidently into worlds that nobody had prepared him for, never doubting he could figure it out," Obama said in a joint statement with Michelle Obama. "Clarence was part of a generation that served as a bridge from a time when there was very little opportunity for Black people to a time when doors began to open. He demanded the world make room, and he paved the way for the rest of us. Michelle and I will always be grateful for Clarence's friendship and wise counsel."

LAUSD

DAILY NEWS

LAUSD kicks off fall semester with push to boost safety and attendance

By CLARA HARTER

It's the first day back at school and the Los Angeles Unified School District is pushing to have as many students show up as possible, as safely as possible.

Last academic year was marked by a string of tragic traffic incidents and high rates of chronic absenteeism. Superintendent Alberto Carvalho is hoping that by improving safety near schools and expanding the district's bus service, more children will return to classrooms this year.

"Walking to school should not become a traumatic experience for our students," said Carvalho. "Los Angeles Unified will continue to work to ensure that our students can make it to school safely, so they are ready to learn."

Getting kids to school safely is a top priority as children continue to suffer from pandemic-related learning loss, and their average daily attendance has not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. This year, Carvalho has set a goal to boost average daily attendance by 5% and increase the number of students using buses by 50%.

While his goals are ambitious, district officials did not appear daunted on Monday morning and expressed a fresh sense of optimism as students returned to classrooms across Los Angeles.

"I love when I see everybody smiling. The kids are so happy to be here and the parents are so happy also," said LAUSD Board Member Scott Schmerelson as he greeted families at Germain Academy for Academic Achievement in Chatsworth. "Learning in person is the most important thing I can think of, especially after the pandemic."

The district is working closely with the City of Los Angeles to implement traffic safety measures and ensure all students can take advantage of in person learning. In recent months the L.A. Department of Transportation (LADOT) has created more School Slow Zones at 45 campuses and installed new speed humps at 28 schools.

"We must do more in order for the students of Los Angeles and their families to feel and stay safe," said Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass in a Sunday evening statement. "I am working with Superintendent Carvalho to ensure that we confront and address the vehicular tragedies, substance abuse and other incidents that we have seen near and in our schools."

The city has funding for about 500 crossing guard positions, but filling those posts has proved challenging due to the short hours and limited pay. Last year there were about 200 vacant crossing guard jobs. LADOT has made a concerted effort to fill the empty posts, and hired 77 new guards in the last fiscal year.

Schmerelson said on Monday that he would like to pursue a motion in which the school board would shift direct responsibility for crossing guard positions to the district.

"We have so many people at school every single day who are volunteers, or three-hour or four-hour aides would love that extra job of being a crossing guard," Schmerelson said, "and they live here, and they know the kids, and they don't have to travel across the city."

Ensuring safety near schools is especially important as the district welcomes thousands of new four-year-old students through its expanded Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program.

Transitional Kindergarten is an optional program to provide young students with early instruction in literacy and numeracy, as well as important opportunities for socialization. In 2021, state legislators passed SB 130 which requires school districts to offer TK to all four-year olds by the 2025 to 2026 school year.

LAUSD has decided to jump two years ahead of schedule.

On Monday morning, Gabriella Montenegro brought her son Damien Gutierrez to Germain Academy for Academic Achievement for his first day of TK.

Gutierrez is a week away from his fourth birthday and would not be eligible for TK in many other districts, but got to enroll at LAUSD thanks to its new expansion. He already benefited from participating in the Los Angeles County Office of Education's Head Start preschool program last semester, so Montenegro felt like enrolling him in TK was a no brainer.

"In Head Start he was coming home with a brand new fact every day 'like this is a rhombus, this is a square'," she said. "He was really learning quick, so I was interested in more schooling and was happy to find a TK program that would take him."

RANDOM LENGTHS

Mayor, Superintendent Act to Address School Safety For First Day of School

Mayor Karen Bass and Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent Alberto Carvalho Aug. 14 announced a series of actions taken to improve school safety. The leaders will host convenings of stakeholders and community members focusing on safety in and around schools to ensure that students in Los Angeles feel and are safe.

The City of Los Angeles has taken the following actions over the summer to address student safety:

Preventing Violence Near Schools:

Over the summer, the city took action to deploy resources through the Summer Night Lights program to some school-adjacent recreation facilities to increase youth and family programming in public spaces in order to help reduce violence. The program is a key component of the Gang Reduction and Youth Development or GRYD Comprehensive Strategy.

Making Streets Around Schools Safer:

The city has been expediting the hiring of crossing guards, reaching the highest number of crossing guards in at least a decade to ensure that students and families can cross streets safely:

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) has worked to increase the hiring rate of crossing guards, filling a total of 77 guard positions during Fiscal Year or FY 22-23.

The city's FY23-24 budget is projected to create up to 93 additional crossing guard positions.

LADOT continues to expedite crossing guard hiring prior to the beginning of the school year, including conditionally hiring 30 new crossing guards at a job fair in Watts on June 29.

The City is improving traffic safety with a record number of investments in their "Safe Route to Schools" program. These investments include the creation of "School Slow Zones", speed humps and quick-build projects that slow down traffic within school zones:

By the beginning of the school year Aug. 14, LADOT will have continued to make streets around schools safer by:

Creating additional school slow zones at 45 schools using 576 signs to reduce speed limits;

Implementing "quick-build" safe street improvements, which involve using low-cost, short-term materials like paint and plastic bollards, to improve roadway safety at 10 schools; and

Installing 78 individual speed humps at 28 schools.

LADOT will continue to implement street safety projects throughout the school year. By June 30, 2024, LADOT will complete "quick-build" street improvements at a total of 41 schools, speed humps at a total of 70 schools, and school slow zones at a total of 250 schools.

On Aug. 4, the city council directed LADOT to provide recommendations for the prioritization of additional traffic safety projects at schools in future fiscal years.

LADOT and LAUSD will enter into an memorandum of understanding to increase collaboration to improve student safety.

Addressing Substance Abuse In Schools:

LAPD's Community Safety Partnership Bureau or CSPB recently launched a pilot program tailored for students, parents and school staff, with a focus on the harms and risks associated with drugs, specifically fentanyl. A component of the program includes educating staff on the functionality and proper usage of Narcan.

The program also established a Fentanyl training cadre, which is a bilingual team that educates community partners, with a target audience that includes students, parents, and school faculty.

LAPD's CSPB is working with LAUSD to increase the effectiveness of fentanyl awareness/Narcan trainings and the impact of the Fentanyl training cadre.

CBS LA

LAUSD students return for first day of school Monday

Summer break is officially over for hundreds of thousands of students in Los Angeles. It's the first day of school and the school district is making changes and reversing some pandemic-era policies.

The new school year begins for Los Angeles Unified School District students Monday as about 500,000 students in the school district return to classes. LAUSD is the second largest school district in the U.S.

LAUSD Superintendent Alberto Carvalho spoke to KCAL News Monday morning about recent changes, including the introduction of "transitional kindergarten" classes now available for 4-year-olds, and an electric-bus fleet of more than 180 vehicles, the largest fleet of electric school vehicles in the U.S.

Carvalho previously said the district will begin the school year fully staffed with educators. The district earlier this year reached new contract agreements with teachers and school staff. The agreements followed a three-day strike staged by staffers and honored by teachers that shuttered district schools.

The school district has set up parent resource centers to inform about safety initiatives, tracking school buses via GPS, tutoring, child sick days and more.

"We must do more in order for the students of Los Angeles and their families to feel and stay safe," said L.A. Mayor Karen Bass. "I am working with Superintendent Carvalho to ensure that we confront and address the vehicular tragedies, substance abuse and other incidents that we have seen near and in our schools."

The district has hired a number of crossing guards, reaching the highest number in at least a decade, according to the LAUSD.

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation has created additional School Slow Zones at 45 schools using 576 signs to reduce speed limits; it has made street improvements including installing speed humps at 28 schools.

The Los Angeles Police Department's Community Safety Partnership Bureau recently launched a pilot program for students, parents and school staff, focusing on the harms and risks associated with drugs, specifically fentanyl. The program includes educating staff on the functionality and proper usage of Narcan.

ABC LA

Boosting attendance top of mind as LAUSD students return to classes

ByJaysha Patel

LOS ANGELES (KABC) -- Nearly 500,000 students in the Los Angeles Unified School District returned to classes on Monday and there's a long list of goals Superintendent Alberto Carvalho has set out to accomplish this year.

As parents woke up bright and early, many may have received a phone call from the district featuring a recorded message from Rams wide receiver Cooper Kupp, giving them an encouraging boost for the first day.

So what's the main focus for the 2023-24 school year? "Speed and accelerating success," Carvalho said.

Boosting attendance

Since returning to in-person learning after the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. schools have seen record high levels of student absences.

Carvalho spent time last week visiting the homes of students to encourage them to attend classes as part of his annual iAttend campaign. He wants to increase average daily attendance by 5%.

"We had two days of iAttend this year. We knocked on about 2,000 doors. We have about three additional days over the next weeks and months," said the superintendent. "It's critically important. A year and a half ago when I first arrived here, chronic absenteeism was about 50%.

That means that 50% of our kids were absent from school 10 or more days."

LAUSD's Chief Medical Director Dr. Smita Malhotra said her advice on keeping children home from school is "similar to what was in place pre-pandemic," according to a statement issued on Aug. 12 posted on the district's website.

"It is not practical for working parents to keep children home from school for every runny nose, nor is it in the best interest of children to continue to miss school after pandemic school closures," she wrote. "If your child has a mild runny nose or cold symptoms that are not bothering them, and they test negative for COVID-19, send them to school. Your child can wear a mask at school when they have these mild symptoms."

This year, there are more 4-year-olds on campus after LAUSD expanded its Universal Transitional Kindergarten program, also known as UTK, two years ahead of the state's mandated deadline.

"We began this process last year. We added 10,000 slots for UTK," said Carvalho. "That's 4-year-olds and some 3-year-olds. This year, we added an additional 15,000 slots."

Staffing

The superintendent said the district will begin the school year fully staffed with educators.

Earlier this year, LAUSD reached new contract agreements with teachers and school staff.

The agreements followed a three-day strike staged by staffers -- and honored by teachers -- that shuttered district schools.

While the contracts were ratified, another dispute arose when the district initially proposed shortening the 2023-24 winter break to make up for lost instructional time.

The unions contested the move, saying it was never negotiated, and the district relented and will maintain a three-week winter break, beginning Dec. 18 and continuing through Jan. 5.

Student safety

There is also a renewed focus on safety this school year.

"We must do more in order for the students of Los Angeles and their families to feel and stay safe," said Mayor Karen Bass. "I am working with Superintendent Carvalho to ensure that we confront and address the vehicular tragedies, substance abuse and other incidents that we have seen near and in our schools."

Carvalho underscored the importance of the effort. "Last year, our students and families faced unsafe pedestrian passages to and from our campuses -- some experiencing injuries and others loss of life," he said. "Walking to school should not become a traumatic experience for our students."

"We cannot have a repeat of what we witnessed last year, both parents and children became victims of accidents that could've been avoided," said LAUSD Superintendent Alberto Carvalho.

The district has hired a number of crossing guards, reaching the highest number in at least a decade, according to the LAUSD.

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation has created additional School Slow Zones at 45 schools using 576 signs to reduce speed limits; it has made street improvements including installing speed humps at 28 schools.

Drug use on campuses

The Los Angeles Police Department's Community Safety Partnership Bureau recently launched a pilot program for students, parents and school staff, focusing on the harms and risks associated with drugs, specifically fentanyl. The program includes educating staff on the functionality and proper usage of Narcan.

The last day of the school year will be June 11, 2024.

SMASH & GRABS

LA TIMES

East L.A. Nike store hit by grab-and-dash thieves, the latest in series of daytime robberies

BY NATHAN SOLIS

A group of thieves were captured on video stealing boxes of shoes and other items from a Nike store in East Los Angeles on Sunday, the latest in a string of smash-and-grab thefts carried out during regular business hours.

A man and woman can be seen scrambling with a handful of shoe boxes in a video posted to the Citizen app and reported by KTLA-TV. The theft was reported to the East Los Angeles sheriff's station at 5:36 p.m. and roughly \$1,000 in miscellaneous shoes were stolen, according to Deputy Maria Lucero with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Lucero could not confirm if any arrests were made in the incident at the Nike Community Store on Whittier Boulevard but said a detective will likely be assigned to the incident.

The incident seems to be the latest in a series of flash-mob robberies, which involve a group of people who ransack a business, often with little attempt to conceal their identities.

The daytime theft in East Los Angeles comes just one day after 30 to 50 people participated in a robbery at the Westfield Topanga Shopping Center. Dozens of people ransacked the Nordstrom store on Saturday and used bear spray to target security workers while they made off with the goods, according to the Los Angeles Police Department. The suspects left in sedans without license plates. Police estimated losses to be between \$60,000 and \$100,000.

There were no injuries, according to a customer service representative who was unable to provide further details Saturday.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass called the Nordstrom robbery "absolutely unacceptable."

"Those who committed these acts and acts like it in neighboring areas must be held accountable," she said in a statement. "The Los Angeles Police Department will continue to work to not only find those responsible for this incident but to prevent these attacks on retailers from happening in the future."

In a similar incident, another group of thieves who robbed the same Nordstrom attacked a security guard with bear spray in November 2021.

At the Americana at Brand in Glendale, 30 to 40 people stormed the Yves Saint Laurent store on Aug. 8. The group drove away in about 20 vehicles with roughly \$300,000 worth of merchandise, according to the Glendale Police Department.

On Aug. 1, the Gucci store at the Westfield Century City Mall was also hit by at least nine people.

NPR

A 'mob of criminals' stole as much as \$100,000 worth of goods from an L.A. Nordstrom

By Dustin Jones

The Los Angeles Police Department said a "mob of criminals" ransacked a Nordstrom department store in Topanga on Saturday, stealing as much as \$100,000 worth of products in broad daylight. The smash and grab robbery is at least the third for Nordstrom in less than two years.

One of the videos from the robbery, shared on X, formerly known as Twitter, by Noel Escobar, shows masked individuals flooding through the Nordstrom storefront at the Westfield Topanga Mall, plowing through clothing racks and smashing display cases in a rush to grab whatever they could.

Police said in an online statement that the thieves made off with \$60,000 and \$100,000 in products, and though there are several leads, but for residents and mall shoppers, "it is a loss of feeling safe."

KTLA reported that an estimated 20 to 50 robbers were involved, and that several suspects with ties to other organized crime robberies in the area were arrested. A security guard who tried to intervene was attacked with a chemical spray, and the store was evacuated when the robbery ended.

Another "flash mob" robbery took place in Los Angeles County just days before, at the Yves Saint Laurent store in Glendale on Aug. 8. The Glendale Police Department said in a statement last week that at least 30 suspects rushed into the store just before 5 p.m. and stole property valued at approximately \$300,000.

"These 'flash mob' burglaries involve a large, coordinated group of individuals simultaneously rushing into the store, overwhelming staff and taking it over," Glendale Police said. "The suspects grab as much merchandise as possible before fleeing in multiple vehicles."

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass called Saturday's incident "absolutely unacceptable."

"Those who committed these acts and acts like it in neighboring areas must be held accountable. The Los Angeles Police Department will continue to work to not only find those responsible for this incident but to prevent these attacks on retailers from happening in the future."

Saturday's robbery was the third Nordstrom heist in California in less than two years.

On Nov. 20, 2021, some 80 people conducted a nearly-identical robbery in Walnut Creek, just outside of San Francisco. Like in the recent attack in Topanga, the Walnut Creek robbers utilized a chemical spray, using it on one of the store employees. Police arrested three suspects outside the store at gunpoint, NPR reported at the time.

And on Nov. 22, 18 to 20 people broke into a Nordstrom store at the Grove, a high-end shopping center in Los Angeles, stealing \$5,000 of merchandise, the Los Angeles Times reported. Three suspects were arrested within a handful of hours with some of the stolen products in their car.

NBC SACRAMENTO

'Mob of criminals' stole up to \$100k worth of merchandise at Los Angeles mall, police say

By Michelle Watson, CNN

A "mob of criminals" stole up to \$100,000 worth of merchandise from the Westfield Topanga Shopping Center in Los Angeles Saturday afternoon.

"Today at around 4 p.m., a mob of criminals stole items from the Topanga Mall with an estimated loss of \$60,000 to \$100,000," the Los Angeles Police Department said on social media. "Topanga Division officers were on the scene quickly and have several investigative leads. To criminals, it is just property taken."

Multiple individuals wearing black from head to toe could be seen ransacking a store at the mall, carrying duffel bags, purses and other items past the broken glass on the floor, in a video posted by the police department.

The crime has left the community with, "a loss of feeling safe," police said.

"The LAPD will exhaust all efforts to bring those responsible into custody and seek criminal prosecution," the department said.

CNN has reached out to the police department and the Westfield Topanga Shopping Center for comment.

In a statement, Mayor Karen **Bass** called the incident "absolutely unacceptable."

"Those who committed these acts and acts like it in neighboring areas must be held accountable," **Bass** said. "The Los Angeles Police Department will continue to work to not only find those responsible for this incident but to prevent these attacks on retailers from happening in the future."

A similar scene unfolded Tuesday in nearby Glendale, where police said thieves stole \$300,000 worth of property in a "bold, flash mob burglary" at an Yves Saint Laurent store.

"These 'flash mob' burglaries involve a large, coordinated group of individuals simultaneously rushing into the store, overwhelming staff, and taking it over. The suspects grab as much merchandise as possible before fleeing in multiple vehicles," the Glendale Police Department said in a statement.

NBC LA

LA County DA George Gascón says smash-and-grab robbers will be held accountable

By City News Service

A search was continuing Monday for more than two dozen culprits who carried out a mob-style smash-and-grab robbery at Westfield Topanga Mall in Canoga Park, with Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón insisting the perpetrators will be held accountable.

The Saturday afternoon melee involving as many as 30 people inside the Nordstrom store at the mall led to the theft of merchandise valued by police at about \$300,000. It followed a similar heist carried out last week by a mob of thieves at an Yves Saint Laurent store at the Americana at Brand mall in Glendale, with the loss also estimated at \$300,000.

Some critics, including Americana at Brand owner and former L.A. mayoral candidate Rick Caruso, have questioned whether law enforcement and the justice system were doing enough to hold offenders accountable. He said a recent change in state law approved by voters, making certain levels of property theft a misdemeanors instead of felonies, has removed the fear of punishment and emboldened criminals.

"The time has come to demand that our elected officials change the laws to hold criminals accountable and start enforcing the laws in a fair and equitable manner," Caruso said in a statement last week following the heist at Americana at Brand. "Retail businesses and small and large shopping areas are experiencing an alarming increase in 'smash and grab' robberies. I have heard directly from small business owners who feel defeated by the lack of accountability for criminals."

Speaking to reporters Monday, Gascón insisted that his office is being aggressive about prosecutions in such mob-style robberies, treating them as organized crime felonies, not simple misdemeanors.

"We've got a team of people that have been working in the Glendale case and other cases, and will continue to do so," he said. "We assigned our organized crime division to work on these cases about a year and a half ago. We view them as organized crime, and we will use every tool available under the law when there is an arrest made to make sure these individuals are held accountable. This is unacceptable behavior in a civilized society."

Gascón said there are people in the community who can identify the robbers, with some people even buying stolen merchandise from the heist, and they also need to be held accountable.

Former Chapman law school dean John Eastman indicted in Georgia

While his department is not directly involved in the Glendale or Canoga Park cases, Sheriff Robert Luna told reporters the sheriff's department will coordinate with other law enforcement.

"We're going to be communicating, we're going to investigate and we're going to assist in any way we can," Luna said. "But I guarantee you, once we get the evidence where we can take people into custody, we're going to take them into custody and go from there."

The Nordstrom robbery occurred just after 4 p.m. Saturday at the store at 21725 Victory Blvd., east of Topanga Canyon Boulevard, according to spokesman Pedro Muniz of the Los Angeles Police Department.

Cell phone video posted on Twitter showed male and female suspects -- most wearing masks, hoodies or other identity-concealing garb -- smashing displays, grabbing clothing and bags and running from the store.

There were at least 30 people involved, police said.

The mall was not evacuated, but an ambulance was summoned to treat a security guard at the store's entrance who was sprayed with bear spray, according to police.

Mayor Karen **Bass** issued a statement condemning the crime.

"What happened today at the Nordstrom in the Topanga Mall is absolutely unacceptable," **Bass** said. "Those who committed these acts and acts like it in neighboring areas must be held accountable. The Los Angeles Police Department will continue to work to not only find those responsible for this incident but to prevent these attacks on retailers from happening in the future."

The LAPD issued a statement Monday urging anyone with information to contact Det. Santander at 818-374-9420, or during off-hours, at 877-LAPD-24-7 (527-3247). Information can also be sent to ORC@lapd.online, or anonymously through CrimeStoppers at 800-222-TIPS (8477) or lacrimestoppers.org.

The Yves Saint Laurent heist in Glendale occurred about 4:50 p.m. Aug. 8. That crime was also captured on video, which was widely circulated.

LOS ANGELES

CITY WATCH

Mayor Karen Bass' Obstruction of Justice Requires a Special Prosecutor

BY RICHARD LEE ABRAMS

THE VIEW FROM HERE - What Is Obstruction of Justice?

Obstruction of justice is behavior which interferes with a law enforcement agency's investigation and/or prosecution of a criminal matter.

Mayor Karen **Bass**' apparent interference with the LAPD's investigation of the illegal audio tape made at the Federation of Labor and subsequent conduct such as Jason Reedy's stalking, assault and battery on councilmember Kevin de Leòn could constitute obstruction of justice. The law makes no exception for mayors. A society based on the rule of law cannot permit interference with law enforcement's performing its duties. A plethora of state and federal statutes may be invoked when a Mayor interferes with an investigation and/or the charging of a person with a crime.

Nationally, there has been an on-going debate whether the Biden Administration has interfered with the FBI and other law enforcement agencies including the Department of Justice by pushing for investigations and prosecutions of Donald Trump. Likewise, when people including a federal judge believe there may have been political pressure not to fully investigate and prosecute President Joe Biden's son, Hunter Biden, there is need to investigate whether there has been political pressure. This article takes no position about either Donald Trump or Hunter Biden. One legal remedy for questions of obstruction of justice is the appointment of a Special Prosecutor.

A special prosecutor occurs when people, rightly or wrongful, fear that political pressure from the top, e.g. a President or Mayor, has improperly influenced a criminal investigation. The special prosecutor is supposed to have sole authority and independence to conduct a criminal investigation, because the public needs to have faith in results of the investigation. That need has arisen in the city of Los Angeles.

Reasons to Believe That Mayor Karen **Bass** Has Obstructed Justice with the Jason Reedy Matter

Los Angeles needs a special prosecutor to investigate the failure to arrest and prosecute Jason Reedy, who stalked, assaulted, and battered councilmember Kevin de Leòn. The reasonable grounds to object to Mayor **Bass**'s behavior took a giant leap forward with City Attorney Hydee Feldman-Soto's alleged decision not to arrest Jason Reedy and that she will not arrest his victim councilmember Kevin de Leòn.

The agency to investigate the leaking of the illegal audio tape and Jason Reed's political violence is either the LAPD or the FBI. As readers of CityWatch may know, this column believes the FBI could not find the Pacific Ocean while standing on the Santa Monica Pier. Thus, we have been focusing on the LAPD and Chief Michael Moore for the failure to arrest Jason Reedy.

Last year on December 11, 2022, the LAPD announced that it was investigating Labor Federation's illegal audio tape and the Reedy incidents. LAPD website Since then, this column has found no LAPD updates on the investigation. Since there is video tape showing Reedy's stalking, assault and battery, the LAPD's dilatory behavior was problematic, especially since Jason Reedy, a member of Black Lives Matter, is seen as a political ally of Mayor Karen **Bass**.

After seven (7) months of silence waiting for the LAPD to arrest Reedy, this column renewed the subject about two weeks ago.

July 31, 2023, CityWatch, LAPD Fiascos

"The political structure of the city is not merely corrupt, but now it is based on defamatory lies, on deaths threats, on mobs surrounding councilmembers' homes, and on physical attacks in public – all with approval of Mayor Karen **Bass** and the LAPD."

August 3, 2023, CityWatch, Los Angeles' Cast of Cowards, Villains, and Dupes

"Chief Moore faces the moral challenge of a lifetime. While the truth will set him free, it will also lose him his job."

made a nightmare of everything stemming from the illegally recorded audio tape. All candidate **Bass** had to do was tell the truth. **Bass** was on the float with Nury and Bonin's son. Allegedly **Bass** was going to correct the defamatory lies, but some of her backers wanted to conceal the truth from the public. The result was **Bass** supported the False Narrative. If Karen **Bass** had spoken up, all of this could have been avoided. She even took the stage at the campaign event sponsored by the American Jewish Committee (AJC), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Jewish Federation Council (JFC) and mislead them to believe that the three councilmember were anti-Black. As a result, all the organizations were duped. Who had the connections to get President Biden to call for councilmembers to resign?

Angelenos need a special prosecutor to investigate Karen **Bass**'s obstruction of justice, but no one has the guts to ask for one.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

LARCHMONT BUZZ

Selma Avenue Encampment Near Larchmont Charter School Removed Last Week

By Patricia Lombard

Just in time for the start of school next week, city staff removed the large encampment of homeless individuals living at the entry to the Larchmont Charter School's elementary school campus on the 6600 block of Selma Avenue in Hollywood. The presence of the encampment has been frustrating to parents and local community members for months as the encampment grew larger and it appeared nothing was being done to remove it.

The encampment in the 6600 block of Selma Avenue before it was removed.

"On Thursday, our office collaborated with The Mayor's office, service providers, and our County partners to house over 45 people who were living on the streets in Hollywood," announced CD13 City Councilmember Hugo Soto-Martinez in his weekly email. "We could not be happier and more thankful for this incredible work."

"The Larchmont Charter School community is incredibly thankful to Mayor **Bass**, the City Council members, and the entire City of LA team that helped to find stable housing for our neighbors and ensure the sidewalks are safe for students at the start of school. We teach our students that they can make a difference and this shows what's possible when our leaders come together to improve the lives of all members of their community," Dave Dumonde, a spokesman for the school, told the Buzz.

"Hollywood is home to the 2nd largest unhoused population in our city, only behind Skid Row," continued Soto-Martinez in his message to constituents. "A large portion of the residents have lived on the streets for years, and many have mental health or addiction issues. It's also a unique area, where housed residents, businesses, and tourism all collide. Because of this, it requires a unique approach – and that's why we've been doing the critical work to coordinate with The Mayor's office, service providers, County agencies, and the Hollywood Partnership, who represents the business community."

The Hollywood Partnership posted on Instagram:

"Exciting news from Hollywood! The Inside Safe program has accomplished another successful cleanup, thanks to our amazing partners @mayorofla, Council member @cd13losangeles, Supervisor @lindsayhorvath, and @lapdhq. Together, we were able to transform the three-block encampment along Selma Ave. between Schrader and Las Palmas, and housed over 41 individuals in need. Our Ambassadors are now working diligently to maintain the cleanliness of the area, especially near Selma Ave. Elementary. We couldn't be more proud of our team!"

School officials told the Buzz last week that as the date for starting school approached, they were increasingly concerned about the lack of communication from CD13 staff, a criticism we have heard from local community members as well.

"Indeed it's a step in the right direction," Keith Johnson, a Larchmont resident who had been contacting the media over the past several months, trying to draw attention to the encampment and pressure city officials to remove it. "We still have so many encampments including some near schools too. We have to pressure the council to get things done."

Johnson said he was very pleased to see Selma Park cleared and LAPD keeping an eye on the park. "LAPD has a patrol car parked at the Selma Park gate, apparently with an officer, and steps are being taken to prevent campers from returning. I hope the community will feel like using the park again. This will help keep campers out."

LAPD is keeping an eye on the park for now.

In early August, concerned about deteriorating conditions, school officials told the Buzz they asked the LA Fire Department to inspect the site. Not surprisingly, LAFD found numerous fire, life safety, and ADA violations at the site, including illegal wiring that had been tapped into the school or the City of LA power box on the playground area of the property. In addition, the entire sidewalk was completely covered with tents, debris, and trash, presenting a safety hazard to children and parents trying to get to the school.

Their assessment added to the already growing pressure from parents, staff and community members on CD13 staff. In an interview with the Buzz in June, CD13 Homeless Director Patrick Mooney told the Buzz removing encampments without placing people in temporary housing actually makes more work and does more harm to the trust he and his staff are trying to build with unhoused individuals to move them into housing. Often, forcing the person to move just pushes them to another nearby encampment or they might disappear and be unreachable if and when a housing voucher does finally become available, explained Mooney.

At the time, Mooney said Kylie Jensen in his office was working with residents at the Selma Avenue encampment, getting to know the people there, building trust, and bringing in various service providers. He said his office was working to remove drugs from the area, and bringing in LA Sanitation twice a week to keep trash cleaned up. The goal, Mooney said, was to house the individuals living there (and to have the encampment fully removed) by the time school resumes in August. "I feel like we're in a very good place to get it done," Mooney said in June. And he has delivered.

While Johnson is happy the encampment was cleared before school started, he also said he's frustrated that it took so long. According to Johnson, CD13 staff first told parents that it would be cleaned by May. Burt Johnson acknowledged, "It's a problem not having the resources, and not everyone wants a hotel room because they come with rules."

Soto-Martinez and his team are moving on to the next problem. What's next, he said, is "more outreach, more services, more housing, and more forming relationships with our unhoused neighbors. This isn't a problem that will be solved overnight or through one housing operation. As our Homelessness team works across our district, they're signing people up for housing referrals to get the next open bed. There's currently a long list of folks who want to be off the streets and under a roof, so our Planning team is working to build the type of interim and permanent housing they need. Every day our team comes to work ready to tackle one of the largest humanitarian crises in the country, and every day we do more and more to help."

For now, parents and students can walk into Larchmont Charter with a clear and clean sidewalk, and they are very grateful.

CITY WATCH

Westlake Neighborhood Downtown LA Wants to Slow Down the Mayfair Hotel Homeless Housing Conversion

BY ELAINE ALANIZ

COMMUNITY CONCERNED - A growing number of residents and businesses in the Westlake neighborhood are voicing concerns over Mayor Karen Bass' proposal to convert the historic 15-story Mayfair Hotel into a permanent homeless housing facility. With an estimated cost exceeding \$83 million, residents are questioning the project's financial feasibility and long-term impact. The Mayor's office is attempting to railroad this project through with not one public notice, not one community meeting and no outreach to the predominantly Latino neighborhood.

For years, the Westlake neighborhood in downtown LA has been at the forefront of efforts to provide housing solutions for the homeless population in Los Angeles. The area already hosts permanent supportive housing and interim housing, actively contributing to addressing the homelessness crisis in the City. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mayfair Hotel was utilized as a part of Project Roomkey, temporarily housing hundreds of unhoused individuals. However, the repercussions of this initiative continue to reverberate throughout the community.

In July 2022, the Mayfair Hotel concluded its involvement in Project Roomkey after serving as a site for two years. The property's proprietors subsequently sought over \$11 million from the City for extensive damage to the building and its furnishings during this period. In addition, the Los Angeles Fire Department was called numerous times to respond to fires in the building, along with a large number of overdoses and other medical emergencies. The Mayfair Hotel is located one block from the John Liechty Middle School and two blocks from Esperanza Elementary School.

"In stark contrast to the community outreach for a planned 30-unit temporary shelter in Westwood and a high-profile homeless projects in Woodland Hills that were approved used solely for families and single mothers and Seniors, which is not even being considered for this site, Los Angeles leaders have inexplicably failed to extend any form of notification to our community, let alone organize a single community meeting," said Eileen Cohen, a long-time property owner in Westlake.

"The latest proposal from the Mayor's Office aims to acquire the Mayfair Hotel, converting it into a permanent interim housing facility. The plan envisions accommodating over 2,000 individuals within the next two years, creating a constant influx of residents in and out of the neighborhood. We know that this project will not just keep people inside the property but will likely cause new encampments and those that prey on them to take up shop outside it as well. Despite the scale and potential impact of the project, community engagement has been non-existent, leaving residents feeling unheard and marginalized," added Elaine Alaniz, President of the Westlake North Neighborhood Council.

The Westlake community is united in its call for a more inclusive and transparent approach to the Mayfair Hotel homeless housing conversion. This project's future impact on the neighborhood, its residents, and the broader Los Angeles community warrants careful consideration and thorough public discourse. This project would create the largest concentration of homeless housing outside of Skid Row.

A comparison of Westlake to West LA and Woodland Hills shows a contrast between these neighborhoods:

[Recent Town Hall Update: At a recent town hall, the Deputy Mayor listened to the concerns of LA's Westlake Neighborhood stakeholders regarding their plea to retain the historical integrity of the building and the potential consequences of hasty decisions affecting the fabric of the community. The Deputy Mayor acknowledged their concerns and emphasized the differences between the current proposal and the previous "Project Room Key."]

JEWISH JOURNAL

Interim Homeless Housing Draws Pushback by Westside Residents

BY RYAN TOROK

A proposal for an interim housing project for the homeless on Pico Boulevard has drawn pushback from residents of the surrounding area.

During an Aug. 3 informational session about the project held at Temple Isaiah, attendees jeered as City Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky, whose fifth council district includes the area where the project would be located, discussed plans for the housing. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass also spoke at the contentious meeting, threatening to end it early as at least one attendee called for Yaroslavsky to be recalled from her position.

"Disgraceful," called out one attendee at the meeting.

The housing would be located at Pico Blvd. and Midvale Ave., at 2377 Midvale Ave. in Westwood, where there's currently a city-owned parking lot. City officials have identified the lot as underutilized and thus a suitable site for the homeless housing project, which would feature 30 beds and be operated by homeless services agency LA Family Housing. L.A.-based company LifeArk, which specializes in prefabricated, self-sustainable modular structures that can be built relatively quickly, will construct the project.

Those in attendance at the Temple Isaiah informational session included Barbara Broide, president of the Westwood South of Santa Monica Blvd. Homeowners Association. Broide is opposed to interim housing being built at the Midvale site. In an interview with the Journal, she said the community was not given the opportunity to have input about where the housing would be located, and she believes there are more appropriate locations for the project.

"We're not naysayers and we're not NIMBYs [Not in My Backyard], but we think it's the wrong place," she said. "Just because Katie [Yaroslavsky] doesn't have another site in CD-5 [council district-five] right now, doesn't make this one right."

"Just because Katie [Yaroslavsky] doesn't have another site in CD-5 [council district-five] right now, doesn't make this one right." — Barbara Broide, president of the Westwood South of Santa Monica Blvd. Homeowners Association.

As the homelessness crisis has worsened in her district and across Los Angeles, Yaroslavsky said the project was necessary to provide an interim solution for the unhoused. The goal of the project, she said, is to act as a link between street homelessness and permanent housing.

"Anyone who has walked or driven on the Westside can tell you that the increase in the number of people living in tents is alarming," Yaroslavsky said in a statement. "We cannot keep waiting for the problem to solve itself—we need real solutions that we know work, and we need them quickly. While thousands of units of permanent housing are being constructed across the City, no interim units are in the pipeline in Council District 5. We need interim solutions now that we know will work."

Along with the meeting at Temple Isaiah, the councilmember participated in an Aug. 6 Zoom session about the project, during which she addressed the perception that the city made decisions about the project without having an open dialogue with the wider community.

"We didn't want to come to all of you with half-baked ideas that were filled with a bunch of holes," Yaroslavsky said. "We generally expect this project to be a net positive for the community."

While housing developments ordinarily require approval from various commissions and the city council, the fact that this project will be developed on a city-owned lot allows for it to be expedited. City Council, nevertheless, will have to approve contracts with the construction company and the operator of the interim housing project.

"We expect council to take action on these items within the next couple of months," Yaroslavsky said.

The expectation is that LifeArk will be able to construct the housing quickly. According to Yaroslavsky's office, the project is expected to break ground before the end of this year and open by 2024.

According to Yaroslavsky's spokesperson, Leo Daube, people will have more opportunities to weigh in on the project in the coming weeks.

To: Carolyn Martin [REDACTED]@gmail.com]
Bcc: mayor.staff@lacity.org[mayor.staff@lacity.org]
From: mayor.staff@lacity.org
Sent: Thur 8/10/2023 1:23:45 PM
Subject: THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 2023 MEDIA COVERAGE
Received: Thur 8/10/2023 1:24:30 PM

LOS ANGELES MAYOR KAREN BASS

SEIU STRIKE

[LA TIMES: Striking city workers become the latest to take part in L.A.'s sizzling season of labor action](#)
[CENTER SQUARE: Los Angeles city workers go on one-day bargaining strike, no demands published](#)
[GOVERNMENT TECHNOLOGY: Striking City Workers Add to Labor Strife in Los Angeles](#)

[KNX LOS ANGELES](#)
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HOLLYWOOD GUILDS STRIKE

[VARIETY: MOGUL MEMO: L.A. MAYOR CAN'T RESOLVE HOLLYWOOD STRIKES AT ARM'S LENGTH](#)
[CNBC: Hollywood strikes have already had a \\$3 billion impact on California's economy, experts say: It's causing 'a lot of hardship'](#)
[MY NEWS LA: Writers Strike Now 100 Days Old, Matching 2007-08 Walkout; No End in Sight](#)
[CBS LA: WGA strike reaches day 100 with no end in sight](#)

[FOX LOS ANGELES](#)
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MIGRANTS

[CAL MATTERS: Karen Bass sees bused migrants as humans. Greg Abbott sees them as pawns in his overstated crisis](#)

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

[LA TIMES: Ship Alaska's homeless population off to California? They say no way, 'Alaska's my home'](#)
[CENTER SQUARE: LA's 'Inside Safe' hotels for homeless program costs \\$17K per month per person](#)
[BEVERLY PRESS: Opponents voice concerns over 5th District housing](#)
[WESTSIDE CURRENT: Opinion: Yaroslavsky has made me a NIMBY](#)
[ABC LOS ANGELES: HILLSIDE VILLA](#)

NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT

[GOVERNING: Big-City Mayors Are Getting Kicked Out of Schools](#)

PUBLIC SAFETY

[LA TIMES: LAPD officer arrested after stolen debit card used at home improvement store](#)
[DAILY NEWS: LAPD officer arrested on suspicion of stealing, using debit card](#)
[LA WEEKLY: LAPD OFFICER ARRESTED FOR ALLEGEDLY STEALING A DEBIT CARD](#)
[FOX LA: LAPD officer arrested for stealing woman's debit card](#)
[FOX LOS ANGELES](#)
[ABC LA: LAPD officer arrested for allegedly stealing woman's debit card](#)
[ABC LOS ANGELES](#)

TRADE, TRAVEL & TOURISM

[THE NACION: A major airport in the United States has banned the sale of water in plastic bottles](#)

OTHER

[KCAL LOS ANGELES: HEIRS OF AFRIKA](#)

LOS ANGELES CITY GOVERNMENT

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL

[DAILY NEWS: LA City Council OKs plan to identify land for transfer to marginalized groups](#)
[KFI: LA Council OKs Plan to Identify Land for Transfer to Marginalized Groups](#)
[EASTSIDER: L.A. plan to transfer surplus city property to marginalized groups moves ahead](#)
[MY NEWS LA: LA Council OKs Plan to Identify Land for Transfer to Marginalized Groups](#)
[LA TIMES: No charges filed in fight between L.A. Councilman Kevin de León and activist](#)
[DAILY NEWS: No charges filed over altercation between activist, De León](#)
[EASTSIDER: City Attorney won't file charges in holiday scuffle between Kevin de León and activists](#)
[EASTSIDER: If Kevin de León ran for reelection, could he win?](#)
[MY NEWS LA: LA Council Expands Program to Let Restaurants Serve Alcohol](#)
[KFI: LA Council Expands Program to Let Restaurants Serve Alcohol](#)

[PATCH: Hollywood Sikh Temple Gets Historic Recognition From LA](#)
[SAN FERNANDO VALLEY SUN: LA City Council Approves Speed Hump Program for 50 'High-Priority' Schools](#)

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES **ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

[REAL DEAL: Raytheon re-lists 47 acres in Canoga Park after \\$150M deal dies](#)
[LA BUSINESS FIRST: L.A.'s West Harbor puts up first walls](#)

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

[LA TIMES: A class-action lawsuit offers free cash to many LADWP customers. Are you eligible?](#)

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

[LA TIMES: In a Florida boom town, builders and homeless services providers fret: 'We can't be L.A.'](#)
[MY NEWS LA: LA Collects Over \\$275M in Taxes from Airbnb Hosts in 2016-23](#)
[DAILY NEWS: LA collects over \\$275 million in taxes from Airbnb hosts in 2016-23](#)
[CBS LA: Some LA Landlords seek relief from rent hike freeze before its 2024 expiration](#)
[KCRW: Tenant harassment is illegal in LA — but the law isn't getting enforced](#)
[SAN FERNANDO VALLEY SUN: Former Residents of Makeshift RV Park in Sylmar Recount Traumatic Experience, Hope for Better Future](#)
[URBANIZE LA: Seven-story, 42-unit apartment building pitched for 11208 W Burbank Boulevard in North Hollywood](#)

NEIGHBORHOODS & COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT

[EASTSIDER: One pool is ready for a splashy return, another in deep planning](#)
[LA TIMES: Taylormania is going to take over the Grammy Museum ... ready for it?](#)
[LA TIMES: The Dodgers are retiring Fernando Valenzuela's number. Does he have a path to Cooperstown?](#)
[NBC LA: Dodgers to retire No. 34 in honor of legendary pitcher Fernando Valenzuela](#)
[TELEMUNDO: Dodgers to retire No. 34 in honor of legendary pitcher Fernando Valenzuela](#)
[DAILY BREEZE: San Pedro's Beacon House receives \\$1.25 million for Bartlett Center upgrade](#)
[BEVERLY PRESS: Zoo welcomes after-hours visitors on Friday nights](#)
[LA TIMES: Bryce James is set to attend Sherman Oaks Notre Dame](#)
[BEVERLY PRESS: Pathways L.A. prepares students for school year](#)
[LA MAGAZINE: Curator Jeffrey Deitch Is Providing Free, Immersive Space to L.A.'s Underground Artists](#)

PUBLIC SAFETY

[FOX NEWS: LAPD in 'worst place possible' ahead of World Cup, Olympics, former sheriff warns](#)
[CBS LA: Driver in LADWP SUV rams LAPD cruisers during pursuit, crashes in Atwater Village](#)
[FOX LA: Man wanted for assault in custody after graphic standoff inside LADWP SUV in Atwater Village](#)
[ABC LA: Man in custody after barricading himself inside bullet-riddled LADWP vehicle in Atwater Village](#)
[MY NEWS LA: Stolen Vehicle Suspect Arrested After Chase, Lengthy Standoff](#)
[KTLA: Violent pursuit suspect in custody after hours-long standoff in L.A.](#)
[TELEMUNDO: Man holed up in Atwater Village after police chase](#)
[LA TIMES: Customer crashes vehicle at Mission Hills car dealership, killing 1 and injuring 2](#)
[DAILY NEWS: Vehicle crashes into Toyota dealership in Mission Hills, killing 1](#)
[CBS LA: One killed, three injured after woman drives SUV into Mission Hills car dealership](#)
[ABC LA: 1 killed after driver slams into Toyota dealership in Mission Hills; 3 others injured](#)
[KTLA: Woman dead after vehicle crashes into Mission Hills car dealership](#)
[FOX LA: 1 dead, multiple injured at Toyota car dealership in Mission Hills](#)
[NBC LA: 1 killed when SUV strikes people in service area at Mission Hills auto dealership](#)
[ASSOCIATED PRESS: Vehicle strikes 3, fatally injuring 1 in service area of Los Angeles car dealership, official says](#)
[FOX LA: Child struck by vehicle in LA's Pico-Union neighborhood](#)
[CBS LA: LAFD fights small brush fire on Cahuenga Peak](#)
[KTLA: Crews battle Hollywood Hills brush fire](#)
[MY NEWS LA: Fire Crews Battling Brush Fire in Cahuenga Peak Area](#)
[MY NEWS LA: Pedestrian Killed on 101 Freeway Identified](#)
[UNIVISION: "He is without his medicine": mother searches for her daughter diagnosed with schizophrenia; she disappeared in los angeles](#)
[LA TIMES: A woman is fired from her job after video of attack on Watts street vendor is seen by her boss](#)
[KTLA: LAPD IDs woman accused in violent dine-and-dash at South Los Angeles taco stand](#)
[UNIVISION: The attacker of a taco vendor in South Los Angeles is fired from her job](#)

TRADE, TRAVEL & TOURISM

[FREIGHT WEEK: Port of Los Angeles to host marine flare collection event](#)
[RANDOM LENGTHS: Port of Los Angeles to Host Marine Flare Collection Event](#)

TRANSPORTATION

[BEVERLY PRESS: Metro keeps brisk pace with subway work](#)
[THE SOURCE: This is 30: On the family business](#)

SEIU STRIKE

[CAL MATTERS: When CA public workers go on strike](#)

LOS ANGELES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

[KTLA: L.A. County considers \\$25 minimum wage for hotel, theme park workers](#)
[WESTSIDE CURRENT: County Supervisor Proposes \\$25 Minimum Wage Despite Previous Backlash](#)
[TELEMUNDO: \\$25 minimum wage proposed for hotel workers in Los Angeles County](#)
[DAILY NEWS: L.A. County approves \\$74.9 million to build North Hollywood Health Center](#)
[CBS LA: \\$20k reward offered for information on La Verne jewelry store robbers](#)
[DAILY BREEZE: Man wrongfully convicted of 1983 Long Beach murder receives \\$3 million settlement](#)

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

[KFI: LA Homelessness Lawsuit Moves Toward Trial](#)
[CBS LA: 'TSwift Lift' to bring an estimated \\$320 million to LA County](#)
[LA TIMES: Germans, Hoosiers, Canadians! How they shaped the Southern California we know today](#)

HOLLYWOOD GUILDS STRIKE

[HOLLYWOOD REPORTER: "It's an Anniversary of Shame for the AMPTP": WGA Negotiator on 100 Days of the Writers Strike](#)
[VARIETY: As Writers Strike Reaches 100 Days, the WGA Vows to Stay 'Resolved and United'](#)
[VARIETY: WGA Strike Hits 100 Days: Timeline of Key Events](#)
[ABC NEWS: Hollywood strike matches the 100-day mark of the last writers strike in 2007-2008](#)
[LA IST: The Last Hollywood Writers' Strike Lasted 100 Days. This One May Last Much Longer](#)
[DEADLINE: WGA Calls Day 100 Of Writers Strike A "Milestone Of Shame" For AMPTP, But Optimism For A Deal Remains](#)
[DEADLINE: L.A. Picket Locations: The Best And Worst Places To Strike Over The Past 100 Days](#)
[VANITY FAIR: 100 Days Later, Hollywood's Writers Are Still on Strike](#)
[THE WRAP: 100 Days In: Writers Reveal Their Highest and Lowest Moments of the Strike](#)
[FORBES: Hollywood Writers' Strike: Here's A Timeline Of What Led To The 100-Day Mark](#)
[DAILY NEWS: The writers strike has hit 100 days with no end in sight](#)
[HOLLYWOOD REPORTER: Writers Guild East Leader Says This 100-Day Strike Is Different: Studios More "Obstinate" Now](#)
[CNBC: 'Survival jobs,' ex-careers and side hustles: How Hollywood writers are making ends meet 100 days into the strike](#)
[LA TIMES: Advocacy groups rally to support Latino artists amidst strikes](#)
[VARIETY: Hollywood Strikes Amplify Criticism of Lavish Media CEO Pay Packages](#)
[NEWSWEEK: Disney CEO Bob Iger Changes Tune on Hollywood Strikes](#)
[NPR: Hollywood strikes' economic impacts are hitting far beyond LA](#)

MAYOR KAREN BASS

SEIU STRIKE

LA TIMES

Striking city workers become the latest to take part in L.A.'s sizzling season of labor action

BY RYAN FONSECA

Good morning, and welcome to the Essential California newsletter. It's Wednesday, August 9.

"L.A. city you're no good. Treat your workers like you should."

That was a chant city workers shouted outside Los Angeles International Airport on Tuesday after hundreds there and thousands more across the city walked off their jobs for a 24-hour strike. It was the first major walkout by the city government's workers in decades.

The swath of workers withholding their labor — lifeguards, sanitation workers, traffic officers, airport custodians, port workers and more — left many city services unfulfilled. That included most trash collection, cleaning and maintenance at the airport and other facilities, the closure of animal shelters and some public pools, plus more chaos around some city concert venues without Los Angeles Department of Transportation traffic officers there to direct and manage drivers.

The union issued some workers with public safety responsibilities "line passes" to cross the picket lines and report for their shifts.

Leaders from Service Employees International Union Local 721 called the strike following a breakdown in labor talks with city negotiators, who the union accuses of unfair labor practices.

"People don't understand the hard work they do. There's a lot of unsung heroes in the city," union president and executive director David Green told The Times. "It's important that the city, that we take a day to recognize that, and let the city know ... they need to respect what we do as city employees."

A major catalyst for Tuesday's action was ongoing city worker shortages, sparked by the pandemic. In an effort to cut payroll costs and soften the financial blow most cities faced in 2020, the city launched a Separation Incentive Plan, making some workers eligible for up to \$80,000 for retiring. Many workers left and the city has struggled to replace them across departments.

Striking workers who spoke with Times reporters said they're overworked, expected to take on more duties with less support. Workers also said their pay has not kept up with the cost of living, describing lengthy commutes from far-flung cities and suburbs where they can afford to live on the city wages they earn.

The strike officially began at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday and workers began gathering at the airport and other sites as the day progressed. Hundreds filled the streets and sidewalks around L.A. City Hall, wearing matching purple shirts and carrying signs as they rallied together outside the city's center of power.

L.A. Mayor Karen Bass and other city leaders have denied the union's allegations of unfair practices and announced a plan "ensuring no public safety or housing and homelessness emergency operations are impacted by this action."

Bass said in a statement the city "will always be available to make progress with SEIU 721 and we will continue bargaining in good faith."

It's been a busy year of labor action in greater L.A. If you're having trouble keeping up, there's the ongoing writer's strike against the major Hollywood studios and streaming giants, which grew into a historic joint strike with action by Screen Actor's Guild members. Hotel workers across Southern California have also been orchestrating frequent strikes since early July, demanding higher pay and better working conditions. And back in March, 30,000 LAUSD workers walked out for a historic three-day strike, joined in solidarity by the district's unionized teachers.

Workers' frequent organized actions, plus the level of unity across various workers' unions, is noteworthy in the "famously fractured city," Times columnist Gustavo Arellano wrote this week

CBS LA

WGA strike reaches day 100 with no end in sight

The Hollywood writers' strike reached its 100th day on Wednesday, with seemingly no end in sight as both sides remain on opposite ends of reaching an agreement. At midnight, it will become the longest strike in Writers Guild of America history.

WGA members first walked off the job back on May 2, and have since been seen picketing outside of major Hollywood studios as they continue to fight for a new contract that meets their demands for better pay, success-based residuals for streaming content and regulations regarding the use of artificial intelligence.

Despite a brief glimmer of hope last week, when the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which represents the studios, asked WGA union leaders to meet and discuss the resumption of contract negotiations, no indication has been made towards an agreement being any nearer.

Following the meeting, union negotiators sent an email to members that said both sides remained far apart on several key issues, namely residuals for content viewed on streaming services. They did say, however, that the studios appeared to be willing to increase some levels of compensation and that they were "willing to talk" about artificial intelligence use on projects.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass** issued a statement on Friday while the meeting was ongoing, hoping that the sides could come to a "fair and equitable" resolution to resolve the strikes that have continued to "have profoundly negative impacts on our economy and many of our community members."

Her statement refers not only to the WGA strike, but also to the ongoing picketing from members of the Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, who are also fighting for a renewed contract with better benefits.

"The impact has spanned every corner of Los Angeles — from the writers and actors on the picket line trying to make ends meet to keep a roof over their head and food on the table, to the businesses who rely on the entertainment industry," **Bass'** statement said. "The economic conditions of the entertainment industry are changing — and we must react and evolve to this challenge. It is critical that this gets resolved immediately so that Los Angeles gets back on track and I stand ready to personally engage with all the stakeholders in any way possible to help get this done."

Film Los Angeles reports that the amount of permits sought to film scripted content has experienced a drastic, but expected, decrease.

"Weekly permit count for Feature Films and Television projects is down by 57.6 percent (167 in 2023 vs. 394 in 2022), compared to the same week in the year prior," the non-profit organization said. "These are the categories into which all scripted projects fall, though not all production within these categories is affected by the labor action. Reality TV, as one example, still appears in these counts in addition to non-union independent films."

They also noted that there were zero requests for scripted TV series permits this week.

Though Mayor **Bass** has expressed optimism that she believes a deal can soon be reached, the current strike bears a striking resemblance to the WGA's most recent strike, from November 2007 to February 2008. That lengthy walkout is estimated to have cost the local economy between \$2 billion and \$3 billion.

Experts say that the current walkout, paired with that of the actors, is expected to be far worse. It's the first joint strike to hit Hollywood in the last 63 years after SAG-AFTRA members joined picket lines on July 14.

Some predict that the current picketing could continue until January of 2024 with both sides at such opposite ends of an agreement.

A message from WGA negotiators last Thursday called on writers to challenge the studios to abandon their "anti-union playbook and offer writers a fair deal. Studios responded by saying that their "only playbook is getting people back to work."

CENTER SQUARE

Los Angeles city workers go on one-day bargaining strike, no demands published

By Kenneth Schrupp

(The Center Square) - Over 11,000 City of Los Angeles workers went on 24 hour strike today while claiming negotiations between their union, SEIU 721, and the city for their new contract starting in January stalled.

A union representing public sector employees, SEIU 721 claims to have over 98,000 members in the Southern California region. While the city and SEIU 721 do have a contract in effect through the end of the year, the city and the union are at odds over specific further demands

made for the union's evolving contract starting next January.

In a statement, SEIU 721 claims, "the city has flat-out refused to honor previous agreements at the bargaining table, prompting workers to file Unfair Labor Practice charges with the City of Los Angeles Employee Relations Board." Despite these allegations, SEIU's statement failed to outline what these failures are, and what they are demanding for their new contract.

However, specific charges alleged by the SEIU in a Facebook post included: "the failure to bargain in good faith over hundreds of proposals at the table, sending negotiators to the table without authority to bargain, the restriction of union access to worksites, and retaliation against union leaders organizing at their worksites...we're striking for respect, plain and simple — and if we don't get it we'll shut it down."

City of Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass** spoke out against the union's claims of bad faith negotiations, noting in a statement, "They deserve fair contracts, and we have been bargaining in good faith with SEIU 721 since January. The city will always be available to make progress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week."

While SEIU is no longer affiliated with the AFL-CIO, the main confederation of labor unions in the United States, the local Los Angeles County AFL-CIO took to social media to celebrate with a post of protestors saying, "On strike, shut it down, LA City is uniontown."

While some city services, such as parking enforcement and sanitation would be impacted by what is city workers' first strike since 1980, **Bass** clarified in a statement that first-responders would continue to operate. "My office is implementing a plan ensuring no public safety or housing and homelessness emergency operations are impacted by this action," **Bass** said.

With the strike announced to be lasting only one day, and public sector unions serving as the most powerful bloc in the city, elected officials ranging from congresspeople to city councilmembers voiced their support.

"It's time for the city to come back to the table and negotiate an excellent contract for working families," said Senate candidate and serving member of Congress Adam Schiff (D—Hollywood) in a statement shared by SEIU.

"Our city workers provide essential services to our entire community, and they deserve a fair contract that honors the work they perform," said Los Angeles City Councilmember Traci Park in response to a request for comment. "I appreciate the patience of our community members as we navigate this one-day labor action."

GOVERNMENT TECHNOLOGY

Striking City Workers Add to Labor Strife in Los Angeles

BY Carl Smith

In Brief:

An estimated 11,000 public service workers in Los Angeles, members of SEIU Local 721, walked off the job on Aug. 8.

The walkout was prompted in protest to the decision by city negotiators to put off hundreds of issues raised by the union until the next round of contract negotiations.

Concerns expressed by these workers, such as insufficient pay and lack of acknowledgement of their service from city leaders, exist among public-sector employees across the country. They are at odds with efforts to build this workforce back to pre-pandemic levels.

Hundreds of public service workers gathered at Los Angeles City Hall on Tuesday for the second major protest of a one-day strike by members of SEIU Local 721. The labor action had begun at 4:00 a.m. with a picket line at the LAX Tom Bradley International Terminal. A reported 11,000 union members took part in the day's walkouts and picket lines.

The crowd at City Hall was friendly, but energized, joining in call-and-response chants that included phrases such as "shut it down" and "burn it down" to describe what might come if good-faith negotiations were not forthcoming.

Local 721 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the biggest public-sector union in Southern California, would be capable of shutting essential governmental functions down. Its 95,000 members include persons who work in sanitation, parks services, hospitals, foster care, law enforcement, libraries and beach maintenance. (The city fire service is covered by a separate union, the United Firefighters of Los Angeles, IAFF Local 112.)

"Today boils down to two things," said David Green, the president of 721. "It's about dignity and respect for all of our workers."

Local 721's president, David Green, addresses the crowd: "We've been slapped in the face with a lack of dignity and respect." (Carl Smith, Governing)

Green emphasized that the strike was not against Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass**, who he described as "always there" for working people. Instead, he said, it was a response to "knuckleheads in that building right there" (city hall) who had walked away from the bargaining table, leaving hundreds of union concerns unaddressed until the next round of contract negotiations.

"This is what happens when you disrespect public-sector employees," he said of the walkout.

"The weatherman said that it was cooling off today, but he forgot that this is a hot labor summer," Yvonne Wheeler, president of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor (LA Fed), told the gathering.

Wheeler leads an affiliation of more than 300 union and labor organizations with more than 800,000 members. "You are joining over 100,000 workers here in Los Angeles who are currently out on strike," said Wheeler, including writers, actors and hospitality workers.

The office of the city's chief administrator has "forgotten about" the essential roles that city workers play, Wheeler continued. "You were essential then, you're essential now and you'll be essential forever."

Up Against the Wall

In a statement issued the day before the walkout, and another issued on Aug. 8, Mayor **Bass** expressed support for the workers. "They deserve fair contracts and we have been bargaining in good faith with SEIU 721 since January. The city will always be available to make progress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week."

Good intentions count, but public service workers in Los Angeles are up against the challenges of daily survival in the second most expensive city in the U.S. They're not the only government workers living with economic pressures.

Fewer than three in 10 public-sector employees responding to the most recent national survey by MissionSquare Research Institute said that they felt "very" or "extremely" financially secure. More than a third said it was difficult for them to pay their bills on time and in full. Seventy-seven percent said their debt level interfered with their ability to save for retirement.

Increased workloads add to these pressures. Only 23 percent of survey respondents said that workforce departures had no effect on their workload and more than a third stated that the added strain was "significant."

Darryl Mims was among those at Los Angeles City Hall on Tuesday. He works in the sanitation department, in the unit responsible for cleanup inside and around the city's homeless encampments.

It's not just a shortage of sanitation workers, he says. "We need to have more police presence when we're out there — we have crews that work at night, and they need to know that there's some security in being out there." No one wants to be kicked out of their home, he says, and there have been incidents where workers have been threatened with guns.

"It's not a complicated job, but sometimes it can be quite dangerous," says Mims. He'd like to see more eyes and ears on the workers, more personal protective equipment and more caring and awareness around the work he and his co-workers are doing.

Staffing the Front Lines

The Saturday before the walkout, a "Staff the Front Lines" bus tour by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) made a stop in Los Angeles. It was the first stop in a Western swing devoted to highlighting the need to fill open public service jobs.

"If our residents want a better running city, if they want the streets to be clean, if they want their libraries open, they're only going to get it done if our workforce is compensated, has good benefits and we are doing the business we need to take care of," said California Assemblymember Miguel Santiago at a press conference for the event.

Grace Kehr is a lifeguard for the city. Public swimming pools are a more significant public health resource than ever as extreme heat events become more frequent.

She'd like to see the city recognize and respect her as a front-line worker, especially considering the current shortage of lifeguards. "We're saving lives, making sure people stay safe," she says. "As L.A. city workers, they need to be paying us L.A. city wages."

Sanitation worker Eric Crayton sees his job in the same way. He and his colleagues stayed on the job during the pandemic, putting themselves and their families at risk. The department is currently understaffed, leading to forced overtime.

Crayton wants the walkout to bring the city back to the bargaining table to address issues it has set aside. "We're hoping that the City Council and the mayor will let the CAO's office know that they shouldn't treat their employees this way," he says. "We should be treated with respect and dealt with fairly."

Not Just a Union Matter

"L.A. is a union town," said LA Fed's Wheeler at the rally. Public-sector workers are five times more likely to be union members than those in the private sector, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Even so, the membership rate is just 33 percent of the overall public-sector workforce.

There may be unique dynamics when unions are involved, but there are good reasons for jurisdictions without a union presence to pay attention to the worker concerns that surfaced during the walkout. Public-sector employment still remains below pre-pandemic levels.

One advantage that government employers have over private companies is that they offer workers the chance to make positive contributions to their communities. But when workers don't feel respected and valued by their government employers, it can increase job dissatisfaction. That, in turn, can impact the ability of cities to hire workers and fill the backlog of unfilled positions.

HOLLYWOOD GUILDS STRIKE

VARIETY

MOGUL MEMO: L.A. MAYOR CAN'T RESOLVE HOLLYWOOD STRIKES AT ARM'S LENGTH

By Andrew Wallenstein

Dear Mayor **Bass**,

I know this isn't the best day to reach out to you considering that as I type this, Los Angeles is being beset by the one-day walkout of more than 7,000 city employees seeking better working conditions. You did your best to put a positive spin on an ugly situation by ensuring

Angelenos the city was not going to shut down, and “we will continue bargaining in good faith.”

It's nice to see you taking such an active leadership role in dealing with the crisis. Unfortunately, it offers something of a contrast to your other local labor headache.

Surely, there is no one more shocked than you that after publicly insisting last Friday that the standoff between the AMPTP and the writers and actors guilds get “resolved immediately,” it became apparent that no such resolution would be happening anytime soon. The first powwow between the WGA and AMPTP in more than three months got contentious enough to see both sides retreat just as quickly as they came together, without making any progress.

Much as I would like to believe your demand for rapprochement would be enough to simply wish a settlement into existence, alas, it was not to be.

So much for hailing the mere decision to stage Friday's meeting an “encouraging development,” as you did. Less than a month ago, when SAG-AFTRA declared its own strike, you deemed it a “historic inflection point” in the first of what has been three statements you've issued on the subject to date.

But what really made me wince this time, Ms. Mayor, is a passage from your latest release: “I stand ready to personally engage with all the stakeholders in any way possible to help get this done.”

In comparison to the “continue bargaining” statement you made with regard to the city's labor walkout, there is something irritatingly passive about the construction of your sentence from Friday, particularly the phrase, “I stand ready.” It's an acknowledgement of your interest in getting involved — but also a confirmation that you aren't actually getting your hands dirty at this time.

It would be like a fireman standing in front of a burning building saying, “I am prepared to extinguish these flames” but not actually turning on the hose.

Maybe I'm not as wise to the ways of politics as I am those of showbiz. But I don't need to be Karl Rove to understand what you're trying to do here: At a time when Hollywood's dual strikes stand to drain billions of dollars from the local economy, you can't look like you're both not paying attention and expressing concern about the situation. A press release is the easiest way to keep your name linked to the strikes without actually having to roll up your sleeves and do something.

And maybe it's unfair to single you out, considering California Governor Gavin Newsom is essentially doing the same thing, publicly extending an offer to broker a deal but stopping short of doing so. And it's not like there's a rich tradition of your predecessors in office wading too far into the muck to help hash out past labor standoffs. Still, if you're going to try to score political points via press releases, you're opening yourself up to criticism that is only going to intensify the longer you stay out of the game.

And the more these strikes drag on, the more I think it will take not a consummate industry insider but perhaps a true outsider — like, oh, I don't know, the mayor of Los Angeles — to be the neutral arbiter Hollywood desperately needs to mediate this crisis.

It's OK if you don't want to take sides, but it's not OK to sit on the sidelines. There's just too much at stake for Los Angeles' financial health not to stick your nose in there.

Now, I'm not saying I think you're not engaged in the issue; it's clear you are in touch with people on both sides of the negotiation table. But that stops well short of what's needed here: a force of nature, someone who will bulldoze his or her way past the industry leaders who don't seem to do much leading and bang their heads together until a settlement is reached.

Hollywood desperately needs a hero right now, someone who is going to unite the warring factions, and we're way past the parlor game of who from the current crop of media luminaries will rise to the occasion. If it was any one of them, it would have been done by now. I tried to arm-twist Ted Sarandos in a “Mogul Memo” last month, but he has yet to heed my call. (It's not too late, Ted — go for it!)

I know it's probably not easy to penetrate the clubby likes of the showbiz veterans presiding over this mess. But having the likes of Jeffrey Katzenberg as an adviser, as you do, is just what you need to help navigate this insular environment.

It's clear you know your way around unions. Back in March, you scored a big win by helping secure raises for support staff at the LA Unified School District after their own three-day strike. Just last week, you successfully led negotiations with the LAPD to approve new pay packages.

Unfortunately, Hollywood can't wait until other stalemates end. You've made your feelings about the entertainment industry's strikes known; now it's time to kick it up to the next step. Resist the urge to issue another press release unless it's citing an actual action you've taken to break this logjam.

CNBC

Hollywood strikes have already had a \$3 billion impact on California's economy, experts say: It's causing 'a lot of hardship'

BY Jennifer Liu

The TV and film writers' strike has crossed 100 days since the Writers Guild of America and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers failed to reach an agreement on a new contract, and it's likely to have cost the California economy at least \$3 billion so far.

That's according to estimates from Todd Holmes, a professor of entertainment industry management at Cal State Northridge, based on economic analysis from the last Writers Guild of America strike that started in 2007. That strike led to 37,700 lost jobs and a \$2.1 billion blow to the California economy, according to the Milken Institute, an economic think tank.

Holmes took that \$2.1 billion figure and adjusted it for inflation and other factors to come to a new strike-induced loss of upwards of \$3 billion for the state of California today.

It's likely to be even higher now accounting for the additional members of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, the union which represents various performers, joining picket lines in July.

Widespread impacts from restaurants to real estate
The strikes don't impact just writers or actors.

Halted productions impact all kinds of businesses, including companies that provide catering for productions, restaurants near studios, prop houses, set builders, dry cleaners, professional drivers, florists and more.

"A lot of different people are impacted surrounding the industry," Holmes says, "and it's causing them a lot of hardship."

People who hold entertainment jobs and entertainment-adjacent roles account for almost 20% of the LA-area income, says Lee Ohanian, an economics professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

"The economic impact is even bigger because average compensation in the industry is considerably higher" than the average earner, he tells CNBC Make It.

That can have a big downstream effect if those workers pull back on their discretionary spending, especially for big purchases like buying a car or a home. In one high-profile instance, actor Billy Porter said in an interview with Evening Standard he is selling his house to save money during the strikes.

A housing crunch could push rent prices higher and cause lower earners to leave the state, said Kevin Klowden, lead author of the Milken report, according to LA Times reporting: "We saw an exodus in the last writers' strike," he said.

Across the state, some 700,000 people are employed in entertainment jobs, or close to 5% of the California workforce, Ohanian says.

How long could the strike last

Some experts say the current strike could set the record for the longest writers' strike in Hollywood history. A 1988 strike lasted 22 weeks, while the strike in 1960 (also the last time writers and actors were both on strike) lasted 21 weeks. Now entering its 15th week, the current strike would surpass both of those records if it goes on until mid-October.

"I could easily see that being broken," says Ohanian. "Typically, workers have less of an economic cushion than the corporate side, so oftentimes in long strikes the unions tends to cave. But thus far, we're not seeing that, and this could certainly reach the six-month mark."

If strikes last until October, Holmes estimates the economic cost will total closer to \$4 billion to \$5 billion.

"With the dual strikes, if it were to go beyond that into November, that estimate would be closer to \$5 billion-plus," Holmes says.

Why this strike could break records: Union solidarity versus disjointed studios

On Friday, WGA leaders met with negotiators for the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which represents Hollywood studios and streamers, for the first time since the strike began May 2. However, the two parties reached a stalemate over two key proposals to establish minimum staffing levels in episodic TV and a guaranteed minimum number of weeks of employment.

The union also confirmed it's seeking the right to honor other unions' picket lines, meaning even if WGA gets a deal, writers will still want to honor striking SAG members, and work won't resume until both strikes are resolved, Variety reports. The WGA represents 11,500 members, while SAG-AFTRA represents roughly 160,000 members.

However, "as united as writers and actors are, it's more disjointed on the studio side," Holmes says. That's because, in addition to traditional studios like Disney and Warner Bros. Discovery, the AMPTP represents tech companies like Amazon and Apple that have changed the landscape with streaming.

For these tech companies, the production and entertainment slice of their business is a much smaller piece of what they do, Holmes says, so it's going to be easier for them to hold off on negotiating a deal compared with traditional studios where a work stoppage may have a bigger impact on their bottom line.

Both Holmes and Ohanian are interested to see how politicians respond to the strike, which could determine its end.

For example, in March, LA Mayor Karen Bass publicly stepped in to mediate between school workers of the SEIU Local 99 and the Los Angeles Unified School District, with leaders from both parties praising the mayor for being "a partner" who had been present "incessantly" to broker the agreement, the LA Times reports.

Holmes expects to see more consistent statements from Bass and California Gov. Gavin Newsom about reaching a resolution to end the strikes. Both are likely to lean on messaging about how the strikes are impacting ancillary workers (the caterers and set-builders, for example) who aren't involved in current negotiations, Ohanian says.

"They could be a quasi representative for all the people affected indirectly in the industry," he says.

On Friday, Los Angeles mayor Karen Bass called for an "immediate" resolution of the strikes and stated she is "ready to personally engage

with all the stakeholders in any way possible to help get this done," Variety reports. **Bass** did not take sides in the negotiations but said the resolution must be "fair and equitable," and that "the economic conditions of the entertainment industry are changing, and we must react and evolve to this challenge."

One complicating factor will be how **Bass** and Newsom make their statements with consideration to their donors. While both are invested in support from unions as well as writers and actors, they also receive donor funding from studio heads represented by the AMPTP.

"They're trying to mediate a fight between two of their kids, and any deviation from purely neutral will be viewed as damaging to the other side," Ohanian says. "I still think they can help the two sides understand where they're coming from, but it's extremely complex."

MY NEWS LA

Writers Strike Now 100 Days Old, Matching 2007-08 Walkout; No End in Sight

With no end in sight, the Writers Guild of America strike marked its 100th day Wednesday, matching the duration of the union's last walkout in 2007-08.

There has been little to no movement toward a resolution of the walkout that began May 2, despite a glimmer of hope last week when union leaders met briefly with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers — which represents Hollywood studios — to discuss a possible resumption of contract negotiations.

That meeting, however, failed to yield any positive results. According to a message sent by the WGA negotiating team to union members after the session, the sides remain at loggerheads on several key issues — including success-based residuals for streaming content. Negotiators said the studios appear willing to increase some compensation levels and are at least "willing to talk" about the use of artificial intelligence.

The meeting ended, however, with no word of renewed labor talks or any indication that walkout will end in the near future.

There was no official comment after the meeting from the AMPTP.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass** issued a statement Friday afternoon urging a full resumption of contract talks so a "fair and equitable" resolution can be reached to resolve strikes that continue "to have profoundly negative impacts on our economy and many of our community members."

"The impact has spanned every corner of Los Angeles — from the writers and actors on the picket line trying to make ends meet to keep a roof over their head and food on the table, to businesses who rely on the entertainment industry," **Bass** said.

"The economic conditions of the entertainment industry are changing — and we must react and evolve to this challenge. It is critical that this gets resolved immediately so that Los Angeles gets back on track and I stand ready to personally engage with all the stakeholders in any way possible to help get this done."

The mayor told KNX News on Wednesday that she has met with WGA officials and is "keeping in constant communication with everyone," although she would not elaborate on those efforts, citing a desire to keep the talks confidential.

But she seemed to express some optimism, saying she thinks a resolution can be reached.

"I don't believe it will go another hundred days. I do not," **Bass** told KNX. "It really cannot go another hundred days. You think about the entertainment industry and the rippling effect in our economy. There are obviously the people that are members of the WGA, or members of SAG-AFTRA, but there are thousands of ancillary businesses that are all impacted."

The last WGA strike, which lasted from November 2007 to February 2008, was estimated to have cost the local economy between \$2 billion and \$3 billion.

The impact of the current walkout is expected to be far worse, with the WGA now joined by actors on the picket lines for the first double-barreled strike to hit Hollywood in 63 years. The SAG-AFTRA actors union went on strike July 14.

Last Thursday, the WGA negotiating committee sent an email to its members challenging studios to abandon an "anti-union playbook" and offer writers a fair deal. The studios shot back, calling the union rhetoric "unfortunate," insisting its "only playbook is getting people back to work."

In its Thursday message to union members, the WGA negotiating committee praised writers' resolve and blasted suggestions the walkout was having limited impact on studios due to content stockpiles held by streaming services, and that a protracted strike might be "good for the companies financially" because they can "write off their losses."

"This is calculated disinformation about the real impact of the ongoing strikes," according to the WGA statement.

The negotiating committee warned the AMPTP not to repeat tactics of the 2007-08 writers strike, which the union contends was an effort to "spread dissent" through the media.

"We won't prejudge what's to come. But playbooks die hard," according to the WGA statement. "So far, the companies have wasted months on their same failed strategy. They have attempted, time and time again, through anonymous quotes in the media, to use scare tactics, rumors and lies to weaken our resolve."

The AMPTP issued a statement in response, saying Friday's discussion with the WGA was to "determine whether we have a willing bargaining partner. The WGA bargaining committee's rhetoric is unfortunate."

"This strike has hurt thousands of people in this industry, and we take that very seriously," according to the AMPTP. "Our only playbook is getting people back to work."

The WGA is pushing for improvements on a variety of fronts, notably for higher residual pay for streaming programs that have larger viewership, rather than the existing model that pays a standard rate regardless of a show's success.

The union is also calling for industry standards on the number of writers assigned to each show, increases in foreign streaming residuals and regulations preventing the use of artificial intelligence technology to write or rewrite any literary material.

The AMPTP has pushed back against some of the WGA's demands, particularly around its calls for mandatory staffing and employment guarantees on programs. AMPTP has also pushed back against WGA demands around streaming residuals, saying the guild's offer would increase rates by 200%.

The use of artificial intelligence has emerged as a major topic. The WGA says it wants a ban on the use of AI, and contends the AMPTP has refused to even negotiate the issue. The AMPTP said the issue raises "important creative and legal questions" and requires "a lot more discussion, which we've committed to doing."

MIGRANTS CAL MATTERS

Karen Bass sees bused migrants as humans. Greg Abbott sees them as pawns in his overstated crisis

BY JIM NEWTON

Even with border encounters sharply down this year, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott has so far sent seven buses of asylum seekers to Los Angeles to make a disgraceful and cynical point about the country's immigration debate.

The first bus pulled into Los Angeles on June 14. It carried 43 men, women and children. They had arrived days earlier in Texas, presented themselves to authorities and asked for asylum in the United States. There, state officials, who have no jurisdiction in immigration matters, put them on buses and sent them to Los Angeles.

The second bus pulled into Los Angeles on July 1 with 41 passengers aboard. The third on July 13. The fourth on July 18. All told, seven buses so far have made the trip to L.A., bringing a total of 283 people from the Texas border to the nation's second-largest city. They have come from around the world: Colombia, Chile, Peru, Venezuela, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Brazil, Haiti, El Salvador, Cuba, China, Cameroon and, of course, Mexico.

The reception given these migrants in Texas and in Los Angeles could not be more different. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott has done everything possible to make these people feel unwanted, placing buoys and razor wire in the Rio Grande to make entry dangerous – even lethal – and his office has instructed authorities to withhold food and water from the families trying to make their way to safety.

In Los Angeles, Mayor Karen Bass and her administration regard those migrants as people in need of help rather than as a blight to be eliminated.

When the busloads arrive in Los Angeles, they are met by the "LA Welcomes Collective," which provides the services that Abbott's administration deliberately denies. The asylum seekers barely exit the bus before they are given a quick medical check and offered food, water and hygiene kits. Volunteer lawyers brief them on their legal rights, and they are quizzed about family who might take them in.

Travel is arranged for those who have connections in the United States, whereas those without a place to go are offered shelter until more permanent arrangements can be made. Volunteers give toys to bedraggled and bewildered children, some as young as 4 months old.

What is perhaps most notable about this shuffle is the fact that these migrants arrive unannounced. There is no call from Abbott's office to say a busload is on its way, no coordination between the Texas governor who ships people like cattle and the local authorities who take on the responsibility of caring for those they regard as human beings seeking safety and opportunity of America.

If this were genuinely an attempt to share resources and responsibly address the issues that arise from people crossing the border, officials in different states would be working together. The fact that there is no such effort speaks volumes to what is really going on.

This is not an effort to address immigration but rather a political opportunity. In fact, border encounters – contacts between law enforcement and migrants – are sharply down this year, dropping from 252,000 last December to 145,000 in June. Moreover, the largest number of those in the country illegally settle in California already, so shipping migrants from Texas to California isn't some cynical form of burden-sharing.

What's ratcheted up in recent months is not the problem itself but rather Abbott's exploitation of it. The governor dispatched the first buses of migrants to Washington, D.C., in September 2022 to Vice President Kamala Harris' house. He has expanded his program over the past year, directing thousands of immigrants to New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Denver and Los Angeles.

"Texas' small border towns remain overwhelmed and overrun by the thousands of people illegally crossing into Texas from Mexico because of President Biden's refusal to secure the border," Abbott said after announcing the first bus to L.A. "Los Angeles is a major city that migrants seek to go to, particularly now that its city leaders approved its self-declared sanctuary city status."

Abbott is correct that Los Angeles recently declared itself a sanctuary city, but a word about that is in order: Immigrants who are in Los Angeles illegally are not protected from deportation. In 1979, Los Angeles' famously – or infamously, some would say – conservative police

chief Daryl F. Gates barred LAPD officers from acting as immigration authorities, preventing them from inquiring about a person's immigration status or stopping them solely on suspicion of being in the country illegally.

That was intended not to offer sanctuary but to encourage cooperation with police – to come forward as witnesses, for instance.

The L.A. City Council recently expanded on that notion, and Los Angeles does not spend any city resources to enforce immigration law. But that's in part a recognition that immigration is enforced by the federal government, not the city. Migrants who live in Los Angeles illegally are subject to deportation, just as they are in Brownsville, Texas.

Abbott's work, then, adds to the challenges that **Bass** already faces in governing Los Angeles, and for no apparent gain other than to bring the Texas governor a little attention and strengthen his credentials with those who demonize immigrants, fantasize a border crisis and award points for cruelty.

"This is a political strategy to make Democratic cities look like they're helpless," **Bass** recently told me. It is coordinated and amplified by the helpful ideologues at Fox News, she added, noting that the bottom line is to "make sure that things get worse" and that Democrats get blamed.

Gov. Gavin Newsom agrees. He believes in borders and is frustrated by illegal immigration, too. California, after all, is home to 2.7 million people without legal status – more than Texas and Florida combined.

But he sensibly pointed out that throwing people onto a Greyhound bus hardly solves anything.

"I get why people are upset about this, and they have a right to be," Newsom told me in an interview this spring. "But they shouldn't be upset with state and local governments and elected officials who are trying to keep people healthier, safer and more educated."

Abbott's bus campaign – which Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has played along with, too – is just ramping up in Los Angeles, but its full effects are more visible in New York City, where buses have been arriving for months. There, Mayor Eric Adams has buckled under the amount of people pouring into the city – some 79,000 in total. Like Los Angeles, New York has tried to manage those arrivals with compassion, but the influx has overwhelmed city services.

Immigrants in New York are sleeping in shelters and even parks. As with Los Angeles, officials are trying to connect the new arrivals to loved ones in the United States, and even those efforts have brought Adams some grief. One especially dense piece in *Politico* equated Adams' relocation of 114 migrant households – some in Florida and Texas – to the influx of some 9,700 migrants that Abbott has sent to New York, calling Adams' efforts "something similar" to those of Abbott.

That's just bad reporting, but it's evidence that Abbott's campaign is working, at least to some extent, as Adams' response to the Texas governor's provocations has left him politically isolated: He's angry at President Biden for not offering more help at the same time that he's furious with Abbott for keeping up the bus parade.

Bass, by contrast, has focused her ire on Abbott. That may help preserve her relations with the White House, which is important to **Bass** on a number of levels. Just as importantly, it separates **Bass** from Abbott's deplorable political gamesmanship, a charade that ignores the humanity of those crossing the border and reduces those men and women – and their children – to talking points in America's cynical immigration debate.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

LA TIMES

Ship Alaska's homeless population off to California? They say no way, 'Alaska's my home'

BY HAILEY BRANSON-POTTS

ANCHORAGE — A man clutching a roll of toilet paper barreled toward Mayor Dave Bronson.

He pointed to the portable toilets the city had just installed at the sprawling homeless encampment the mayor was visiting.

There were just four toilets for hundreds of people. They often overflow with feces, said the 46-year-old man, who gave his name as Joel.

Bronson promised to bring more toilets. Then he pivoted to his latest idea: offering homeless people in Anchorage a one-way ticket to warmer cities — such as Los Angeles — this winter.

"Hey, let me ask you something," Bronson began. "If I offered you an airline ticket—"

"I wouldn't take it!" Joel yelled. "Alaska's my home. How dare you? How dare you!"

"What I want to see is you people take your head out of your a— and figure this sh— out."

The mayor's grand scheme to solve one of urban America's most intractable problems wasn't going over so well.

Bronson's unfunded plan to fly homeless people out has become a major flashpoint in Anchorage, which, like cities across the West, is grappling with a burgeoning homelessness crisis and a lack of both emergency shelters and affordable housing.

In May, the city closed a mass shelter at the Sullivan Arena, a sports venue that housed upward of 500 people during cold months. It had been operating on and off as an emergency shelter since 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Bronson said it needed to return to hosting hockey games and rock concerts.

After the Sullivan closed, homeless camps in Anchorage's parks and greenbelts exploded in size. Hundreds of people live outdoors in this city of 288,000, and officials currently have no plans for a new winter shelter.

During a point-in-time census in January, Anchorage recorded 1,760 people staying on the streets and in overnight shelters — up from 1,494 in 2022.

So far this year, at least 31 people believed to be homeless have died outdoors in Anchorage, surpassing last year's record high of 24, said Alexis Johnson, the city's homelessness coordinator.

Most died from drug overdoses, especially from fentanyl, she said. Some froze to death.

Winter in Alaska's largest city brings months of subfreezing temperatures. Days have almost no sunlight.

This summer has been rainy — leading to a lot of foot injuries for unhoused people who can't keep dry — and all of the shelters in Anchorage have been running at capacity, said Jessica Parks, chief operating officer for the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness.

Last week, Bronson, wearing a suit and tie, walked among scores of tents on the grassy, city-owned lot on Third Avenue, which has become one of Anchorage's biggest encampments. Recently, he said, a camper threatened him with a hatchet.

The plane ticket idea, he said, was an "act of desperation."

"You've got something we don't have," he told a Times reporter, referencing sunny Southern California. "You've got good weather all year long."

Told that homeless people in Los Angeles increasingly are dying on the streets from heat-related illnesses, he responded: "What are we supposed to do?"

Last year, the Salvation Army offered tickets out of Anchorage to a few homeless people who could prove they had family or friends to stay with elsewhere.

Bronson wants to greatly expand such efforts and plans to ask the Anchorage Assembly, the city's governing body, for around \$50,000 for a relocation program. Homeless people could choose to go anywhere in the Lower 48 — preferably somewhere warmer, such as California — or elsewhere in Alaska.

A ticket to L.A., he said, is cheaper than paying about \$100 per person per day for shelter and food.

Bronson, a conservative Republican, swore he wasn't picking on the Golden State. But he added that he had read the book "San Fransicko: Why Progressives Ruin Cities," which blames California's liberal leaders for the state's homelessness crisis.

"I don't want to get the folks of L.A. mad at me," he said. "I don't want the mayor mad at me."

It is not new for cities to buy one-way bus or plane tickets to ship homeless people out of town. One such program, called Homeward Bound in San Francisco, was started by Gov. Gavin Newsom in 2005, when he was the city's mayor. Portland, Ore., had a similar program. So did Pomona.

But Bronson's pitch comes at a time when the movement of vulnerable people to other places is a political lightning rod.

Last year, Republican governors in Texas, Arizona and Florida began busing and flying asylum-seeking migrants to Democratic strongholds to protest liberal immigration policies. Texas Gov. Greg Abbot has sent more than 200 migrants to Los Angeles since June.

"Republicans want to tell a false story that Democratic-run cities are falling apart," Zach Seidl, a spokesman for Mayor Karen Bass, told The Times last month in response to Bronson's plan. "But in reality, these ridiculous stunts just show the difference between leaders who confront crises by rolling up their sleeves to address issues and leaders who confront crises by rolling over to shift the problem."

Seidl said Wednesday that Bronson had not contacted Bass.

Los Angeles County already has more than 75,500 unhoused people — a number that has grown more than 70% since 2015, despite hundreds of millions of dollars spent on shelter, permanent housing, outreach and campsite cleanups.

In Anchorage, the city government has been working closely with local nonprofits to buy hotels and convert them to housing. But squabbling between the mayor and the more liberal Assembly has slowed efforts to address the homelessness crisis.

Bronson, a former U.S. Air Force and commercial airline pilot, took office in 2021. He was narrowly elected, riding a wave of support from conservative voters who were, like him, opposed to coronavirus mask and vaccine mandates.

He is now up for reelection and is no stranger to controversy. He once spoke in defense of anti-maskers who wore yellow Stars of David with the words "Do Not Comply" to an Anchorage Assembly meeting. He later apologized. He briefly shut off fluoride in the city's water system until he realized it was required by law.

Last summer, Bronson's administration closed the shelter at the Sullivan Arena and bused homeless people to a city-run campground in Centennial Park frequented by bears.

The campsite borders the Chugach Mountains and the U.S. Army's and Air Force's Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson — a wooded facility so well-known for its ursine visitors it is nicknamed J-BEAR.

Last summer, state wildlife authorities killed five black bears after they broke into homeless people's tents in the park. The city eventually shut down the campsite and reopened the Sullivan shelter.

Last fall, the Assembly nixed Bronson's plans for a new insulated, tentlike structure that would have sheltered up to 150 people. Construction stopped after Bronson's administration gave the contractor the go-ahead to spend millions of dollars to start building — without approval from the Assembly, which is required by law.

"Anchorage is facing a massive under-investment from the feds and the state that is leaving the local government holding the bag," said Christopher Constant, Assembly chairman. "And we are struggling and fighting each other, trying to find a solution to a problem that needs outside funding."

Constant doubts the Assembly will approve funding for airline tickets. The idea, he said, has "racist overtones" because more than 40% of Anchorage's unhoused population are Indigenous people whose families have been in Alaska for thousands of years.

"If we're talking about a \$50,000 investment in plane tickets, we're talking about a massive deportation," Constant said.

On a sunny morning last week, Thraine Katchatag carried a plate of potatoes, biscuits and gravy from a nearby rehab facility back to the tent he shares with a friend in the Third Avenue encampment. He laughed when asked whether he would take a plane ticket.

"I will never leave Alaska," he said. "This is my state."

Katchatag, 67, is Native Alaskan — Athabaskan and Iñupiat — from Shaktoolik, a village of about 200 people on a narrow, fast-eroding sand spit on the Bering Sea.

The village bans the sale and importation of alcohol. Katchatag, a carpenter, said he came to Anchorage in 2018 because "the village is dry, and I like to drink."

He spent part of last winter at the former Sockeye Inn, a hotel that was converted to a homeless shelter run by Catholic Social Services and is geared toward older adults and people with health and mobility issues. Katchatag said he was kicked out because he had to be taken three days in a row to a city-funded sleep-off center to sober up after he was intoxicated in public.

Nancy Cabinboy, 40, sat on a rock nearby, nursing a bloody knee she got by falling off a bicycle.

She is Siberian Yupik and Iñupiat, originally from Nome. She said she lost her children — she didn't say when or why — and life just got hard.

If the mayor offered her a plane ticket, she wouldn't know where to go.

"I've never left Alaska before," Cabinboy said. Maybe she'd try Mexico or Las Vegas. Somewhere warm. Somewhere different.

"I'm just trying to get my life going, you know?" Cabinboy said. "It's been a really rough time."

She spent last winter at the Sullivan, where she always worried that someone would steal her belongings. She doesn't know what she'll do this year.

The encampment is on the vacant lot where the Alaska Native Medical Center — severely damaged in a magnitude 9.2 earthquake in 1964 — once stood.

There is no running water. In the summer, the sun shines 22 hours a day, making it hard to sleep. Noise from the nearby railroad tracks, military jets flying overhead, music blasting from tents, and people fighting is constant.

One campsite, where a busted recreational vehicle was parked next to a tent, was strewn with children's toys. A pink tricycle. A plastic shopping cart. A Little Tykes toddler slide.

A man emerged, carrying a toddler. A child with long blond hair and dirty cheeks, probably 6 or 7, peeked out from behind a tarp then darted into the RV.

Sitting on a wooden pallet a few feet away, Ane Opetaiia, 38, who works as a hotel housekeeper and stays at the camp, said she was appalled by the mayor's idea.

"They'd send us to L.A.?" she asked, laughing. "How about sending us to hell and back? Los Angeles? This is Los Anchorage."

Her friend, Lae, a 30-year-old woman originally from Hawaii who would not give her full name, smoked a cigarette and shook her head in disgust.

Lae has the Fifth Commandment, "Honor Thy Father and Mother," tattooed on her arm. She grinned as she pulled a large hatchet from her tent. She uses it to cut weeds. And for protection.

"Can you make our story seem happy?" she asked. "F— the mayor."

She had another idea for Bronson. "There's days where we don't eat nothing," she said. "The mayor should send us some pizza."

John Tatham, who has run a custom printing business across the street since 1986, said the camp has never been this big.

His delivery van was recently stolen. He's found people sleeping in the parking lot and had people "taking a dump in our doorway."

Last week, Tatham, 75, heard several gunshots in the camp and watched a car speed out of there.

City leaders, he said, have largely been inept.

"You're not going to solve it from behind a desk," he said. "You're going to have to get out there, roll up your sleeves, and engage with these people so you can separate the people who are truly homeless and truly needy and looking for a solution from the ones who are just taking advantage of the services."

For those who truly want it, he said, a plane ticket wouldn't be a bad option.

CENTER SQUARE

LA's 'Inside Safe' hotels for homeless program costs \$17K per month per person

By Kenneth Schrupp

(The Center Square) - New data released by the City of Los Angeles suggests Mayor Karen **Bass's** signature "Inside Safe" homelessness reduction policy, which pays for hotel rooms for homeless individuals as they search for longer term housing, costs \$17,009 per individual per month.

Inside Safe, which received a \$250 million boost in the fiscal year 2023-2024 budget, has social workers offer homeless individuals living on the streets free stays at hotels as they transition them into longer-term housing.

Having spent \$32,619,694 through June 30, 2023 on 57,533 nights of rooms in hotels, the cost per homeless individual served comes out to \$567 per night, or \$17,009 per month. Notably, these costs include Los Angeles Police Department security for "encampment cleanup support," Los Angeles Department of Transportation for moving participants, Los Angeles County Homeless Services Authority assistance for homeless outreach and the offering of housing, and services for program participants such as 24/7 monitoring and food.

At the program's current retention rates, roughly one in six individuals who enter the program exit, choosing to return to the streets. Despite tens of millions spent, only 1,463 individuals have been served, 1,105 of whom are in the program's short-term housing, 108 of whom have entered permanent housing, and 250 of whom have either left the program entirely or are "served from the streets" and maintain some form of contact with a social worker but are no longer housed.

Of the \$250 million Los Angeles expects to spend on Inside Safe for fiscal year 2023-2024, \$92 million is for hotel rentals, \$18 million is for damage to hotels from program participants, \$6 million for staff bringing people in, \$16 million for case management in hotels and helping people find housing, \$16 million for overhead, \$10 million for resident monitors at each hotel, \$13 million (or \$21 per individual per day) for food, \$1 million for participant belonging storage, \$13 million for move-in subsidies to longer term housing, \$18 million in rental assistance (two years per participant at \$1833 per month), and \$47 million (\$31 million of which is from state funding) for purchasing and operating hotels as Inside Safe projects.

BEVERLY PRESS

Opponents voice concerns over 5th District housing

Los Angeles City Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky, 5th District, is making efforts to better inform constituents about a new interim housing project at Pico Boulevard and Midvale Avenue in Westwood after a group of 15-20 opponents disrupted a meeting on the project on Aug. 3 at Temple Isaiah.

Yaroslavsky and Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass** attended the community meeting, along with approximately 100 people, at the synagogue at 10345 W. Pico Blvd. They were outlining the interim housing proposal when a group began booing and jeering. A video filmed by an unnamed person in the crowd shows the disruption. The video was posted on social media by Westside For Everyone, a volunteer grassroots group working for more inclusive housing on the Westside. Some of the opponents wore blue tape over their mouths to illustrate that they feel they were being silenced.

City officials and Temple Isaiah leaders attempted to calm the opponents, and **Bass** said the meeting would be canceled if order was not restored. Shortly afterward, the crowd quieted and the meeting continued as Yaroslavsky outlined the project and answered questions. The councilwoman also held a Zoom meeting on the project on Aug. 6 attended by approximately 250 people.

"It was unfortunate, because most of the people who were there were really there to learn more and to have their questions answered, and a small number of people made it hard for others to get that information, which was disappointing," Yaroslavsky said. "It was loud in the beginning, but once people quieted down and others were able to have their questions asked and answered, I think we were able to clarify and mitigate some of people's concerns."

The interim housing proposal calls for approximately 30 beds to be created on a city-owned parking lot at Pico Boulevard and Midvale Avenue. The goal is to house homeless individuals while permanent housing is built or identified, and they can be linked with city services. Because the city owns the lot, the project does not require planning commission or City Council approval. Yaroslavsky said interim housing is sorely lacking in the 5th Council District, and she hopes to open the site in 2024. Opponents of the project voiced concerns over transparency and a lack of information presented to the public about potential impacts at the site. Security and enforcement of rules preventing camping around the interim housing site were chief concerns.

The project will be constructed by LifeArk and will be operated by L.A. Family Housing, an organization that helps people transition out of homelessness. The site will have 24-hour security. Yaroslavsky said it is critical to create interim housing sites to ensure there are temporary shelters for homeless individuals entering the housing system. Because property values are high in the 5th District, the city is looking at locations where housing can be created on city property to reduce costs, she said.

"As I said before, my district is the only district in all of Los Angeles that doesn't have any general population adult beds, and so we get calls all the time from constituents and businesses, especially in that neighborhood, with complaints wanting us to clear an encampment," Yaroslavsky said. "As a candidate for office, I said we need to be offering people credible offers of housing. Otherwise, we'll just move them from one sidewalk to another. So these beds are part of a larger strategy to bring beds online across the district and the city."

Scott Epstein, former chair of the Mid City West Neighborhood Council and current policy and research director for the nonprofit Abundant Housing L.A., attended the meeting at Temple Isaiah and said the tension at the beginning was palpable. He supports the project at Pico and Midvale because it will create housing. Epstein said he also understands the public's desire to be part of the planning process and added that the meeting was a chance to be heard.

"I think the meeting was well publicized. It was announced on multiple platforms," Epstein added. "Could more have been done? I guess more could be done, but I think there [should be a] balance between public engagement and urgency. It's important to understand the sample of people you see at these meetings is not representative of the public at large."

Brad Kane, president of the South Carthay Neighborhood Association, did not attend the meeting at Temple Isaiah, but said part of the problem is people feel there is not enough responsiveness from the council office. He believes some people felt like the project was already a "done deal" when Yaroslavsky presented it at the meeting, and their opinions didn't matter.

"Where is the dialogue with the community? Where is the conversation? This is one more thing that will get developed," Kane said. "It comes across as, 'we know better than you know.' The community wants to know how we can work together."

Yaroslavsky said her staff and the city worked to ensure that formal plans for the project existed before it was presented to the community.

"In terms of the process by which it was made public, it was important to us that we had thought through what we wanted to do before we went to the public, because we knew people would have questions, people would have concerns. We felt like it was important to be in a position to be far enough along that we can answer people's questions, to show that we really put in a lot of thought and effort," Yaroslavsky said. "Like I said to folks both on Thursday night in person and on the Zoom that we held on Sunday morning, this is the beginning of the process, and we're going to have plenty of opportunities for community input. We want to make sure that this is something that's a net positive for the community. I truly believe that a well-run housing development here will make the community safer, and it's on me and my team and L.A. Family Housing, who's going to be operating the facility, to really keep that promise."

Yaroslavsky's spokesman Leo Daube said people will have more opportunities to weigh-in on the project in the coming weeks. He also encouraged those who would like to provide additional input to email them to councilmember.yaroslavsky@lacity.org.

WESTSIDE CURRENT

Opinion: Yaroslavsky has made me a NIMBY

by Andrew Kahn, District 5 resident

WEST LA - On August 2, our LA City councilperson Katy Yaroslavsky announced plans to turn an "underutilized" parking lot in our neighborhood into a 30-unit tiny homes development. Ironically, her own father-in-law acquired the development site through eminent domain to turn it into a public parking lot because he believed that the northside of Pico at Midvale, previously a vacant lot slated to be a restaurant, both lacked adequate parking and blighted the neighborhood.

Our neighborhood has concerns about the project for several reasons. Pico and Westwood are the main commercial streets in the area and are only just starting to recover from COVID-induced vacancies, never mind that the Starbucks abutting the lot recently closed, in part, due to issues with homeless people. Our neighborhood, near Overland Avenue Elementary, Westwood Charter Elementary, Rancho Park, and the Westside Pavilion, is filled with young families that are already on edge because of a steep rise in troubling run-ins with homeless people. For example, one evening we heard scraping sounds outside our open front windows. When I went outside, I encountered a homeless man sitting on our porch chairs acting erratically. In another instance, my wife was confronted by another homeless man who struck her car window with a rock. She called the police and when they arrived the officers advised her to get a guard dog and a gun! A neighbor of ours recently found a homeless woman sleeping around the side of her house surrounded by needles and feces. Almost everyone has stories like these.

Former LA Controller Ron Galperin's office released a report last year that identifies twenty-six potential sites out of fourteen thousand City-owned properties that meet the minimum criteria for immediate homeless housing solutions. Those twenty-six sites offer nearly two million square feet of land to be repurposed for the unhoused. The parking lot at Pico and Midvale is not one of those sites.

I am all for big, bold initiatives to solve our homelessness crisis. I am a proud life-long democrat and have consistently voted to pass bond measures to fund housing. I am not against tiny homes. Heck, I do believe the folks in Venice are actually NIMBYs. But, if you were to take a quick driving survey of the westernmost part of Yaroslavsky's district, you would find that the overwhelming majority of homeless people are settled over a half mile away between the 405 and Sepulveda from Pico north to Santa Monica Boulevard, where it is exclusively commercial and industrial. They are not next to houses.

More troubling than all of this, however, is how Yaroslavsky has foisted this on our neighborhood and is trying to rush the project through with minimal community involvement, public transparency, or legitimate analysis. Between announcing the project on August 2nd via press release and telling us any opposition would be in vain on August 6th during a Zoom call, she held only two meetings to tell us about the project. Neither meeting was meant to be a discussion. No questions were invited let alone answered; the zoom call even disabled the chat and was a one-way "webinar." My working assumption is that Yaroslavsky has done the election math, and concluded that her margin of victory from this past election will more than make up for the votes from our neighborhood that she will lose in the next one. To everyone else in District 5 (and outside of the District), she will hail this as an accomplishment. You can already see the machinations in motion. Mayor Karen Bass and Mike Bonin are vocally defending Yaroslavsky as being "brave."

But, what about this is brave exactly? Is it brave to ignore your constituents' legitimate concerns, refuse to answer their questions, and tell them "too bad"? Is it brave to buck a traditional, consensus-building process that might unite a politician and her constituents behind a better project? Is it brave to do the lazy thing by adding thirty beds on a city-owned parking lot next to family homes and small businesses in lieu of a bigger initiative on industrial-zoned Sepulveda, where large populations of homeless individuals in this part of her district already reside?

Shame on you, Katy.

NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT **GOVERNING**

Big-City Mayors Are Getting Kicked Out of Schools BY Alan Greenblatt

In Brief:

Major cities such as New York, Chicago and Boston moved to mayoral control of schools in the 1990s. They pushed through some reforms, but many voters found their approaches heavy-handed. Only a dozen mayors are still responsible for schools, but almost all mayors still seek influence.

Chicago residents will get to do something next year that they haven't done since the 1990s. They will cast votes for members of the school board. Thirty years ago, Chicago was in the vanguard of major cities where mayors took direct control of schools. That idea is now in retreat.

Los Angeles, Detroit and Oakland, Calif., have already moved away from mayoral control of schools. In Boston, nearly 80 percent of voters approved a nonbinding resolution in 2021 to restore an independent school board, but Mayor Michelle Wu vetoed a proposal earlier this year from the City Council to do just that.

For the most part, running schools has come to be seen as a complicated endeavor that is just one plate too many to juggle for the person also in charge of parks, public health, transit, crime and much else. "What you're seeing is that the idea you can hold a mayor accountable at the ballot box for the performance of our schools has just not borne fruit," says Ricardo Arroyo, a member of the Boston City Council.

It's a dim memory at this point, but mayoral control of schools was a buzzy policy approach back in the 1990s. The experiment was ultimately run in only about two dozen major cities — there are just under a dozen where mayors are still in control — but they included some of the nation's largest districts. Michael Bloomberg and his handpicked Superintendent Joel Klein drew national attention for pushing competition in New York, while the embrace of charters in Washington, D.C., and other cities became the subject of a high-profile documentary.

The clout of mayors offered a counterweight both to teachers unions and sometimes stodgy educational bureaucracies. At least in some places. "When you had a strong mayor who was invested in it, it created coherence and a focus on school performance that was otherwise lacking in these big urban centers," says Frederick Hess, director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington.

That didn't happen everywhere. Not all mayors were as transparent about their plans for schools as elected school boards had been. Nor were all of them willing or able to take the political risks involved in driving real change. And it proved difficult to find compelling evidence that mayors running schools worked any miracles, compared with the performance of peer cities.

"In the scheme of things, how big were these impacts?" Hess asks. "It's hard to argue they were that big."

Problems With the Model

A couple of things are driving this move away from mayoral control. For instance, the changing racial and ethnic mix within many cities means many residents believe they will be better represented when they can vote for multiple members of a school board, rather than letting the mayor appoint everyone. "A school board can make everybody in the community feel like somebody is articulating their agenda, where you had folks who felt they were locked out of the mayor's agenda," Hess says.

There have been other downsides. Members of appointed school boards who've crossed swords with mayors on key decisions have found themselves booted out of office. Even as they sometimes seem to act as rubber stamps, they can also serve to insulate mayors from taking responsibility for unpopular decisions.

It's the school board who did it, not me, a mayor might say. "What makes an elected school committee more responsive is that the constituency believes it's working for them, rather than an appointed committee that essentially works for the mayor," Arroyo says.

Mayors Still Get a Say

When Phillip Jones took office as mayor of Newport News, Va., he knew he had no formal control over schools. Not only does his office not run the schools, he has no say at all about policy or priorities. But he understood that schools are essential to the health of his community, so he's done everything he can to prod them in the right direction. He intends to spend time this fall working as a substitute teacher to draw attention to classrooms and their needs.

"I have zero agency, but I have been the first mayor to attend school board meetings," Jones says. "I am deep in their budget. I am actively participating."

If contemporary mayors mostly don't want to be in charge of schools — and their constituents don't want that, either — that doesn't mean mayors will have no say. Schools are too important. They represent the biggest item in the typical city budget and are often the largest local employer. Months before Tuesday's one-day strike brought many city services to a halt in Los Angeles, Mayor Karen Bass stepped in to mediate a strike that shut down schools for several days.

Mayors concerned with schools are finding lots of other ways to make their wishes known. Some are pushing for specific policies, whether early childhood education or afterschool programs. Dozens of mayors have created children's cabinets meant to coordinate services for children and youth. All mayors spend plenty of time visiting schools and meeting with parents and school officials.

"Instead of direct, formal control, mayoral leadership is picking up through these other mechanisms," says Kenneth Wong, an education professor at Brown University. "Mayors are not shy to take on districtwide initiatives, but they're using cross-sector collaboration to support this work."

The idea that mayors were going to take over schools and save education has come to an end. Today's mayors have gone back to the old way of doing business, trying their best to make schools better while standing safely on the sidelines. And that's where voters seem to want them.

PUBLIC SAFETY

LA TIMES

LAPD officer arrested after stolen debit card used at home improvement store

BY RICHARD WINTON

A veteran Los Angeles police officer working in the jails has been arrested on suspicion of theft and fraud after a stolen debit card was used at a home improvement store.

Edmond Babaians, 42, who was assigned to the Custody Services Division, was booked on a felony warrant by the LAPD's internal affairs unit Tuesday.

A woman reported that her debit card was missing after she had been at a department facility. She told investigators several transactions had been made with the card, according to her bank statement, and she obtained security system photographs of a man using the card to make purchases at a home improvement store.

The woman turned over the images to LAPD investigators, who identified the theft suspect as Babaians, according to an LAPD statement.

A mugshot of Edmond Babaians in his police uniform

LAPD Officer Edmond Babaians. (LAPD)

While the department did not describe the fraudulent purchases, a felony warrant generally means theft of more than \$950.

"The allegations of an officer breaking public trust are extremely troubling, and there must be accountability," LAPD Chief Michel Moore said in a statement revealing the arrest late Tuesday.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass also emphasized the accountability of sworn officers.

"Our police officers must be held accountable to the highest standard," she said in a statement. "I want to acknowledge and thank Chief Moore and LAPD leadership for swiftly taking action on this serious matter."

She added that the Police Department's integrity "is of the utmost importance, and we must continue to act with transparency and accountability to build trust with all Angelenos"

Babaians has worked as an LAPD officer for 16 years. He was booked in LAPD's Valley Jail Section and later released on his own recognizance, a bail standard implemented by the Los Angeles County Superior Court for such an offense.

He was relieved of his police powers and was assigned to home pending the outcome of the LAPD's administrative and criminal investigation.

Moore said the Police Department is cooperating with the L.A. County district attorney's office, which will explore charges against the officer.

DAILY NEWS

LAPD officer arrested on suspicion of stealing, using debit card

BY CITY NEWS SERVICE

A Los Angeles police officer was arrested Tuesday, Aug. 8, on a felony warrant for burglary and theft of a debit card.

Officer Edmond Babaian, who was assigned to the Custody Services Division, which operates the department's jails, was booked in the department's Valley Jail Section and released on his own recognizance, according to the Los Angeles Police Department.

The department's Internal Affairs Division opened an investigation after a member of the public contacted the LAPD regarding a missing debit card that she recalled having inside a department facility and later noticed unauthorized transactions on her bank statement, police said.

The victim obtained photos of the person making purchases with her debit card at a home-improvement store and forwarded the pictures to the LAPD to identify the person using her card.

"The allegations of an officer breaking public trust are extremely troubling and there must be accountability," LAPD Chief Michel Moore said. "This department will fully cooperate with the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office in this matter."

Mayor Karen Bass issued a statement: "Our police officers must be held accountable to the highest standard. I want to acknowledge and thank Chief Moore and LAPD leadership for swiftly taking action on this serious matter. The integrity of our police department is of the utmost importance and we must continue to act with transparency and accountability to build trust with all Angelenos."

Babaian, a 16-year LAPD veteran, was relieved of his police powers and was assigned to his home pending the outcome of the department's administrative and criminal investigation.

LA WEEKLY

LAPD OFFICER ARRESTED FOR ALLEGEDLY STEALING A DEBIT CARD

BY ISAI ROCHA

An LAPD officer was arrested Tuesday for allegedly stealing and using a woman's debit card.

The LAPD Internal Affairs Division investigated the matter and put out a felony arrest warrant on Officer Edmond Babainas for burglary and theft after the woman complained about the card going missing.

"The allegations of an officer breaking public trust are extremely troubling and there must be accountability," LAPD Chief Michel Moore said in a statement. "This Department will fully cooperate with the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office in this matter."

The woman claims to have last seen the card while inside an LAPD location, later seeing transactions going through without her consent. The woman allegedly obtained photos of the officer making transactions with her card at a home improvement store and presented them to LAPD.

That is when LAPD identified the person using the card as Officer Babainas.

"Our police officers must be held accountable to the highest standard," Bass said in a statement. "I want to acknowledge and thank Chief Moore and LAPD leadership for swiftly taking action on this serious matter. The integrity of our police department is of the utmost importance and we must continue to act with transparency and accountability to build trust with all Angelenos."

Babainas was booked at LAPD Valley Jail and released under his own recognizance. He was been relieved of his duties until the criminal investigation is completed.

FOX LA

LAPD officer arrested for stealing woman's debit card

BY CITY NEWS SERVICE

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Babaian, a 16-year LAPD veteran, was relieved of his police powers and was assigned to his home pending the outcome of the department's administrative and criminal investigation.

ABC LA

LAPD officer arrested for allegedly stealing woman's debit card

A Los Angeles police officer was arrested on suspicion of stealing a woman's debit card.

Officer Edmond Babaians, who was assigned to the Custody Services Division, which operates the department's jails, was taken into custody Tuesday on theft and burglary charges.

The department's Internal Affairs Division opened an internal investigation after a member of the public contacted the LAPD regarding a missing debit card that she recalled having inside a department facility and later noticed unauthorized transactions on her bank statement, police said.

The woman later obtained photos of a man using the card at a home improvement store and turned them over to police. The person using the card was identified as Babaians, according to the LAPD.

"The allegations of an officer breaking public trust are extremely troubling and there must be accountability. This department will fully cooperate with the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office in this matter," said LAPD Chief Michel Moore.

Mayor Karen **Bass** issued a statement saying, "Our police officers must be held accountable to the highest standard. I want to acknowledge and thank Chief Moore and LAPD leadership for swiftly taking action on this serious matter. The integrity of our police department is of the utmost importance and we must continue to act with transparency and accountability to build trust with all Angelenos."

Babaians, a 16-year LAPD veteran, was relieved of his police powers and was assigned to his home pending the outcome of the department's administrative and criminal investigation.

TRADE, TRAVEL & TOURISM

THE NACION

A major airport in the United States has banned the sale of water in plastic bottles

Los Angeles airport, United States, last week banned the sale of water in plastic bottles to minimize waste and help care for the environment, the promoters of the measure reported. Thus, travelers will be able to buy water in sustainable containers, such as recyclable aluminum or glass.

"We encourage our travelers to help us reach our goal of eliminating airport plastic waste by bringing a reusable water bottle and filling it at one of our many hydration stations," said Los Angeles World Airports CEO (LAWA), Justin Erbacci, in a statement on the measure implemented since last month.

In addition, the statement released by the airport specified: "Single-use prepackaged plastic bottles of all sizes that contain purified water without gas and without flavor, spring water, mineral water, artesian water, well water, tap water and electrolyte-enhanced water are subject to the same policy."

This measure is part of a plan that dates back to June 2021, when the local government pushed to cut the use of plastic bottles and gave suppliers and the airport time to take the necessary measures. However, the ban does not apply to bottled water served on board a flight nor to carbonated or flavored drinks.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass** at the time had said that "phasing out single-use plastic water bottles at LAWA facilities" was an "important step to reduce environmental footprints and protect public health." and livelihood."

In fact, in recent years, airports around the world have increased the availability of water bottle refill stations. As early as 2019, the San Francisco airport banned the sale of single-use plastic water bottles and expanded the ban in 2021 to include additional beverages such as sodas and teas.

To: Carolyn Martin [REDACTED]@gmail.com]
Bcc: mayor.staff@lacity.org[mayor.staff@lacity.org]
From: mayor.staff@lacity.org
Sent: Wed 7/26/2023 2:59:07 AM
Subject: WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2023 MEDIA COVERAGE
Received: Wed 7/26/2023 2:59:52 AM

LOS ANGELES MAYOR KAREN BASS

METRO

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PUBLIC SAFETY

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[FORBES: Art On The Metro, Los Angeles' Moving Museum](#)
[2URBANGIRLS: South LA rail line tests theory of transit gentrification](#)

LOS ANGELES CITY GOVERNMENT

[LA TIMES: Marilyn Flynn, ex-USC dean in corruption case with Ridley-Thomas, sentenced to 3 years probation](#)
[ABC NEWS: Ex-USC dean sentenced to home confinement for bribery of Los Angeles County supervisor](#)

LOS ANGELES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

[LA TIMES: L.A. County Board of Supervisors meeting is temporarily shut down by protest](#)
[MY NEWS LA: LA County Supervisors to Consider Advancing Discrimination-Prevention Efforts](#)
[LA TIMES: L.A. County says phone calls will be free in all its jails by Dec. 1](#)
[DAILY BREEZE: Free calls for LA County jail inmates OK'd by Board of Supervisors](#)

[NBC LA: LA County board of supervisors to consider making inmate phone calls free](#)
[SPECTRUM NEWS: LA County Board of Supervisors to consider making inmate phone calls free](#)
[ABC LA: Inmate phone calls would be free under proposal to be considered by LA County Board of Supervisors](#)
[DAILY BREEZE: At what levels are 'forever chemicals' in drinking water? LA County supervisors want answers](#)
[SANTA CLARITA SIGNAL: Hahn proposes motion to investigate PFAS in L.A. County water](#)

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

[SPECTRUM NEWS: Diversion program offers solution to mental health crisis in LA County jails](#)
[LONG BEACH PRESS TELEGRAM: LA County probation officer charged with assaulting juvenile in custody in Malibu](#)
[ABC LA: LA County probation supervisor charged with assault, accused of excessive force in restraining teen](#)
[CBS LA: Los Angeles County probation officer charged with assault of teenager at Malibu juvenile camp](#)
[DAILY NEWS: Early troubles plague newly reopened Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall](#)

[ABC LA: Trans man's violent arrest under investigation by Los Angeles sheriff's department](#)

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[KTLA: Portion of Santa Monica bluffs appear in danger of falling onto PCH -](#)

[FOX LA: Part of Santa Monica Bluffs in danger of crumbling, falling onto PCH](#)

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[DAILY NEWS: Kaiser workers set to picket Southern California medical facilities](#)

[LA TIMES: Southern California will broil for the rest of the week. How hot could it get?](#)

SAG-AFTRA AND WRITERS GUILD STRIKE

[WASHINGTON POST: Will London Actors Turn Scab on Hollywood Pals?](#)
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[WEHOVILLE: UNITE HERE tastes power striking alongside Hollywood actors, writers](#)
[FOX LA: Snoop Dogg, Dr. Dre cancel Hollywood Bowl shows](#)
[NBC LA: Snoop Dogg scrubs Hollywood Bowl shows due to writers and actors strikes](#)
[CBS LA: Snoop Dogg cancels Hollywood Bowl show amid writers, actors strike](#)
[ABC LA: Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre cancel Hollywood Bowl shows in solidarity with SAG-AFTRA, WGA](#)
[GUARDIAN: 'It's unsustainable': can Hollywood survive without transformation?](#)
[MY NEWS LA: LACo Board Backs Striking Hollywood Workers, Looks to Help Impacted Businesses](#)
[DEADLINE: L.A. Board Of Supervisors Backs Striking Actors, Urges Studios To Return To Talks](#)
[LA TIMES: 'Jeopardy!' champions boycott tournament in solidarity with striking writers](#)
[DEADLINE: Stephen Colbert Hits Rain-Soaked NYC Rally To Support WGA, SAG-AFTRA & Animation Guild: "We Have To Win"](#)

MAYOR KAREN BASS

METRO

LA TIMES

Mayor Bass takes over Metro as it undergoes huge expansion, copes with low ridership and crime

BY RACHEL URANGA

Taking the helm of the board charged with the nation's second-largest transit system, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass on Monday laid out her priorities at a perilous moment for the agency.

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority is going through the largest expansion in generations, as ridership sags, unprovoked attacks on operators jumped and its promise of a "car-free" Olympics looms.

"Metro is truly an essential service, but for Los Angeles to thrive in fact, Los Angeles to survive in the future, Metro cannot be mostly a system of last resort. It must be a system of first choice," Bass said during her first "State of the Agency" address as board chair.

In a packed ticketing concourse hall at Union Station, Bass told a crowd of media, advocates, transit officials and workers that she will continue much of the work already in motion — including a plan to create 10,000 housing units on Metro property, speeding up the frequency of service on subway and light rail lines, and deploying more officers to stem crime.

Although ridership was ticking closer to pre-pandemic levels, it was “still nowhere near where we need to be with the Los Angeles today and certainly in the future,” she said.

“We must acknowledge that ridership is still down,” **Bass** said. “And the reduction is disproportionately among women, riders who report that they do not feel safe. And we must address the increase in human suffering that we have seen on our system.”

Almost 50 people have died on the system this year, she said. “This is an issue of life and death.”

As mayor, **Bass** has made reducing homelessness her top priority, including people using Metro’s stations, trains and buses for shelter. She said the agency is increasing homeless outreach workers and medical teams in the system. There will also be more officers deployed to the B and D lines and along certain bus routes where the most assaults are reported.

Two bus drivers were stabbed in the last three months. Metro Chief Executive Stephanie Wiggins repeated a pledge Monday that safety is her top priority. Last month the board took a step toward creating its own police force.

“We have an opportunity to create a department that from its inception is here with a holistic approach, one that shows that we respond urgently to crime, but that we prevent crime and deliver the necessary outreach and services,” **Bass** said.

Among those in the crowd was LAPD Chief Michel Moore, whose officers, along with Long Beach police and Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputies, patrol the Metro system at a cost of about \$173 million this year.

Although there were no new policy initiatives announced, the optimistic speech was the first time **Bass** spoke so comprehensively about her vision of Metro since taking a seat on the powerful board. **Bass**, who took over the chairmanship early this month, provided insight into where she will focus her attention.

Although the chair is a one-year position that rotates among the 13 board members, as mayor she controls four seats, giving her a large voting bloc that can push issues such as housing forward. In March, she appointed L.A. City Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky to replace former board member and Councilman Mike Bonin.

The other two seats she controls are occupied by Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker, founding president of the nonprofit Ward Economic Development Corp., and City Council President Paul Krekorian, who represents the San Fernando Valley. Both are holdovers from former Mayor Eric Garcetti.

Among the issues **Bass** will grapple with in her tenure as chair are congestion pricing on L.A.’s clogged freeways, whether and how to create a transit police force, and designating the final route for the C Line extension ending in Torrance.

“We are building up one of the world’s great metros, and if we do it right, if we run it right, the people will come and they will enjoy a world-class service befitting of our world-class region,” **Bass** said.

Coming out of the pandemic, the \$9-billion agency has struggled to restore a sense of safety on the rail lines and increase ridership. At the same time, it’s building out its public transit system ahead of the 2028 Olympics, with a massive infusion of tax dollars. Next year, the rail line connection to the airport is expected to open. And a line that connects downtown to the Westside is expected to open by 2027. But budget overruns have dogged construction projects, and safety issues interrupted work on the D Line.

Denny Zane, founder of MoveLA, said **Bass**’ optimism heartened and surprised him given the significant challenges ahead, including potential belt-tightening from Sacramento. The group helped build the coalition that sponsored Measures R and M, the largest source of local tax revenue for Metro projects.

“It’s clear she knows voters expect progress in the county’s ambitious transit program. But the voters also want the system returned to being safe, secure and reliable. She knows what she has to do and the complexity of the problem,” Zane said. “They have the leadership and the resources, but it’s a hell of a challenge.”

During her mayoral campaign, **Bass** vowed to make free transit a reality. She made no mention of it during her speech, but asked about it afterward, she said, “That is still a goal.”

“The question is what is the goal during my tenure of one year.”

One of those pushing for fareless transit was Oscar Zarate, director of organizing for Strategic Actions for a Just Economy. Sitting in the crowd, he said he was disappointed but hoping that **Bass** might resurrect the issue during the next board meeting.

“She committed to make sure that no Angeleno would ever have to pay for a bus or train again,” he said. “I think that really resonated with a lot of people in the community. I’m hoping that she mentions it at our first board meeting.”

DAILY NEWS

Karen Bass takes helm of Metro, focuses on more riders, safety and Olympics

By STEVE SCAUZILLO

In a ceremony inside Union Station’s historic ticketing hall on Monday, July 24, Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass** officially took over as chair of LA Metro and laid out an ambitious vision for the county’s transit agency.

Bass, who has been on the Metro board for seven months, wants to increase ridership; move the homeless off the trains, stations and buses; improve rider wait times and make the system safer for anxious residents who’ve abandoned mass transit due to crime concerns.

Ridership on the entire system reached about 900,000 boardings every weekday and has risen 11 of the 12 months in the last fiscal year, with ridership at about 77% of 2019 levels, Metro reported. Safety concerns, plus more employees working from home, has decreased commuter ridership, while weekend ridership has risen faster and is about 90% of pre-pandemic ridership.

"Ridership is still down and the reduction is disproportionately among women who report they do not feel safe," **Bass** said during her remarks made to an audience of about 500, including many Metro employees, elected officials and others, including LAPD Police Chief Michel Moore.

The emphasis on bringing back women who once rode the subways, light rails and buses but stopped was echoed by Third District Supervisor and Metro board member Lindsey Horvath.

"We absolutely want to make sure we are expanding ridership and making it safer for women," she said in an interview after the event. "Women have dropped off significantly because of perceived safety issues. We have to work on that."

Bass touted the 300 Metro Ambassadors — customer relations guides in green shirts who watch out for crime, report homeless sleeping on trains and work with Metro Transit Security and three law enforcement agencies patrolling the system: LAPD, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department and Long Beach Police Department.

As someone who has made finding housing for the homeless in Los Angeles a priority, **Bass** touched on the issue of the unhoused and safety. "Almost 50 people have died on the Metro system last year," she said, calling for Metro to build homeless navigation hubs where lines terminate after midnight, forcing homeless riders to disembark.

She also called for Metro to use its surplus land for housing projects. She set a goal for Metro to increase building housing by tenfold, half of which would be low-income housing.

Fourth District Supervisor Janice Hahn, who is first vice president of Metro, said Metro under **Bass's** leadership has already started to "clear out the bureaucratic red tape" that will help the agency reach a goal of 10,000 new affordable housing units in the next eight years.

Bass also noted that Metro is considering switching to an all-Metro police force that would include dropping contracts with the three law enforcement agencies. More law enforcement and Metro Transit Security officers have been deployed on the B and D subways lines, where crime and trespassing reports are above the system average, and on certain bus lines where driver assaults have skyrocketed, she said.

Sina San, 62, a regular Metro rail rider from Duarte, takes the A Line (formerly L, and Gold) six days a week from the Irwindale station where she parks her car, to and from her workplace in downtown Los Angeles, she said on Monday while waiting for the train at Union Station.

As a woman, she generally feels safe on this light-rail line. "I do, but I am afraid sometimes," she said.

She gets anxious when she sees unhoused people get on the train in the mornings, often from Azusa, an end of line station. "Nowadays, on the train it is getting better," she noted. "But in the mornings I see people sleeping on the train."

One time, after she refused to give money to a homeless man, he followed her off the train to the station platform and lit up a marijuana cigarette, she said.

Dubbed The State of the Agency, Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins' update touched on past accomplishments and future goals. She said crime in every category has decreased, dropping 53% on rail this May over May last year and 13% on buses. "People are feeling safer in choosing to go Metro," she said.

Wiggins said the agency has added new rail lines and bus lanes. In the last fiscal year, it opened the 8.5-mile first phase of the K Line, known as the Crenshaw Line, running from the E (Expo) Line's shared Expo/Crenshaw station in Mid City, through South Los Angeles, Westchester and Inglewood. Sometime in 2024, it will finish the LAX/Metro Transit Center Station at Aviation Boulevard and 96th Street that will connect to a people mover into the airport terminal horseshoe.

In June, Metro opened the 1.9-mile Regional Connector with three new DTLA stations and that facilitates transfer-free rides from East Los Angeles to Santa Monica and from Azusa and Pasadena to iconic DTLA neighborhoods, as well as Watts, Compton and Long Beach.

She said the agency is preparing for the 2028 Summer Olympic Games, the Paralympic Games that same year and the 2026 Men's World Cup soccer games. Wiggins said the Olympic Games will be car-free, requiring more investment in transit, including a new transit project every year between today and 2028.

"By 2028, we will have 130 miles of rail, 121 stations, 71 miles of busways and more than 100 miles of bus priority lanes. And the cleanest bus fleets ever," she said.

Wiggins repeated her "moonshot goal" declared last year to make riding Metro a first choice for 10 million county residents. "It is time to dispel the notion that we are not a transit town. We are," she said.

MY NEWS LA

Bass Will Focus on Safety, Homelessness, Ridership Boosts as Metro Chair

Mayor Karen **Bass** took the gavel Monday as chair of Metro, saying she and the transit agency's board will focus in the next year on strengthening public safety, further addressing homelessness on the system and pushing for ridership to return to pre-pandemic levels.

"Today, hundreds of thousands of Southern Californians depend on Metro to go to work, to go to school, and to go to their doctor's

appointments. Metro is truly an essential service," **Bass** said during the annual "State of the Agency" address, held at Union Station.

"But for Los Angeles to thrive — in fact, for Los Angeles to survive in the future, Metro cannot be mostly a system of last resort. It must be a system of choice. We need more Southern Californians to view and use Metro as their first choice for transportation."

Bass noted that ridership is up 16% to nearly 900,000 boardings every weekday, a sign of recovery from a pandemic-era downturn. But she also acknowledged that overall ridership remains down — with the drop coming disproportionately from women, who report they do not feel safe.

The new chair — who took the gavel from outgoing board Chair Ara Najarian, a Glendale city councilman who completed his term — also emphasized a need to provide more resources targeting safety issues related to mental health or substance abuse.

On the topic of public safety, Metro will deploy additional officers across the B (Red) and D (Purple) lines, which are the lines that experience the most assaults.

In May, the board approved a \$9 billion budget for fiscal 2024. Ahead of that approval, Metro officials had emphasized public safety as the agency came under close scrutiny due to high-profile crimes on or near the transit system.

The budget includes \$290.5 million in public safety, and supports the agency's Reimagining Public Safety Framework — "a multi-layers strategy for enhancing public safety" on the system.

Though Metro extended its law enforcement contracts with the L.A. County Sheriff's Department and the police departments of L.A. and Long Beach, the board also moved forward to develop a feasibility plan for an in-house public safety department. Metro is aiming to present the plan to the board in January 2024.

According to Metro, over a six-year period starting in 2017, law enforcement contracts cost the agency approximately \$911.9 million.

"We have an opportunity to create a department that from its inception is integrated within a holistic approach, one that ensures that we respond urgently to crime, prevent crime and deliver necessary outreach and services," **Bass** said regarding Metro exploring an in-house public safety department.

Homelessness is another key issue **Bass** said she aims to further address over the next fiscal year, which runs through next June 30. She noted that almost 50 people died on Metro's system this calendar year. Many of them were unhoused.

Metro will be increasing its homeless outreach teams to a total of 24 that will work in partnership with community-based organizations to develop homeless navigation hubs and conduct outreach to move people out of the agency's system into stable housing, she said.

Bass also discussed plans to "take full advantage" of surplus and underutilized land to jumpstart Metro's joint development program, which is intended to increase Metro's production of housing units. The goal will be to reach 10,000 units of housing by 2031, with half of the units being income-restricted.

In his remarks Monday, Najarian gave an overview of Metro's accomplishments in the past fiscal year, which included opening the long-awaited Regional Connector; the opening of the K Line, a light rail system connecting several South Los Angeles communities; the launch of the agency's ambassador and Go Pass programs; and several efforts to improve public safety.

The connector added three underground stations, and allows riders to travel between Azusa and Long Beach, and between East L.A. and Santa Monica, without transferring.

"The Regional Connector transforms the way Angelenos travel through downtown Los Angeles and connects more people with the broader Los Angeles County region to more places that they want to go," Najarian said.

Metro officials said more than 300 ambassadors conducted nearly 52,000 customer interactions, reported nearly 1,200 cleanliness issues, 270 elevator and escalator issues, 250 graffiti incidents and 170 safety issues.

In addition, Najarian discussed projects Metro continues to work toward, such as the C (Green) line, which would connect more of the South Bay from Redondo Beach to the Torrance Transit Center; LAX Metro Transit Center; and the east San Fernando Valley Light Rail project, a 6.7-mile segment connecting the communities of Van Nuys, Panorama City and Pacoima.

Metro is also investing in higher levels of service frequency and reliability and cleaning. Officials have announced plans to run trains on the B and D lines every 10 minutes by September, and increase the frequency of bus and light rails systems by the end of the year, too.

In addition, Metro allocated \$201 million in cleaning efforts to fund 10 roving cleaning teams, hire 24 more full-time custodial staff and hire up to 50 temporary part-time custodial staff dedicated to the B (Red) and D (Purple) lines.

Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins thanked **Bass** and Najarian, as well as the rest of Metro's team, for their partnership. She said Angelenos are enjoying a "revitalized" system that "reduces congestion and traffic fatalities, and helps fight climate change."

"So, this all feels very different to me. It's a change from the last few years when we've been battling illness, fear and division," Wiggins said.

Wiggins reiterated that the 2028 Olympics will present an "immense challenge," but even more an "epic opportunity." She said she aims for the games to be "car free," adding that Metro will open a major transit system "every year between now and 2028."

"By 2028, thanks to the support of L.A. County voters through Measures R, N and M, we'll have 130 miles of Metro rail, 121 stations, 75 miles of busway and bus rapid transit and more than 100 miles of bus priority lanes, and we'll have the cleanest bus fleet ever," Wiggins said.

Wiggins also said Metro will continue to reach toward its "moonshot" goal — to revolutionize the way L.A. moves and establish Metro as the preferred choice of transportation.

"But most of all, reaching our moonshot goal requires commitment from our 11,000 Metro employees and to continue to put people first," she said. "We need to listen to our customers to learn from them and act fast to meet their expectations for a world class transportation service."

FOX LA

LA Mayor Karen Bass shares vision of developing 'world-class' Metro transit system

BY HAL EISNER

Tony Martinez takes the train from the Los Angeles Metro at 4:40 a.m. five days a week to get to his job.

"That's when it's a little rough to be on it," Martinez said.

Carmen Felix is legally blind and asthmatic. She also is a regular on the Metro.

And for another passenger Tony Celis? He used to live on the trains!

"A homeless outreach team found me," Celis said.

Now, he's heading to a job interview after getting help from an outreach team.

When riding for hours on the train he says, "I wasn't taking my medications I was hearing voices. I couldn't be around people. I thought people were after me," Celis said.

All three welcome the idea of safety changes and Mayor Karen Bass says there are some on the way.

"As the new chair of Metro it is my responsibility to lay out the state of the agency," Bass said.

Her vision? With major events taking stage in LA the next few years, including the World Cup, the Summer Olympics and the Paralympic Games, Bass wants to make sure that the world "enjoys nothing less than a world-class transit system."

There have been lots of Metro-related crime stories on the news. Stephanie Wiggins, LA Metro's CEO, tweeted that overall crime fell in May by 53% on the rail system and 13% on busses.

The agency is increasing visibility to add to that, according to Patrick Chandler with the transit agency.

"We've asked our law enforcement contractors which includes LAPD, Long Beach PD and LA Sheriffs to be more visible," he said.

They are training new ambassadors whose job it is to serve as courtesy liaisons with people like Felix, who needs a little help getting around.

Chandler says the agency has tripled homeless outreach from 8 to 24 teams.

"When we have all 24 teams on board, there will be over 100 homeless outreach workers on the Metro system," said Dave Sotero, with Metro.

Celis likes that because he got help from such a team although it was unrelated to Metro.

The bottomline for Carmen Felix: It's still not great.

"It's kind of scary," she said.

"There's a lot more security. There's a lot more police officers," Celis said.

Anthony Martinez said more changes will help.

Metro officials tell us the agency will partner with LA County investing nearly \$14 million in an outreach to the unhoused. They are allocating \$10 million this fiscal year to a new Department of Mental Health partnership for more training.

A feasibility study is to be conducted on a possible in-house Metro Police Department. That could be a big undertaking because Metro has 270 million boardings a year, about 900,000 a day.

ABC LA

Mayor Karen Bass hopes to boost Metro ridership, saying it 'cannot be mostly system of last resort'

By Josh Haskell

LOS ANGELES (KABC) -- Metro has transportation projects throughout Southern California that are opening or under construction, but they've been plagued by safety issues.

Riders are complaining about cleanliness while homeless people use trains as shelter.

"Metro cannot be mostly a system of last resort," said Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass. "It must be a system of first choice."

On Monday, Metro's leadership team, including Bass and the new Metro Board Chair, reassured the public that riders are being heard.

"The alarming increase in random attacks on our bus operators highlights the fact that we must do more to keep our employees and customer safe," said Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins. "Thanks to our board, we're growing our Metro transit security by 45% and we're deploying all the new officers to bus riding teams. We don't have the resources to put a transit security officer on every bus, but by targeting these resources to the places that need them the most, we can make our busses even safer than they are today."

According to Metro data, ridership has increased since pandemic-era lows, but as of June, numbers were still only three quarters of pre-pandemic ridership numbers.

Bass said her top priorities for the city centers around homelessness and public safety, which are also top priorities for Metro.

"We must acknowledge that ridership is still down and the reduction is disproportionally among women riders who say they do not feel safe," said Bass. "Almost 50 people have died on the Metro system just this year, so we are increasing our homeless outreach teams by 50%."

Wiggins said Metro's goal is to place 900 people sheltering on Metro into interim or permanent housing by summer of next year.

In addition to investments in public safety and efficiency, Metro is investing \$201 million into its cleanliness efforts, funding 10 roving cleaning teams and hiring more custodians.

WESTSIDE CURRENT

Metro Los Angeles State of Agency Address Highlights for a Comprehensive Transit System

By Dolores Quintana

During the Metro Los Angeles State of Agency address on Monday, Metro unveiled several significant accomplishments and ambitious plans to further improve public transit services in the region. The announcement responded to numerous requests from the community, showcasing Metro's work to enhance the commuter experience.

One of the most prominent accomplishments highlighted during the address was the complete replacement of fabric seats on buses and trains with vinyl seats. This upgrade is aimed at improving durability and ease of maintenance, ensuring a more pleasant journey for passengers. While some social media comments stated that they had ridden trains or buses with the old fabric seats, a Metro social media representative asked the commenters for more information.

Metro's vision to make transit even better in Los Angeles includes an even more expansive transit network by 2028. The ambitious plans include the addition of 130 miles of rail, 75 miles of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lanes, and 100 miles of bus priority lanes.

Addressing public safety concerns, Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins emphasized the increased visible presence of staff across the rail system to ensure the system is being utilized for its intended purpose: transit. This enhanced presence has yielded positive results, with overall crime experiencing a notable 53% decrease on the rail system and a 13% decrease on buses in May.

According to Metro, riders have also expressed their satisfaction with the service, as reflected in a decline in customer complaints. Moreover, valid TAP (Transit Access Pass) usage has risen, demonstrating increased compliance with fare payment regulations. Loitering and trespassing incidents have also seen a decline, contributing to a safer and more comfortable commuting environment.

Metro's efforts to enhance public safety have garnered praise and support from key stakeholders. Outgoing Board Chair Ara Najarian, new Board Chair Mayor Karen Bass, and Supervisor Janice Hahn all articulated their shared priorities during the address:

Improving Public Safety: Ensuring a secure environment for all riders remains a top focus, with measures to combat crime and safeguard passengers.

Connecting the Unhoused to Resources: Metro is committed to working closely with social service organizations to provide support and resources to the unhoused population within the transit system.

Encouraging Transit-Oriented Housing: Metro aims to promote and facilitate the construction of housing developments near transit stations, encouraging a more sustainable and transit-friendly lifestyle.

Universal Transit Accessibility: Metro envisions creating a public transit system that caters to the diverse needs of all residents, ensuring equitable access to transportation services.

PROGRESSIVE RAILROADING

LA Metro posts progress on FY23 strategic goals

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority officials yesterday marked growth toward agency goals during fiscal-year 2023 at the annual State of the Agency event.

L.A. Metro's FY23 progress included increasing ridership, expanding rail and bus service and creating new safety, cleanliness, equity and customer service programs, announced L.A. Metro Board Chair Karen Bass, former Chair Ara Najarian and CEO Stephanie Wiggins at the event. Bass, who is also mayor of Los Angeles, succeeded Najarian July 1.

Successes during the year included:

improvement and expansion of rail and bus service to provide new transit options for riders, including the opening of the K Line in South Los Angeles and Inglewood and the Regional Connector downtown;

growth of special fare programs designed to provide equity and support the next generation of L.A. Metro riders. The low-income LIFE program registered 89,036 more riders, while students took more than 16.7 million free rides using the GoPass, which provides free rides to students at participating schools; and

implementation of a new human-focused public safety plan, which called for interventions across the rail system that have reduced crime by 53% in recent months. Additionally, the pilot L.A. Metro Ambassador program added visible unarmed staff to assist riders and watch for issues on the network and at stations.

Goals for FY24 include expanding the network to reach more parts of Los Angeles and getting ridership back to pre-pandemic levels, said Bass. L.A. Metro consistently gained ridership in FY23 compared to FY22; in June 2023, average weekday ridership was 76% of pre-pandemic levels measured in June 2019. Weekend ridership hit 91% of pre-pandemic levels.

"Metro is truly an essential service. But for Los Angeles to thrive — and for Los Angeles to survive in the future — Metro cannot be mostly a system of last resort. It must be a system of choice," Bass said. "As we prepare to host the World Cup as well as the Olympic and Paralympic Games, we will work toward that reality by building ridership and making our system safer and more accessible for all."

MY NEWS LA

Metro Touts Continued Ridership Growth

Metro had nearly 24 million bus and train boardings in June, a 13.3% increase from last June that marks the seventh straight month of year-over-year growth, the agency announced Tuesday.

"I'm excited that people continue to return to our buses, trains and rideshare services," L.A. Mayor and Metro Board Chair Karen Bass said in a statement. "With the opening of the Regional Connector last month, Metro has made it more accessible and affordable to travel by public transit across the region, and the benefits of this new connectivity are translating into increased ridership."

Bass added she "looks forward to seeing ridership continue to grow" as Metro continues to expand the transit system and improve public safety.

Metro's monthly bus and rail ridership now stands at 81% of its 2019, pre-pandemic level, with average weekend ridership at 91% of pre-pandemic levels and 76% for average weekdays, the agency reported.

In June, Metro recorded 23,824,620 passengers aboard its bus and rail systems, with an average of 866,670 rides each weekday.

Saturday and Sunday boardings averaged about 646,743 and 542,727 passengers, respectively. The agency noted that ridership recovery continued to strengthen on the weekends, with average boardings on Saturdays and Sundays reaching almost 89% and 94% of pre-pandemic levels.

Bus ridership continued to lead overall with 18,679,084 rides during June, with total bus ridership at almost 84% of its level in June 2019.

The agency, alongside the city of Los Angeles, installed more than 30 miles of bus priority lanes, the most recent of which opened on Venice Boulevard in June.

More than 5 million trips were taken on the rail system in June, an increase of 14.2% compared to the same time last year, Metro said. Rail ridership growth was led by gains on the B (Red) and D (Purple) lines. Average weekday ridership on the B and D lines is up 15.5% year-over-year, and up 5.6% since January.

Average ridership on the B and D lines now exceed its level in June 2019, before the pandemic.

According to the agency, weekend ridership was driven by special events including the Pride Parade, Pride Night at Dodger Stadium, Pride in the Park, and CicLAvia South L.A. The opening of the Regional Connector stations in the Little Tokyo/Arts District, Historic Broadway and Grand Avenue Arts/Bunker Hill also generated ridership, with more than 100,000 riding the new A and E lines on opening day.

More than 82,000 people continued to ride the new lines over the opening weekend.

"Metro's three new downtown stations stitched together the A, L, and E lines, and made getting around Los Angeles easier and more fun," Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins said in a statement. "Our riders can now easily visit downtown restaurants and events, and travel through three beautiful art filled stations which are quickly becoming destinations themselves."

In a statement, the agency also highlighted various "proactive" steps taken recently aimed to "ensure its transit service is safe, friendly, fast, and frequent." They include:

- a new "multi-layered" public safety approach "to increase the visible presence of both armed and unarmed security and customer care personnel on the system";
- a Drug-Free Metro campaign focused on drug-related crimes and targeting "hotspots throughout the system";
- engaging more than 300 Metro Ambassadors to help customers navigate the system;
- hiring more than 1,000 new transit operators, and

— fully restoring bus service.

Metro also stressed its fareless and reduced-price transit pass programs, such as its GoPass program for K-12 and community college students, and its Low-Income Fare is Easy program that provides free rides and discounted fares to people with low incomes.

LA OPINION

Karen Bass receives the helm of Metro with great challenges

By: Jorge Luis Macías

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass has been given the helm as the new chairwoman of the Board of Directors of Metro, the nation's second-largest transit agency, to address a priority challenge: passenger safety, particularly women and homeless deaths.

"Women report that they don't feel safe," Mayor Bass said, after taking the gavel of Metro presidency from outgoing leader Ara J. Najarian.

"We must address the human suffering that we have seen in our public transportation system, as in many other cities," he said in relation to the homeless, of whom 50 have died this year in the Metro system.

The mayor promised that Metro will have 24 dedicated teams to work in partnership with community organizations; the objective is to develop "navigation centers" for the homeless and carry out the necessary outreach to move people from stations, trains and buses to stable housing.

"We are going to make the most of surplus and underutilized land to fuel Metro's co-development program, to increase Metro's production of housing units tenfold, so that we reach 10,000 housing units by 2031," Mayor Bass said during the annual "State of the Agency" Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro).

In front of community leaders, mayors of numerous cities, the mayor recognized that thousands of residents of southern California depend on Metro to go to work, school or to their medical appointments, due to the fact that the service of the public transport agency is essential.

"But, for Los Angeles to prosper and survive in the future, Metro cannot primarily be a system or a last resort, but must be a system of first choice," he said, in response to the need for more Angelenos to use Metro as their first choice of transportation and become less dependent on car use.

This would lead to determining the health of the air that is breathed and the decrease in the amount of greenhouse gases, as well as the level of traffic jams in the streets, highways and highways on daily trips.

Indigence in transportation is one of the great challenges of the agency.

In fact, Bass reported that ridership using Metro's rail and bus services has increased 16% to nearly 900,000 boardings every weekday, though he acknowledged that ridership is still low.

Los Angeles County has a population of just over 10 million, and half are in the workforce (4,969,400), according to the Los Angeles Almanac. This would mean that only a fifth of the people who work use the public transport system to carry out any type of daily activities.

Serious security issues

Mercedes Garza and her granddaughter Abigail Fonseca, who traveled by Metro from Long Beach to Union Station, told La Opinión that they do not feel "100 percent safe" when they have to use the Blue Line.

"There are a lot of homeless people on the trips and you don't know how they're going to react," said the woman, who works at LAX. "Sometimes, I think they are wrong in the head; I understand them, but is it very dangerous? Before, Metro was clean, now the seats smell like pee?"

Mercedes' testimony was corroborated by several Metro ambassadors consulted by La Opinión.

"On the Red Line you see a lot of drugs, people get on it and carry weapons, and many times they are dangerous people," said Jesús García, a Metro ambassador.

"We don't feel 100% safe": Mercedes Garza and her granddaughter Abigail Fonseca.

"Yes, many are homeless," added Lisette González. "I have seen people suffer from overdoses."

"There is also violence and gangs," said Nicole Simpson, while her partner, Jerome Barker, noted: "Our job is just to report what we see."

World Cup 2026 and the Olympic Games 2028

Poverty, insecurity and homelessness, drug addiction and mental health are crises that must be urgently addressed, said Stephanie N. Wiggins, Metro's executive director.

"But when I consider that we delivered 269,000,000 rides last year and increased ridership in the last 12 months, I am confident that we can connect Angelenos with one another and inspire them to make us the first choice for transportation."

He acknowledged that there is still a long way to go, but Metro is building the most ambitious transportation plan in the nation.

"In 2028, the Olympic and Paralympic Games present us with an immense challenge and an even more epic opportunity," he said.

?Transportation will be public and without the use of automobiles.?

In 2026, the Soccer World Cup will take place, which is hosted by Mexico, Canada and the United States, including games in Los Angeles.

?We are building a transit legacy for the people of Los Angeles, and we are building it with purpose, with equity and with the contribution of 10 million people,? said the official, who recalled that, during the 1984 Olympic Games, the city only had passes to transport people in diesel trucks, and by 2028, thanks to measures approved by the voters, the county will have 130 miles of Metro Rail stations, 121 stations, 75 miles of busway and bus rapid transit.

Crimes decrease by 53%

Stephanie N. Wiggins thanked officers and LAPD Chief Michel Moore for improving the way they deter and respond to crime on Metro public transportation services.

In fact, he reported that at Westlake MacArthur Park calls for service and arrests of people with weapons have dropped to zero since May, medical emergencies at the station have dropped dramatically, and valid tickets to board trains have increased more than 100 percent.

?Progress is not just limited to Westlake MacArthur Park,? he said. ?Crime in all categories has decreased throughout the Metro system since May, and overall, crime fell 53% on the rail system and 13% on the bus system.?

response teams

Regarding the insecurity and dangers on the Red and Purple lines of the Metro, and the comments of the ambassadors, José Ubaldo, Metro spokesman, announced the specific actions that are being developed to face the problems.

?Since last year we have been implementing a work plan in various parts: participation of LAPD police, Long Beach police and county sheriffs who have increased patrols at train stations, platforms and buses,? said Ubaldo.

?With non-police security guards, patrolling has increased, and with private guards, surveillance has increased to complement security.?

He added that Metro ambassadors ?are our eyes and ears; apart from providing information services to passengers, solving questions where they are going and where they can make connections?.

In addition, he added that the ambassadors are always ready to identify if there is something improper in public transport and report the bad things so that the guards, LAPD or bailiffs take action.

Regarding cleaning complaints, he revealed that the transportation agency has teams that work all the time.

?If there is an elevator full of dirt, there are people who go quickly and clean it,? said Ubaldo. ?We are directly attacking that.?

He reported that they have teams of people who care for the homeless or indigent, interview them and make an assessment of their needs and get them temporary housing.

?We also have a strong mental health team; ambassadors are trained to use Narcan when people have overdosed [overdosed] on the drugs,? she reported. ?They [teams of people] are not only there to provide information, but also to save lives, and all these attack teams are giving good results.?

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

DAILY NEWS

New interim housing for homeless is coming to LA's Westside

By LINH TAT

A new interim housing project that will provide approximately 30 beds is slated to open next year on the city's bustling Westside, Los Angeles City Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky announced Monday, July 24.

The project will be constructed on an underutilized city-owned parking lot at 2377 Midvale Ave., across from the former Westside Pavilion shopping center. It will provide critically needed temporary housing for people living on the streets, according to her office, which noted in an email to constituents that there is just one interim housing unit available for every eight homeless people in Council District 5 at the moment.

District 5 covers Bel Air and Beverly Glen and stretches south to Palms, running east of the 405 freeway. It also includes neighborhoods further east, including Fairfax and La Brea.

"Anyone who has walked or driven on the Westside can tell you that the increase in the number of people living in tents is alarming," Yaroslavsky said in a statement. "We cannot keep waiting for the problem to solve itself – we need real solutions that we know work, and we need them quickly. While thousands of units of permanent housing are being constructed across the city, no interim units are in the pipeline in Council District 5."

More than 46,000 Angelenos are homeless on any given night, based on the most recent count conducted by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. According to Yaroslavsky's office, when the councilmember took office in December, fewer than 100 interim housing units existed for the 1,300 unhoused people within Council District 5.

According to Yaroslavsky's spokesperson, Leo Daube, the project will cost an estimated \$60,000 per unit. That would add up to about \$1.8 million if 30 units are built. Daube said Yaroslavsky's office is working with the city to see about minimizing additional site costs.

The prefabricated housing units will be built by LifeArk. The project is expected to break ground later this year and open in 2024. L.A. Family Housing will provide support services to residents once the facility is open. The goal is to serve adults already living near the facility, and 24/7 onsite security will be provided.

Mayor Karen **Bass** said it's imperative that every part of the city provides housing solutions.

"While permanent housing is always the goal to house Angelenos living on our streets, we must continue to bring people inside to confront the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles and to prevent five people from dying on our streets every day," **Bass** said in a statement commending Yaroslavsky's efforts.

Two information sessions with additional details about the design, construction schedule, safety protocols and rules for residents who live there have been scheduled: The first, an in-person session, will take place 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Aug. 3 at Temple Isaiah Community Room, 10345 W. Pico Blvd. A second – virtual – session will take place from 10 to 11 a.m. on Aug. 6.

For details or to sign up for either session, visit councildistrict5.lacity.gov/Midvale.

CAPITAL & MAIN

CHECKED OUT How We Found What the City of L.A. Didn't: Landlords Renting Low-Cost Housing to Tourists

By Robin Urevich, Capital & Main, with additional reporting by Gabriel Sandoval, ProPublica

Tourists in Los Angeles make their way out of the H Hotel parking lot and head to the front desk in May.

This story was produced in partnership with ProPublica's Local Reporting Network. Read part one and part two of the investigation into L.A.'s residential hotels.

On her first day in office last December, Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass** declared a state of emergency over housing and homelessness, promising to provide shelter for people living on the streets and make it easier for developers to build affordable housing.

At the time, I was a few weeks into my fellowship with ProPublica's Local Reporting Network. I had previously worked on a two-year series of stories on housing for Capital & Main and found that while the city struggled to create affordable housing, some low-income residents were losing homes they'd lived in for years, especially in areas where property values were rising.

The **Bass** administration clearly aimed to create more affordable housing. But I wondered whether the city was effectively using its enforcement mechanisms to preserve the dwindling supply of low-cost housing that already existed.

With Gabriel Sandoval, a research reporter at ProPublica, I found that in 2008, the L.A. City Council had passed a law aimed at reserving more than 300 residential hotels as low-cost housing. We decided to see if it was working.

An excerpt from an L.A. ordinance regulating the demolition and conversion of residential hotel units.

Residential hotels provide small, basic rooms, sometimes with shared bathrooms. They often house low-income workers and elderly and disabled people who can't afford other apartments. City officials determined the hotels were residential by using the state's legal definition: buildings of six or more units that served as permanent housing for their residents.

Gabriel and I searched hotel webpages and online travel sites and found that some places, like the H Hotel in Koreatown, which are supposed to remain available to local residents, had instead morphed into tourist accommodations.

The building, formerly known as the East West Hotel, in April 2011. It was designated as a residential hotel in 2008 and again in 2011. Image via Google Maps.

El Patio Inn in Van Nuys bills itself as "an inexpensive hotel near Universal Studios Hollywood."

"Experience the effervescent spirit of Los Angeles with a stay at El Patio Inn, your gateway to the city's most notable attractions," the hotel's website says. "Whether you're looking to be mesmerized by the magic of Universal Studios Hollywood, enchanted by the art treasures of The Getty Center, or drawn into the allure of Hollywood's star-studded Walk of Fame, El Patio Inn provides a convenient base for your LA adventures."

City officials had designated El Patio as residential in 2008. The owner appealed, and in 2013, a Housing Department hearing officer affirmed its residential status, according to the agency's records. El Patio's general manager didn't return phone calls seeking comment.

Eventually we identified 21 residential hotels with more than 800 rooms in total advertising to tourists, in apparent violation of city law.

Promoting Local Attractions

El Patio Inn was designated as a residential hotel in 2008, and that decision was affirmed in 2013. Screenshot by ProPublica.

With their own websites, ads on booking sites and Yelp and Google reviews, these hotels didn't hide their efforts to draw business and leisure travelers. For example, the Homotel Suites website describes the hotel as "modern," "boutique" and "the perfect central base to explore all the great restaurants, shops and tourist attractions that Los Angeles has to offer."

Visitors can book rooms for up to \$235 per night and even a "party hall" for \$450.

Hometel Suites general manager Becky Hong had previously said the hotel has no plan to offer residential rentals but didn't respond to a question about whether its tourist accommodations violate the law.

Travelers on a budget can find a "family room" for \$175 per night at the Lincoln Park Motel, whose website advertises the property's proximity to "Downtown Los Angeles, Dodgers Stadium and many other attractions."

The Lincoln Park Motel offers rooms near Los Angeles attractions as well as a honeymoon suite with a hot tub. Screenshots by ProPublica.

Lincoln Park owner Jeffrey Xiao didn't return calls and declined to answer questions about his property's short-term rental ads. "No, thank you for reaching out to me," Xiao texted.

We wondered, if we were able to find what seemed like violations so easily, why city leaders weren't doing more to enforce the ordinance.

We asked officials if any of the 21 hotels were exempt from the law or had received city clearance to convert to tourist use. (The law allows owners to apply for exemptions from the residential hotel law if they can prove they have not historically operated as long-term housing. It also allows hotel owners to convert their properties to other uses if they either replace the affordable housing or pay into a city housing fund.)

While we waited for answers, we visited some of the hotels to see for ourselves how they were being used.

Some hotels had undergone seemingly obvious transformations. The H Hotel, formerly known as the East West Hotel, replaced its old sign on the building's brick exterior with a big neon H. The property now includes a bar and a cafe with sidewalk seating.

The H Hotel's operations manager, Nojan Haddadi, didn't respond to an email requesting comment. He previously said the hotel offers only short-term rentals and has asked the city to remove its residential designation. The hotel's owner previously declined to answer questions, citing advice from his attorney.

At other hotels, we found tourists outside.

El Patio Inn advertises its proximity to Universal Studios Hollywood.

These guests who were in town for a Dodgers baseball game were staying at the Knights Inn.

The Knights Inn is within walking distance of Dodger Stadium.

Knights Inn owner Charles Wang said the inn has always operated as a hotel and blamed the previous owner for failing to respond to the city when it put the building on the residential hotel list. The hotel's franchise agreement requires it to be used for short-term rentals, he said.

The Housing Department told us that low staffing made it difficult to enforce the residential hotel law and that sometimes hotels barred its inspectors from coming in without an administrative warrant. Inspectors didn't obtain warrants to enter the hotels, a process that would have entailed a day's work, Housing Department code enforcement director Robert Galardi said.

After our story, the department said it would immediately investigate the 21 hotels and review its enforcement practices. Department spokesperson Sharon Sandow wrote in an email that the agency is "aggressively reviewing and investigating all the leads you provided and additional information as well. We are pursuing all avenues under the Code."

Through our reporting, we obtained more than 10,000 pages of Housing Department records in response to California Public Records Act requests.

Housing Department correspondence and other documents showed all 21 hotels had been deemed residential and were subject to the city's residential hotel law. For example, this 2013 letter from the Housing Department to an attorney representing the American Hotel confirmed its status.

This letter was sent to the American Hotel owner's attorney, confirming that it is designated as a residential hotel. Obtained by ProPublica.

But nearly all of the American's rooms are currently offered to tourists, not residents.

Mark Verge, the American's owner, said he didn't recall the letter between his attorney and the Housing Department and has always operated the American as a hotel: "I have a hotel license. I pay bed tax."

This Housing Department document shows the American Hotel was deemed residential in 2008.

When housing inspectors visited the American and other hotels, they appeared to miss what seemed like clear signs that the hotels offered short-term rentals.

At Hollywood's Las Palmas Hotel, an inspector snapped this 2019 photo to show windows had been replaced without a permit. (You might recognize this hotel from the final scene of "Pretty Woman.")

A portion of a 2019 inspection report showing the city cited the Las Palmas Hotel for replacing windows without a permit. There's no indication the inspector asked about the sign. Obtained by ProPublica.

The inspector cited Las Palmas for an illegal construction violation, but there is no record that he inquired about the sign that advertises

"daily" and "weekly" rentals. Until recently, we found, the hotel was booking nightly rentals through its website. One of the hotel's owners, Ashok Vanmali, declined to comment.

Last year at the H Hotel, a Housing Department inspector noted that a manager told him directly that the hotel was a "transient hotel," using the legal term for hotels that rent rooms to travelers, and not a residential one.

But the inspector didn't cite the H Hotel for violations of the residential hotel ordinance.

After we published our initial story, the mayor's office asked the Housing Department to account for how some residential hotels had apparently turned into tourist lodging and how it could prevent these transformations from happening in the future. The Housing Department said that it would report back by the end of August.

Many hotels continue to advertise online.

DAILY NEWS

Fear grips LA tenants who do not have the back rent due August 1

By LINH TAT

Mayra Granillo has lived in the same apartment in Hollywood for 32 years. But at about the time she fell ill in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic and was forced to stay home for a month, she was fired from one of her two jobs. She returned to her second job, only to have her employer cut her hours from full to part-time.

Today, the 56-year-old dishwasher owes about \$4,000 in rent and doesn't know if her landlord will evict her if she doesn't repay the money soon that she owes from the early part of the pandemic.

"I'm afraid. You never know," she said.

Granillo was among about 100 people who gathered outside the Stanley Mosk Courthouse in downtown Los Angeles on Tuesday, July 25, for a rally organized by the Keep LA Housed Coalition. They called upon Mayor Karen Bass and city councilmembers to cancel rent debts or provide protections for tenants who cannot meet the city's Aug. 1 deadline to pay rent they owe from the first 18 months of the pandemic.

Early this year, the Los Angeles City Council adopted a sweeping package of tenant protections to lessen the impact of ending the pandemic-related moratorium on evictions. Among other things, the council established a grace period: tenants would have until Aug. 1 to repay the debts they incurred between March 1, 2020 and Sept. 1, 2021. And they have until Feb. 1, 2024 to repay rent they owe from Oct. 1, 2021 to Feb. 1, 2023.

But tenant rights advocates say many Angelenos haven't completely recovered from the pandemic. Those struggles, coupled with inflation and L.A.'s continuing high cost of living, make it nearly impossible for many to pay off their debts, advocates say.

They fear that if no further actions are taken to prevent landlords from evicting tenants come Aug. 1, eviction filings will only soar — resulting in more people living on the streets at a time when the city's homeless population is at an all-time high.

"We're never going to address that crisis of homelessness in this city until we do something to stop the pipeline to homelessness. And the pipeline to homelessness — it starts with eviction. And it starts with high rents and a high rent debt. ... We must act now before this crisis gets worse," said René Moya, an organizer with Debt Collective and a member of the Los Angeles Tenants Union.

Over the past year, the organizations he's affiliated with have been involved in establishing a toolkit for tenants facing evictions. According to Moya, of the tenants who sought help through the toolkit, evictions for nonpayment of rent have increased from about 66% to over 85% of eviction cases "in a matter of months" and that the average person were behind on at least three months of rent payments totaling about \$6,300.

Additionally, about 40% of all tenants who used the toolkit owed rent and about 35% of those evicted were Black, though Blacks make up just 9% of the county's population, Moya said.

Daniel Yukelson, executive director of the Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles, said in an email Tuesday landlords were "left powerless" against nonpaying tenants and were "taken advantage of" during the pandemic. He described scenarios where landlords did not receive rent payments while their tenants bought new cars, went on vacations and, in some instances, purchased their own properties.

As for the Aug. 1 repayment deadline, Yukelson said tenants have known for nearly three years that they would need to repay back rent.

"During that entire time, some have not made any attempts to repay their obligations, and simply have waited around for some miracle to make a large, lump sum payment, which they are unlikely able to do," Yukelson wrote.

"It is time for the City of Los Angeles to stop babysitting these adults who took full advantage of the untenable situation the City put housing providers in and live up to their financial commitments," he continued. "Rather than extending the payment deadline, it is time for the City to step-up and cover the rent that has gone unpaid. Housing providers did not shut down businesses and put people out of work."

On Tuesday, tenant rights advocates said \$20 million in voter-approved Measure ULA funds should be set aside for a rental assistance program but the program has yet to launch. They criticized city leaders for not ensuring the program would be up and running before the Aug. 1 rent repayment deadline.

Sharon Sandow, a spokesperson for the city's housing department, said in a statement that the department is "highly focused on minimizing

the impact of the August 1st date for Angelenos to repay rent" and that it's engaged tenants, community-based organizations, and legal partners to make sure tenants and landlords know their obligations, limitations and rights when it comes to evictions.

Sandow said the Los Angeles Housing Department and a citizens oversight committee worked "relentlessly" in June to get a Short-Term Emergency Assistance program for tenants approved.

"LAHD now is sending a request for Council and Mayor approval of contracts to implement programs, and will be accelerating every step possible to launch the rental assistance program in September," Sandow said. "We will be in constant contact with stakeholders to keep them informed."

The mayor, in a separate statement, also referenced the emergency rental assistance program and noted that the programs are pending council approval when the City Council returns from recess next week.

"I am extremely concerned about what will happen on August 1st when certain COVID-19 rental protections expire, which is why I worked with the Housing Department on an outreach campaign to make sure Angelenos know their rights and know about resources and protections available," Bass said.

She also noted that The Mayor's Fund, an independent nonprofit, launched a citywide outreach effort to connect Angelenos with case management, health care and legal services like eviction defense to keep people housed.

"We must do all we can to ensure that a wave of evictions does not hit our City as we continue confronting the homelessness crisis," Bass stated.

The City Council is on recess and won't meet again until Aug. 1 – the same day as the first rent debt deadline.

Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez said in a statement Tuesday that the city is in the midst of a series of labor strikes as workers demand living wages and that week's deadline puts thousands of workers who live paycheck to paycheck at risk of losing housing.

"This moment demands action – I am working closely with my colleagues at the City to secure a sustainable solution that will keep our people housed, and I call on my colleagues at every level of government to join us in standing with tenants and workers to address pandemic rent debt and protect our city from an eviction tidal wave that will only worsen our homelessness crisis," Hernandez stated.

Yukelson said landlords would rather avoid having to kick out tenants due to the time and costs associated with California's lengthy eviction process. He called evictions a "last resort."

"That's not just because of the cost and stress of the whole process, but also because most human beings do not want to see people put out on the street," he said.

In the meantime, Angelenos like Irma Cervantes are anxious, not knowing if they might soon find themselves homeless.

Cervantes, an East L.A. resident, said she was receiving financial support from the father of her four children until he lost his job at the start of the pandemic. She now owes about \$6,000 in rent.

Cervantes said she's being harassed by her landlord, who has shut off her electricity and water. Without the ability to cook or store food in a fridge, Cervantes often eats out, which makes it harder to save money. She said she's unable to move to another apartment because the rent is too high or she can't afford to pay the safety deposit.

"Right now, (I have) nowhere else to go so that's why (I'm) staying put," she said through a translator.

The stress has impacted her health, said Cervantes, who said paramedics had to make a house call about two weeks ago.

Granillo, the dishwasher from Hollywood, also described being weighed down mentally and emotionally by the fear of not knowing if she'll lose her home.

She said she can't sleep, but her doctor doesn't want to prescribe sleeping pills. Instead, he's encouraging her to stress less.

"He wants me to be relaxed," she said. "But how can I relax with all this?"

LA OPINION

Los Angeles authorities are called to protect tenants with past due rent

By: Araceli Martinez Ortega

Julia Orozco has not been able to pay rent for 9 months because the painting company her husband worked for closed during the pandemic.

"We ask the Los Angeles authorities to lower the rents because what we earn is not enough for us," says Julia, married and mother of a child under the age of 5 who rents a studio in the Echo Park neighborhood of Los Angeles.

She and a group of tenants and their advocates rallied outside the Stanley Mosk Courthouse to urge Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass and the Los Angeles City Council to support tenants who are struggling to pay off debt accumulated during the pandemic. covid-19.

Without the intervention of these elected officials, thousands of Angelenos could face eviction and homelessness as August 1 is the deadline to pay rent debt.

"We pay \$1,046 a month to rent a studio that has cockroaches, mice, bedbugs, and lizards on the windows. We cannot pay the owner the debt of \$9,000 in one payment. We need help," says Julia.

The City of Los Angeles has recommended that \$20 million of Measure ULA funds be used to establish a rental assistance program for tenants who have been unable to catch up on their rent.

They demand support for tenants with late rent payments. (Courtesy)

However, the Los Angeles Department of Housing (LAHD), charged with implementing the program, has no plans to do so until November.

The Keep LA Housed (KLAH) Coalition is asking that these funds be made available as soon as possible, and that the Council consider temporary protections against eviction for nonpayment of rent.

María Escobar can't sleep because she owes \$5,500 to her landlord in East Los Angeles.

"I dedicate myself to cleaning houses, but covid has hit me twice. The last time, in December, I was unable to work for two months, and that has affected me a lot; to the point that I have not been able to pay the rent since June 2022. I also owe electricity and other services", says María, a 69-year-old Guatemalan immigrant.

"I have been living in a unit between César Chávez and Chicago streets in Los Angeles for almost 24 years. I am alone. I am very afraid that they will evict me and end up on the street," she says.

In February, the City of Los Angeles approved a package of tenant protections, which included a new repayment program for those who have accumulated debt due to financial problems caused by covid-19.

Eligible tenants who owe rent between March 1, 2020 and September 1, 2021 have until August 1 to pay.

However, many tenants have not been able to recover from the impacts of covid.

On top of that, inflation and the high cost of living in Los Angeles have made it nearly impossible for many Angelenos to stay indoors.

According to the KLAH Coalition, the Housing Department has made it clear that the promised rental assistance program will not be ready by the August 1 repayment deadline, leaving tenants unable to pay, at risk of eviction and homelessness if they are not provided with alternative support.

Mateo Gil, organizer of SAJE, Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, said the past due tenant debt in the City of Los Angeles was \$152,081,670 as of July 2023.

"In the first six months of the year, 23,030 digital eviction notices have been filed in the city of Los Angeles. At our clinic in SAJE, we handle between 5 and 10 eviction notices every week."

Gil said they hope to have a positive response from Mayor Bass before August 1, especially since she declared a state of emergency in the city due to homelessness.

"Tenants with rent arrears are in a very challenging situation, living between the possibility of eviction and landlords not wanting to make repairs to them," he said.

And he added that since rents are very expensive in Los Angeles and wages are not going up, they are doing everything possible to make tenants stay where they are living, because it will be very difficult for them to find an affordable rental place.

TRADE, TRAVEL & TOURISM

TR BUSINESS

LAWA prohibits SUP water bottle sales as it looks to more sustainable future

By LUKE BARRAS-HILL

Passengers at LAX and VNY are being encouraged to bring reusable water bottles to the terminals and filling up at one of the many hydration stations. Source: LAWA.

Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) has forbidden its vendors from selling single-use plastic (SUP) water bottles at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and Van Nuys Airport (VNY).

The move feeds into the landlord's sustainability plan to reduce SUP waste at the airports' facilities and move towards zero waste.

"The climate crisis is a great challenge facing our city, and phasing out single-use plastic water bottles at LAWA facilities is an important step to reducing our environmental footprint and protecting the health and livelihood of all Angelenos," stated Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass. "I want to thank LAWA for serving as a leader among airports around the world working to achieve a more sustainable future."

In June 2021, the Los Angeles Board of Airport Commissioners (BOAC) approved unanimously to phase out SUP water bottles by 30 June 2023.

The two-year period was to enable airport businesses to deplete their inventories of SUP water bottles and adjust purchasing contracts before switching to compliant products.

LAWA and businesses with lease or concession agreements at LAX and VNY are required to substitute SUP water bottles with containers made from sustainable alternatives, such as recyclable aluminium or glass.

July is expected to be the busiest month for LAX, with the peak summer travel month tipped to draw around seven million passengers. Source: LAWA.

Sustainability Action Plan goals

In addition to restaurants, concessions and lounges, the policy also applies to vending machine providers and airport events.

Pre-packaged SUP bottles of all sizes containing non-carbonated and unflavoured purified water, spring water, mineral water, artesian water, well water, tap water, and electrolyte-enhanced water are subject to the policy, though bottled water served onboard aircraft is exempt.

In anticipation of the ban on SUP water bottles, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power worked with LAWA to install additional drinking water hydration stations for passengers throughout LAX's terminals.

"We encourage our guests to help us reach our goal of eliminating plastic waste at the airport by bringing a reusable water bottle and filling it up at one of our many hydration stations," commented Justin Erbacci, Chief Executive Officer, LAWA. "Eliminating single-use plastic water bottles is essential to improving our environment and enhancing sustainability across our airports."

LAWA's Sustainability Action Plan, which includes strategies for LAX and VNY, has a goal for net zero in the following areas by 2045: no potable water consumed for non-potable uses; zero carbon emissions from LAWA operations; and using 100% renewable electricity.

OTHER

JERUSALEM POST

Celebrating the Spirit of Israel in Los Angeles

On May 17, 2023, the Saban Theater in Beverly Hills came alive with vibrant celebrations to mark Israel's 75th birthday. Supported by the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles and the IAC organization, the event brought together a diverse audience of over 1,800 people, eager to honor and commemorate Israel's historical journey.

Distinguished guests, including Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass** and Democratic Senator Alex Padilla, graced the occasion with their presence. The Israeli Consul General, Hillel Newman, delivered an inspiring speech that highlighted the enduring relationship between the United States and Israel, while also acknowledging the remarkable achievements of the Israeli nation.

COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

This is what Mayor Barbara Buffaloe is bringing back from a city leadership conference

BY CHARLES DUNLAP

When Columbia City Manager De'Carlion Seewood announced the 2024 budget July 13, one major aspect included the creation of a new city department, expanding the work staff do in community development to focus on housing and neighborhood services.

The focus of the proposed department is on affordable housing. Hearing that other communities, including those overseas, are putting a focus on affordable housing was reinforcing to the work being undertaken by the city, said Mayor Barbara Buffaloe on Monday.

She attended the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative last week in New York, which was attended by 27 U.S. and 13 international mayors as part of its seventh cohort.

"Places like Verona, Italy, Turin, Italy, Iowa City, Iowa, Amsterdam, all are suffering from lack of affordable housing for their community members," Buffaloe said about the path ahead. "The ideas of what we can do from the data and work we are doing here in Columbia with the county, what can we do to increase the available housing here and what unintended consequences do we need to be aware of."

"And how as the mayor can I help inspire for what it is we all want, which is a safe place for people to live and sleep. What can we do to work together to achieve that?"

She also seeks to apply skills learned through courses to transportation and sustainability to develop actionable strategies on these topics.

Buffaloe can take one of three tracts for her path through the program: innovation, data and collaboration. Buffaloe is focused on innovation with an eye toward finding ways to remove governmental process barriers, where possible.

"What can I do to automate some of these systems, so like if you have filled out a form, it's prepopulated. I don't need you to do it again, or electronic opportunities if paper is hard to access. Can things be done in person or virtually," she said.

This cohort partnership also means Columbia will have access to Harvard research data and case studies for comparisons to Columbia to address the various complex challenges, Buffaloe said.

The City Leadership Initiative is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies. It invested \$150 million in support of the Bloomberg Center for Cities at Harvard University, which was part of the host organizations. Mayors were welcomed by former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

"Mayors face no shortage of urgent challenges right now — from poverty to climate change to public safety. This program is designed to help build their capacity to lead and empower them to act boldly," he said in the announcement about the new mayoral cohort. "We look forward to working closely with this new class throughout the year and to seeing the results they'll deliver for the millions of residents they serve."

Buffaloe received a message about applying to join the seventh City Leadership Initiative in the spring.

"I was really interested because this is my first time in politics. I worked for city government, but as far as being mayor, I want to make sure that I have all of the tools available and all of the trainings I can to be the best mayor I can for Columbia," she said.

The first classes were in-person but over the next year, there will be virtual sessions. Since Buffaloe participated, it gives Seewood an opportunity to also participate from a city management perspective.

"Having that opportunity for professional development for our senior staff that are working on implementing some of these innovative ideas, I think is key to making sustainable investment in Columbia," Buffaloe said.

Attendance and participation in the cohort helps elevate what Columbia is doing to a national and slightly international scale, while also allowing Buffaloe to learn some strategies and of programs instituted by other mayors, she said.

"(This) was when we worked with other communities in the midwest to collect data that showed our already changing climate. Other communities had not done something like that," Buffaloe said. "... All of us came together from a place of compassion. Listening to (Los Angeles) mayor Karen Bass talk about how she doesn't want to get to a point where we are penalizing people for poverty. We talked about the need for more housing ... those wraparound services."

Buffaloe was able to interact with mayors from Peoria, Illinois, and Chandler, Arizona. Peoria is close to her original hometown and the mayor from Chandler attended the University of Missouri, she said.

Mayors and those within the Bloomberg organizations also knew of Buffaloe from conference calls with the U.S. Council of Mayors and from even before when she was with the city's sustainability office, she said.

"While this is a huge world, every one of our actions do make ripples that get out and hopefully inspire others to make a difference in their world," Buffaloe said.

POLITICO

This congresswoman is making hip-hop political

By BRAKKTON BOOKER

What up, Recast family! Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie goes on the attack against fellow presidential hopeful Sen. Tim Scott, President Biden establishes a national monument after Emmett Till and his mother and the DOJ sues Texas Gov. Greg Abbott after he erects a floating barrier to deter migrant crossings. Today, we kick things off with a first-look shared only in The Recast.

First-term Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove (D-Calif.) says she's a child of hip-hop.

Now she's set to drop a resolution that remixes how we think about the arc of the genre's influence on American culture and politics.

Kamlager-Dove says her resolution, which she is unveiling on Wednesday, but allowed The Recast an exclusive review of a draft of the bill, goes far beyond recognizing Aug. 11 as the 50th anniversary of hip-hop. "Hip-hop," the bill declares, "has evolved as a platform to advocate for social, political, and economic needs of all people, including environmental justice, education, healthcare, and voting rights." And as such, Kamlager-Dove is hoping that the resolution will underscore the significance of Black American contributions to one of America's greatest exports.

She hopes the resolution can be another tool to push back on what she says is a Republican effort to double down on culture wars — that specifically targets Black history — ahead of next year's elections.

Framing the bill in that way, however, may make it hard to win much-needed GOP support. Before Kamlager-Dove was sworn in, her predecessor, former Rep. Karen Bass — now the mayor of Los Angeles — gave her some advice: pursue issues where she could work in bipartisan fashion.

But Kamlager-Dove thinks the bill will inspire some Republicans to reach across the aisle.

"I'm sure a lot of these Republicans have some rap songs on their Spotify playlists," she tells The Recast.

Her resolution, should it pass, will also push for members of Congress to organize and plan activities to honor hip-hop's contributions as well as encourage local governments to strengthen relationships with hip-hop entrepreneurs in their communities.

A larger event aiming to elevate and drum up support for the resolution is planned for September — coinciding with the annual Congressional Black Caucus conference — and the anniversary of the murder of West Coast legend Tupac Shakur.

We chop it up about her own hip-hop influences, why she was worried House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, a known Biggie enthusiast, would bigfoot her idea — and how her resolution differs from the bipartisan one passed in the Senate.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

THE RECAST: Hip-hop is celebrating a milestone next month and your resolution aims to highlight how the culture and the genre impacted not just America, but the globe. Why is it important for you to introduce your resolution now?

KAMLAGER-DOVE: I'm a fan of hip-hop. I'm a child of hip-hop. I grew up in New York when hip-hop was just finding itself and had just started. When I was a little person going to elementary school, Run DMC was out, it was the Beastie Boys, Roxanne Shanté, Big Daddy Kane.

Back then, many folks sort of saw hip-hop as a fad, as some subgenre of music that wouldn't last, mostly because these rappers seemed so "unsophisticated" and "unintelligent" and yet they were able to marry rhyme with color and rhythm and fashion, and this unapologetic truth that spoke to a population that felt unseen.

I mean, fast forward to the last presidential election, Cardi B was a surrogate for the candidate who is now the president of the United States. When [Barack] Obama was president, he put out playlists and talked about some of his favorite rappers. It's part of the zeitgeist of this country.

I mean, good lord, folks like Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) who has demonized our music until they appropriate it, because it's convenient for them.

And this lady puts out a fucking video where she's basically sitting on a throne that looks like Big Daddy Kane.

So I wanted to have a resolution to celebrate this 50-year journey.

THE RECAST: I know your predecessor, current mayor of Los Angeles Karen Bass, gave you some advice about picking issues that can help you work across the aisle. Do you feel like having a resolution on hip-hop is going to kind of aid you in that effort?

KAMLAGER-DOVE: Maybe not publicly, but privately, I'm sure a lot of these Republicans have some rap songs on their Spotify playlists. I will say, if there're some courageous Republicans out there, they need to sign their name on the resolution.

I will say that Republicans are doubling down with these culture wars, baiting Black people, with the discussion of DEI [diversity, equity and inclusion] — tomorrow we have the 75th anniversary of desegregation in the military. Meanwhile, Sen. Tommy Tuberville of Alabama refuses to support the nomination of the Joint Chiefs of Staff nominee Air Force Gen. CQ Brown Jr., a brother, under the guise of Tuberville being anti-abortion. But I think it's really about denying Black people.

But I am encouraged by ongoing conversations with the Foreign Affairs Chair Mike McCaul (R-Texas) and he talks about music as a soft power, as a diplomatic power. Now I don't know if he's got any rap on his playlists. But I share that because I think music and dance can be incredibly powerful bridges that are used to connect people.

THE RECAST: Last week Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, heralded the passage of a similar hip-hop resolution, along with Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) which calls for the establishment of Aug. 11 as "Hip Hop Celebration Day" and November as Hip Hop History Month. Rep. Jamaal Bowman (D-N.Y.) is introducing similar legislation in the House. How is your resolution different?

KAMLAGER-DOVE: I talked to Rep. Bowman about it and I joked about not wanting any East Coast-West Coast beef on this. We're hoping to do more on this during the Congressional Black Caucus in September.

Theirs is to recognize hip-hop in general. Mine is specifically to highlight the 50th anniversary of hip-hop. I'm really excited that Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries is also supportive of it. At one point we thought that he would want to do this one because you know him being from Brooklyn, the genesis of it and I told my staff: "If he yanks it from me, it's OK because he'll be the speaker [one day]."

But my resolution is about the arc of the movement and the role hip-hop has played through generations to empower Black politics and Black people.

It's also an opportunity to push back on this new Republican narrative about erasing Black history — both in the classroom and through political agenda.

Part of Black history is hip-hop and part of the resistance of the Black political movement is also embedded in hip-hop. The resolution kind of celebrates all of this and is an opportunity to talk about all of those things as well.

A quote from Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove reads "It's also an opportunity to push back on this new Republican narrative about erasing Black history — both in the classroom and through political agenda."

THE RECAST: That's interesting. Now I'm wondering if you're going to get bipartisan support on this if planning to weave the resolution through that lens.

I am wondering if you can talk a bit about the influence of hip-hop on Congress. I mean I don't think that there would be such a thing as a Congressional Sneaker Caucus on the Hill if it weren't for hip-hop, launched by Reps. Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R-Ore.) and Jared Moskowitz (D-Fla.).

KAMLAGER-DOVE: It goes to show how transcendent hip-hop has become, right? So you're absolutely correct. I was thinking about that right before you asked it. I was like, Yeah, that's true. Everyone was rocking some new Air Force 1s.

THE RECAST: So what are your top-5 hip-hop tracks on your playlist?

KAMLAGER-DOVE: Well there's Roddy Ricch with his "Aston Martin Truck." I'm kind of listening to all things. Burna Boy. I just went to this Jay-Z event at the Brooklyn Library, so I'm like "Big Pimpin'" — so, yes! And "The Story of O.J." There's J. Cole's "Pride is the Devil" And then, I guess if you want to go really old, Roxanne Shanté with her "Roxanne's Revenge."

To: Carolyn Martin[REDACTED]@gmail.com]
Bcc: mayor.staff@lacity.org[mayor.staff@lacity.org]
From: mayor.staff@lacity.org
Sent: Tue 10/3/2023 1:31:06 PM
Subject: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2023 MEDIA COVERAGE
Received: Tue 10/3/2023 1:31:51 PM

LOS ANGELES MAYOR KAREN BASS

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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SENATOR-DESIGNEE LAPHONZA BUTLER

LA TIMES

From Dianne Feinstein's death to the rise of Laphonza Butler: 3 momentous days in California

BY TIMES STAFF

The news jolted California on Friday morning: The state's legendary senator, Dianne Feinstein, had died at age 90.

Her death launched an outpouring of mourning and memories for the towering figure.

But it also created a more basic political quandary: Whom would Gov. Gavin Newsom pick to replace her?

This was the question with which Newsom had been grappling for more than a year as Feinstein's health dramatically deteriorated and some called for her to step down.

With several prominent Democrats already vying to win Feinstein's seat in 2024, Newsom made a choice that would dictate his list of candidates.

Here is a look at how the 72 momentous hours following the senator's death went, from reporting in The Times.

Who were Newsom's choices?

Newsom's decision on a potential appointment has some history.

Three years ago, he promised to appoint a Black woman to the U.S. Senate if a vacancy opened.

The 100-member Senate does not include a Black woman, a void left when California's Kamala Harris vacated her seat in 2021 to become vice president and Newsom tapped then-Secretary of State Alex Padilla to the coveted post.

Padilla, a longtime political ally, made history as California's first Latino senator. At the time, Newsom faced criticism for not selecting a Black person, so he pledged the next opening would go to a Black woman.

What role did the Senate race play?

Newsom also was under pressure to not unduly influence the hotly contested 2024 U.S. Senate race. He later announced no successor would be from among the candidates running to replace Feinstein.

Rep. Barbara Lee of Oakland is the only Black woman among several high-profile candidates vying to take Feinstein's seat in 2024.

In the wake of Feinstein's death, some called on Newsom to change his stance and tap Lee.

"The most qualified person on day one to fill the legacy of Sen. Dianne Feinstein is none other than Congresswoman Barbara Lee," Congressional Black Caucus Chairman Rep. Steven Horsford said Sunday in an interview with MSNBC.

The caucus also sent Newsom a letter making the case for Lee, and Horsford said he had talked to Newsom about it by phone and in person.

"We're asking him to understand the moment of this appointment not only for the people of California, but for the people of the United States," Horsford said.

As the weekend wore on, Newsom faced more criticism for his decision to appoint a short-term caretaker. Times columnist Erika Smith on Saturday described his pitch to Black candidates this way: "Hey, you there, Black woman. Can you keep this seat warm for a few months? Vote and do Senate stuff. You know, just until we elect a white person to replace you?"

A UC Berkeley poll in September found Democrats Reps. Adam B. Schiff of Burbank and Katie Porter of Irvine are neck and neck, with support from 20% and 17% of likely voters, respectively. The two have sizable leads over Lee, who sits at 7%.

Despite several months of campaigning, Lee remains less well-known, with half of likely voters having no opinion of her. Although she is the only Black candidate in the race, she trails among likely Black voters, with 16% support, behind Schiff's 30% and Porter's 21%. Newsom hasn't endorsed anyone in the Senate race.

Political observers said the stakes were high for the governor.

"Newsom is in a pickle here," said Steven Smith, a professor of political science at Washington University in St. Louis.

Did Newsom's stance change?

On Sunday, Newsom's office did offer a clarification, saying whomever he selected would be free to run for the seat in 2024.

"If that person decides she wants to seek a full term in 2024, then she is free to do so. There is absolutely no litmus test, no promise," Newsom spokesman Anthony York told The Times.

However, mounting a successful statewide campaign just six months before the March primary, when other candidates have been fundraising all year, would be a formidable challenge. While incumbency is a powerful force in elections, there is no guarantee that Newsom's appointee would be a viable candidate.

How did the choice come down?

With Democrats' slim majority in the Senate, Newsom was under pressure to name his pick quickly.

So on Sunday night, he announced that Laphonza Butler, a Democratic strategist who rose to prominence in the labor movement and who is also the president of Emily's List, would fill the void.

Butler, a lesbian, will be the first out person of color to serve in the Senate and the first LGBTQ+ senator from California.

"An advocate for women and girls, a second-generation fighter for working people, and a trusted adviser to Vice President Harris, Laphonza

Butler represents the best of California, and she'll represent us proudly in the United States Senate," Newsom said in a statement.

"As we mourn the enormous loss of Senator Feinstein, the very freedoms she fought for — reproductive freedom, equal protection, and safety from gun violence — have never been under greater assault. Laphonza will carry the baton left by Senator Feinstein, continue to break glass ceilings, and fight for all Californians in Washington, D.C."

Little is known about Newsom's process in selecting Butler.

Some names that sparked speculation included California Secretary of State Shirley Weber; San Francisco Mayor London Breed; civil rights leader Angela Glover Blackwell; and human rights activist Lateefah Simon, who is running to replace Lee in Congress.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Holly Mitchell and U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Los Angeles) said they are not interested. A representative for L.A. Mayor Karen Bass shot down speculation earlier this year that she might consider the job.

Who is Laphonza Butler?

Before joining Emily's List — a political organization dedicated to electing women to political office — Butler served as director of public policy and campaigns at Airbnb. She also partnered at the political consulting firm SCRB Strategies (now Bearstar Strategies), whose clients included Newsom, former Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf and then-Sen. Kamala Harris. The firm is run by the governor's veteran strategists Ace Smith, Sean Clegg and Juan Rodriguez.

Butler also served for more than a decade as president of Service Employees International Union Local 2015, which represents more than 325,000 nursing home and home-care workers throughout California. SEIU Local 2015 is the largest union in California and the largest local representing long-term care workers in the country.

She also was a senior advisor on Harris' presidential campaign.

In 2018, Butler was appointed as a UC regent by then-Gov. Jerry Brown, a post she held until 2021. She has served on the board of the Children's Defense Fund, a national child advocacy organization; political action committee BlackPAC; and the Bay Area Economic Council Institute think tank. She's a former director for the board of governors of the Los Angeles branch of the Federal Reserve System.

Butler was born in Magnolia, Miss. Her father died after a series of heart attacks when she was 16, leaving her mother to work as many as three jobs at once to support her three children.

She received her bachelor's degree in political science from Jackson State University — a historically Black college — where, she told The Times' Mark Z. Barabak in 2021 that she was inspired by her instructors, many of whom were veterans of the civil rights movement. They instilled in her a bent toward activism and a commitment to social justice, she said.

"What are you doing for freedom? That was always the question," Butler told Barabak. "What are you doing for freedom today?"

Butler moved to California in 2009 after serving as a labor organizer for nurses in Baltimore and Milwaukee, janitors in Philadelphia and hospital workers in New Haven, Conn.

What is next?

Mourners can pay their respects to Feinstein this week when her body lies in state at San Francisco City Hall, where her political career began.

The public can gather Wednesday to say goodbye to the long-term California senator as well as sign a condolence book from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., her office said.

The late senator's funeral will be a private affair Thursday at the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center in the Herbst Theatre. It will be livestreamed and broadcast for public viewing at San Francisco City Hall.

Meanwhile, Butler could be sworn in as early as this week.

SF CHRONICLE

Laphonza Butler advised a who's who of politicians and causes. Now she takes center stage

BY Sophia Bollag, Shira Stein

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom's selection of Laphonza Butler to replace Sen. Dianne Feinstein in the Senate elevates a longtime leader in California labor and politics who has never held public office.

On Monday, Newsom called her "next-level qualified" for the job and pointed to Butler's deep experience in public service, from organizing workers in Los Angeles to advising national leaders like Vice President Kamala Harris. Her lack of tenure holding public office, he argued, may be her greatest attribute.

"People that have been around a long, long time, they realize the constraints of office and sometimes their expectations are lowered as a consequence," he told reporters in San Francisco on Monday. "Her expectations are not lowered. She has a sense of idealism and optimism about what she can do."

Butler drew criticism almost immediately because she lives in Maryland, not California. She previously lived in Los Angeles and still owns a

home there, but moved to Maryland in 2021 to lead the group Emily's List, which works to elect women who support abortion rights to public office. Newsom's office said she would re-register to vote in California before being sworn in, satisfying the constitutional residency requirements for the job.

Butler is scheduled to be sworn in Tuesday by Harris, who traditionally does so as president of the Senate.

Despite living for the last two years primarily on the East Coast, Butler has deep ties to California. She rose to power within the labor movement through the Service Employees International Union's branch representing long-term care workers in the Los Angeles area. When all of the regional long-term care workers unions in California joined forces to become SEIU Local 2015, she was elected president of that larger union. She was also selected to lead the umbrella organization SEIU California, which represents all the union's local branches in the state.

Butler's meteoric rise took her through labor organizing, political consulting at top Democratic firm Bearstar Strategies, a brief stint at Airbnb managing public policy and campaigns, and since 2021, as head of the nation's premier organization helping elect women to political office.

Butler's contact list is a who's who of politicians — she served as a senior adviser in California for Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign and as a political adviser to Newsom, former Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass.

Butler is a longtime key ally of Harris, starting in 2010 when she helped negotiate an SEIU endorsement in the California attorney general campaign.

"Early in that race, there were a lot of naysayers who didn't think I could get elected," Harris said in 2018. "Laphonza stuck with me from the beginning through the end."

During Harris' failed run for president, Butler was a senior strategist for the campaign. Politico reported Harris intended to name Butler as her campaign manager, but ended her campaign before doing so.

Since then, Butler has been a reliable supporter of Harris, speaking to the Chronicle about her role in shifting the conversation on abortion rights and her place as the focus of the 2024 election.

In a 2021 interview, Butler said the biggest lesson she learned from Harris was to "lean into your ambition. ... It was her ambition to serve that prepared her to be our country's first woman and Black woman vice president, to pierce that glass ceiling."

Butler has also been a longtime ally of Newsom, having endorsed his run for governor in 2018. His appointment of her to the Senate allowed him to continue his penchant for appointing "firsts." She will be the first lesbian Black woman in the Senate, and only the third Black woman and third openly LGBT person ever to serve in the chamber.

Butler is "succeeding a trailblazer by breaking more barriers," White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters Monday, referring to Feinstein. Jean-Pierre is the first Black and first openly LGBT press secretary.

"Just because you are the only person in the room, you're there for more than just you. Embrace that your voice is in that space... and use it. If you're going to be in the room, be heard," Butler said in a 2021 interview.

During her tenure with SEIU, Butler was instrumental in negotiating a \$15 minimum wage law with then-Gov. Jerry Brown in 2016. Under her leadership, the union pressured Brown and lawmakers by launching a campaign to place a minimum wage measure on California ballots. She used the threat of a costly campaign over the measure as leverage in negotiations, ultimately agreeing to pull it from the ballot after Brown and the Legislature enacted the state's landmark minimum wage law.

Arnulfo De La Cruz, the current president of SEIU 2015, described Butler as critical to those negotiations. He said her background as an organizer of caregivers, including those working in nursing homes and in private residences, helped center the voices of an often marginalized workforce in the conversation around minimum wage.

"I don't think the Fight for 15 would have happened without Laphonza," De La Cruz said, referencing the title of the minimum wage campaign. "She was the leading voice in that fight."

The law made California's minimum wage the highest in the country. It gradually phased in the \$15 minimum wage but also included the ability for it to climb higher with inflation. The state's current minimum wage is \$15.50 because of inflation and the requirements in the law.

Two years after Butler helped negotiate the deal with Brown, he appointed her to a 12-year term on the University of California Board of Regents, the governing board of the state's flagship university system. She left that position just three years in to become president of Emily's List.

Her time at the helm of Emily's List coincided with the most critical juncture for abortion rights in more than a generation — the overturning of Roe v. Wade. Butler led a rebranding of Emily's List, expanding its mission to include voting rights and focusing on a more diverse set of candidates, she said in 2022.

Part of that expansion came because of what Butler said was a direct link between the rollback of voting rights and the loss of abortion rights.

"I fear that true freedom in our country is disappearing," she wrote in an open letter to her daughter posted days after the decision leaked. "In these tough moments, one life lesson you should take and keep with you is that in order to keep certain freedoms, you must be willing to fight

for them," she wrote. "With so much dishonesty in our world, it's my dream of living in a world that protects you and all America's daughters that fuels the fight in me."

She traveled to states thought to be a lost cause when it came to abortion rights, and saw her prediction that abortion rights would help Democrats win come to fruition in the 2022 midterm elections.

"We are very fortunate that we have a leader in Laphonza Butler at a moment like this in the history of our country," Harris said at a 2022 Emily's List gala.

As the head of Emily's List, Butler could make or break a campaign. Her organization brings considerable fundraising, research on important issues and efforts to get out the vote to any candidate it endorses. That experience could make her a formidable opponent should she choose to enter the 2024 Senate race.

If she chooses not to run for a full term, she'll have just 15 months to make an impact. In 2022, Butler quoted Muhammad Ali. "When he was fighting his biggest battle, he said, 'Don't count the days, make the days count.'"

KCRW

Laphonza Butler to fill Feinstein's Senate seat. Will she seek full term?

by Amy Ta

Governor Gavin Newsom on Sunday appointed Laphonza Butler to fill Dianne Feinstein's Senate seat after Feinstein died last week. Vice President Kamala Harris is scheduled to swear in Butler on Wednesday. The appointment fulfills a promise Newsom made two years ago to name a Black woman to the next vacant Senate seat. Democratic Representatives Barbara Lee, Katie Porter, and Adam Schiff have been vying for the seat since Feinstein announced she would retire.

While Butler isn't a household name, the Senate-designate has been around California politics for a long time, says CalMatters Reporter Alexei Koseff. She has a history with SEIU Local 2015, which represents California's long-term care workers. Then she was a partner in the consulting firm that represents Gavin Newsom, Kamala Harris, and other high-ranking California politicians. After that, she worked on Airbnb's public policy.

One question swirling after news of her appointment is whether she's eligible to serve as a California senator, particularly since she moved to Washington D.C. two years ago when taking on a role with EMILY's List, a national group that works to elect Democratic women who support abortion rights.

Koseff says Butler owns a home in California and will need to re-register to vote in the state prior to her swearing-in ceremony.

"Obviously, this did open up some criticism. A lot of Republicans, in particular, mocked the governor for the fact that he couldn't even find someone to appoint from California," Koseff explains.

He points out that many women politicians reportedly said they weren't interested in the job and tried to push it on to Congresswoman Barbara Lee. That includes Karen Bass, Maxine Waters, and London Breed. "There was this big public pressure campaign. And obviously, it did not work out in the end."

Some of the appointment's loudest critics were Barbara Lee's supporters, Koseff notes. And so, if Butler ends up running for the full Senate term, would she take support away from Barbara Lee as a progressive Black woman?

"It's so hard to say because we don't even know yet if she is going to run. So these are all hypotheticals that we're trying to figure out at the moment. ... But I do think that there's a lot of questions about what her entering the race would mean. From a surface level, she certainly has a profile most similar to Barbara Lee's. But politically, we don't really know yet how she's going to govern."

He continues, "Barbara Lee has really asserted herself out there as the progressive choice, and that has garnered her a lot of fans. Not enough, obviously, to be leading in the polls. But they may be very devoted to her. And in fact, Butler might end up being a little bit more of a mainstream Democrat and draw support away from someone like Adam Schiff."

LA WEEKLY

NEWSOM APPOINTS LAPHONZA BUTLER TO COMPLETE FEINSTEIN'S SENATE TERM

BY ISAI ROCHA

California Governor Gavin Newsom appointed Laphonza Butler to the Senate after the death of longtime U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein.

Butler will serve the remainder of Feinstein's term, which runs through 2024 and gives her the opportunity to run for a full term in the next election cycle.

"An advocate for women and girls, a second-generation fighter for working people, and a trusted adviser to Vice President Harris, Laphonza Butler represents the best of California, and she'll represent us proudly in the United States Senate," Governor Newsom said. "As we mourn the enormous loss of Senator Feinstein, the very freedoms she fought for — reproductive freedom, equal protection, and safety from gun violence — have never been under greater assault. Laphonza will carry the baton left by Senator Feinstein, continue to break glass ceilings, and fight for all Californians in Washington D.C."

A senior adviser to U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris during her 2020 presidential campaign, Butler will become the first Black and openly gay woman to serve in the Senate.

Former president of the Long Term Care Workers unit of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Butler helped represent more

than 250,000 janitors, security officers, window cleaners, and food service workers across the country. She also served on the SEIU California council, giving way to union representation that Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass commended in a statement.

"Laphonza Butler is an incredibly capable leader who I know will serve with distinction in the U.S. Senate on behalf of California," Bass said. "I first met Laphonza when she took the helm of SEIU Local 2015 and I watched as she worked to grow the union into the statewide force it is today. She has always been a fighter for the people and I look forward to working with her in this new capacity."

Senator Feinstein died at 90 years old Thursday, Sept. 29, and served as a U.S. senator since 1992. Feinstein was also the oldest sitting member of Congress, a classification now belonging to Senator Chuck Grassley, 90, out of Iowa.

Newsom remembered Feinstein as a mentor and "trailblazer" for policy related to gun safety.

"... to me, she was a dear friend, a lifelong mentor, and a role model not only for me, but to my wife and daughters for what a powerful, effective leader looks like," Newsom said after Feinstein's passing. "Every race she won, she made history, but her story wasn't just about being the first woman in a particular political office, it was what she did for California, and for America, with that power once she earned it. That's what she should be remembered for."

LA OPINION

Political Round: Newsom keeps his word and appoints an African American as senator

By: Araceli Martínez Ortega

The death of Senator Dianne Feinstein put Governor Gavin Newsom to work overtime, because in the midst of the grief he is experiencing, he had to dedicate time to selecting who will temporarily occupy his seat in the Senate

Within 48 hours, the governor appointed 44-year-old union leader Laphonza Butler, leaving in the way a large number of African-American women who were mentioned could be Feinstein's replacement for the remainder of her term.

The California Constitution gives Governor Newsom the authority to appoint an interim senator while voters elect in November 2024.

When he appointed Alex Padilla, Newsom promised that if he were to nominate another senator, it would be an African American.

The most viable option was Rep. Barbara Lee of Oakland who has been campaigning since February when Feinstein announced she would no longer seek re-election. But appointing Lee temporarily would not have been seen as a fair decision to her opponents, Reps. Adam Schiff of Pasadena and Katie Porter of Orange who are fighting for Feinstein's seat.

Congresswoman Lee had not been very fond of the idea of an African American being appointed on an interim basis just to fulfill the requirement. According to what she posted on Twitter, she considered it an insult to the countless African-American women who have helped the Democratic Party win time and time again across the country.

The list of those who could go to the Senate mentioned Mayor Karen Bass herself, Supervisor Holly Mitchell, San Francisco Mayor London Bree, Secretary of State Shirley Weber and Congresswoman Maxine Waters.

It was even thought that the ideal candidate was Congresswoman Waters, since her possible appointment was a good way to close with a flourish her legislative career of more than three decades in Washington. Waters is 85 years old. She is not far off Senator Feinstein's age. And she has also always maintained an excellent relationship with the Latin community.

And speaking of our community, we wonder why, if it is only a temporary position, the interim senator could not have been a Latina. Because we already have a Latino senator, we must settle. We are more than 40% of the population of California.

But Newsom kept his promise and appointed an African American woman in Butler's person to go to the Senate for just over a year.

Butler is California's second African-American senator and will also be the state's first openly LGBTQ senator.

Time limits

The other issue that came to the table of discussions after Feinstein's death is whether congressmen and senators, including members of the Supreme Court, should be imposed time limits.

There are many comments that Feinstein was not allowed to resign. You can imagine who; And it is strange because in the past, these characters criticized that rulers like Fidel Castro have remained in power forever.

A Pew Research Center poll found that 87% of the public supports imposing age limits on politicians in Washington, and 74% on members of the Supreme Court. Republicans are the most in favor of the proposal, but Democrats are not very happy about it.

Age should not matter, if the rulers, legislators or ministers were in full function, but when they get stuck in the middle of a press conference like Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, it is time to give them a tribute and let them go.

The list grows

Through a video, Superintendent of Education Tony Thurmond announced this week that he wants to be governor of California. He joins the list that already includes Comptroller Betty Yee, Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis, and most likely Prosecutor Rob Bonta. So far no Latino has said this is my voice to join the race, although there were rumors that Antonio Villaraigosa could be encouraged, it is doubtful because the political capital of the former mayor of Los Angeles is greatly diminished.

CHIEF HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS OFFICER LOURDES CASTRO RAMIREZ

LA TIMES

Bass' homelessness czar Mercedes Márquez to be replaced by Lourdes Castro Ramírez

BY JULIA WICK

Mayor Karen **Bass**' homelessness czar, Mercedes Márquez, will leave her high-profile post next month, with state housing official Lourdes Castro Ramírez set to succeed her, the mayor's office announced Monday.

Márquez, a former local and federal housing official, was one of **Bass**' first hires last year. She has held one of the more visible roles in an administration that's been predominantly focused on the city's homelessness crisis.

Márquez was expected to step down before the end of the year, and the mayor's office described Castro Ramírez's appointment as "a planned transition due to federal retiree rules" in a news release Monday.

Castro Ramírez will start her tenure as the city's chief housing and homelessness officer on Nov. 6, the same day Márquez steps down, according to the mayor's office.

Márquez will remain a senior advisor to the administration. Bass praised her "tireless work and dedication" in a statement.

Known for her tough management style, Márquez brought deep knowledge of both City Hall and federal agencies, having previously run the city's housing department and twice served in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"We have led unprecedented efforts through our Inside Safe initiative, and have truly locked arms with every level of government to bring the Los Angeles homelessness crisis the attention it deserves in order to save lives every single day," Márquez said Monday. "I feel lucky to have a successor like Lourdes Castro Ramírez, someone with the experience and knowledge required, and someone I have had a relationship with for nearly 20 years."

Castro Ramírez currently leads the California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency, which is responsible for overseeing the state's housing departments.

The agency's far-reaching portfolio includes state cannabis and alcohol licensing departments, the California Horse Racing Board and state departments dedicated to civil rights and consumer protection.

Castro Ramírez also serves on the California Strategic Growth Council, the California Housing Finance Agency Board and the Governor's Military Council, and she co-chairs the California Interagency Council on Homelessness.

She has been based in Sacramento but will "be working in person and living in the [Los Angeles] area" when she joins the mayor's office, **Bass** spokesperson Gabby Maarse said.

"I am honored to join in Mayor **Bass**' efforts to continue this work, bringing my experience and passion for urgent, collaborative and transformative solutions to Los Angeles, the place that welcomed my family when we immigrated from Mexico, and the place where I found my calling and honed my community planning, housing and leadership skills," Castro Ramírez said.

Before the state Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency, Castro Ramírez led HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing and the San Antonio Housing Authority. She also spent a decade with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and led HACLA's Section 8 program for several years.

KFI

Mayor Bass Appoints New Chief Housing and Homelessness Officer

Lourdes Castro Ramírez, secretary of the California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency, will take over the position as chief housing and homelessness officer, Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass** announced Monday.

Ramírez will begin her appointment on Nov. 6, replacing Mercedes Márquez, who currently holds the position. According to **Bass**' office, the decision to appoint Castro Ramírez is part of a planned transition due to federal retiree rules.

"We must continue our momentum and progress in confronting the emergency of this homelessness crisis, and I am excited to be bringing Secretary Lourdes Castro Ramírez to continue our transformative work on this issue," **Bass** said in a statement.

The mayor thanked Márquez for her work and dedication to address the city's homelessness crisis.

Márquez will continue her work with **Bass** as a senior advisor to ensure "continuity and expand momentum to bring unhoused Angelenos inside with urgency."

Under Márquez's leadership, **Bass's** administration said it has helped more than 17,000 unhoused Angelenos come inside, of which 1,600 found shelter through the mayor's Inside Safe initiative.

According to the mayor's office, Márquez has leveraged \$150 million of Measure ULA funding to fund items such as short-term emergency rental assistance, expedited more than 7,000 units of affordable housing through the mayor's executive directive No. 1 -- which streamlines affordable housing projects -- and assisted in the purchase of the Mayfair Hotel for interim housing.

"We have led unprecedented efforts through our Inside Safe initiative, and have truly locked arms with every level of government to bring the Los Angeles homelessness crisis like the attention it deserves in order to save lives every single day," Márquez said in a statement.

She added, "I feel lucky to have a successor like Lourdes Castro Ramírez, someone with the experience and knowledge required, and someone I have had a relationship with for nearly 20 years."

Gov. Gavin Newsom appointed Castro Ramírez to serve as the secretary of the state agency in March 2020, where she currently leads and oversees 12 entities, including 40 boards and bureaus. She's also responsible for preservation and expansion of safe, affordable housing, efforts to prevent and end homelessness, protect consumers and safeguard California's civil rights laws.

"I'm grateful to Gov. Newsom for entrusting me to help realize his vision on housing, homelessness, civil rights and consumer protections," Castro Ramírez said in a statement. "Today, I'm honored to join Mayor **Bass'** efforts to continue this work, bringing by experience and passion for urgent, collaborative and transformative solutions to Los Angeles, that place that welcomed my family when we immigrated from Mexico, and the place where I found my calling and honed by community planning, housing and leadership skills."

Since 2020, the agency and departments delivered more than \$31 billion in funding to expand rental and homeownership housing opportunities, and more than \$11 billion in homelessness solutions.

Castro Ramírez formerly led the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Public and Indian Housing. She was previously the president and CEO of the San Antonio Housing Authority, and a director at L.A. City's housing authority overseeing rental assistance and resident development programs.

She earned her master of arts degree in urban planning and a bachelor of arts degree in political science and Chicano studies at UCLA.

MY NEWS LA

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LA IST

LA Mayor Picks New Top Advisor On Homelessness and Housing

By Nick Gerda

L.A. Mayor Karen **Bass** is bringing on someone new to be her top advisor on homelessness. Lourdes Castro Ramirez, who oversees much of the state's homelessness and housing spending, will start as Bass' chief of housing and homelessness on Nov. 6.

Why the change: The mayor's current homelessness czar, Mercedes Marquez, has been in the role since **Bass** started as mayor in December and will stay on as an advisor to assist the transition. In a statement, **Bass**' office said the job change was planned "due to federal retiree rules" without explaining further. (Marquez used to work for the federal government.)

Key quote: "We must continue our momentum and progress in confronting the emergency of this homelessness crisis, and I am excited to be bringing Secretary Lourdes Castro Ramirez to continue our transformative work on this issue," **Bass** said.

The background: **Bass** has taken on homelessness as her main concern, with her Inside Safe program bringing 1,600 people into motels and hotels. But she's run into challenges finding long-term solutions. Only about 1% of people in the program have been able to find permanent supportive housing.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE #1

DAILY NEWS

Loophole lets developers put big apartment buildings next to SF Valley houses

By LINH TAT |

One of Karen **Bass**' first act as mayor of Los Angeles was to issue an executive directive to fast-track the city's approval of 100% affordable housing projects and shelters, in response to L.A.'s housing and homelessness crisis.

That was December 2022. In June, **Bass** revised her Executive Directive 1, known as ED1, adding a clause to specify that such projects built under ED1 cannot be located on single-family streets.

That means that developers who want to build large, multi-story projects in single-family neighborhoods can't use **Bass**' ED1 fast-track process, which also exempts developers from conducting certain environmental studies or holding public hearings.

Single-family streets have long been protected from developers who want to build large apartment buildings. But to the shock and dismay of some San Fernando Valley residents, such projects might still end up on their quiet streets.

During the first six months after the mayor's executive directive went into effect, and before **Bass** updated it to prohibit ED1 projects on single-family streets, the city received several applications from developers seeking to build large, multi-family developments in such neighborhoods.

Eight applications are in the pipeline — all proposed in the San Fernando Valley, according to the city's planning department.

They include five projects in City Councilmember Bob Blumenfield's Council District 3 in the West Valley — two in Canoga Park and three in Reseda; two projects in the East Valley — in Pacoima and Sun Valley; and one in Sherman Oaks.

The proposed projects range from 78 to 202 units, with heights of 39 to 80 feet, according to the planning department.

Residents in Sherman Oaks were flabbergasted to learn that a seven-story, 200-unit building could go up on Ethel Avenue, towering over their single-family homes. An upset group of residents showed up to protest at a recent unrelated ribbon-cutting ceremony that their councilmember, Nithya Raman, was hosting.

In an interview on Thursday, Sept. 28, Maria Pavlou Kalban, co-vice president of the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association, called the situation "terrible."

"At this point, the city needs to figure out how to mitigate the impacts on the neighbors. They can't just wipe their hands. ... It's sloppy work on the part of the city," Pavlou Kalban said.

"The mayor's office made a mistake and what they need to figure out now is how to mitigate that impact," she added.

Bass' office issued a statement in response to questions as to whether the mayor realized when she issued her initial executive directive that it allowed massive apartment buildings in single-family neighborhoods, or if the eight applications submitted to the city before she revised the directive should qualify as ED1 projects.

"Executive Directive 1 is intended to cut through red tape for affordable housing that meet a set of requirements," **Bass'** office said. "The Mayor updated her executive directive to make it clear that projects that don't meet these requirements are not eligible for administrative expediting and instead must use the standard application process which typically includes a public hearing in front of the City Planning Commission."

During a City Council meeting last week, Blumenfield said the city should not allow the eight projects to move forward under ED1, five of which are in his district.

Blumenfield said that those left dealing with the consequences will be "all of those neighbors, all of those folks who can't necessarily speak for themselves, who live next door, who, their property value is going to get cut in half, they're going to have a big shadow over their place ... when that was not the intent of ED1."

Here's a list of those projects, provided by the city's planning department:

5501-5511 N. Ethel Ave., Sherman Oaks: 200 units with building height of 80 feet
10898-10900 W. Olinda St., Sun Valley: 78 units with building height of 43 feet
8217 N. Winnetka Ave., Canoga Park: 360 units with building height of 80 feet
19448 W. Saticoy St., Reseda: 114 units with building height of 48 feet
7745 N. Wilbur Ave., Reseda: 190 units with building height of approximately 69 feet
11070 N. Borden Ave., Pacoima: 202 units with building height of 58.5 feet
8550 N. Variel Ave., Canoga Park: 85 units with building height of 39 feet
18430 W. Vanowen St., Reseda: 85 units with building height of 64 feet

In addition to letting developers skip normal steps like environmental reviews or public hearings where community members can weigh in, decisions by city staffers to approve applications under ED1 can't be appealed by neighbors or others who oppose a project. This is different from the typical approval process, where applications are reviewed by the planning commission.

The upside to the ED1 process, some say, is that it significantly cuts the time it takes to green light housing projects.

And because ED1 doesn't require the City Council to approve a project, developers have more certainty that if they fulfill other requirements, their projects will get approved, Councilmember Nithya Raman said.

During the Tuesday, Sept. 26, council meeting, Raman credited the mayor's directive for incentivizing developers to build affordable housing in a city where it's sorely needed, saying it cut the approval time from more than six months to 47 days on average.

In her Council District 4, Raman said, some developers who intended to build market-rate housing are now proposing 100% affordable housing projects instead.

"Seeing the predictability that comes from ED1, (developers) have actually refiled as 100% affordable," Raman said. "That's how much predictability is valued by developers, and I think really matters to us being able to increase affordable housing in the city."

The mayor has also touted the success of ED1 to get more affordable housing built in L.A. Last month, **Bass** announced that more than 7,000 affordable housing units are in the pipeline to be built because of the directive.

But now, city officials are wrestling with whether the eight applications to build 100% affordable housing units in single-family residential zones, submitted before the mayor updated her directive, should be allowed to use the ED1 approval process.

Should the eight projects in the Valley be 'grandfathered' in?

The development proposed in Sherman Oaks was debated by the City Council last week.

The firm Uncommon Developers has proposed a seven-story, 200-unit affordable housing project on Ethel Avenue, in a single-family residential neighborhood. Uncommon Developers submitted a preliminary application in March and more paperwork several weeks later – before the mayor revised her executive directive.

In July, after **Bass** revised her directive, the planning department notified the developer that his application no longer qualified for the ED1 track.

The developer appealed, arguing that whatever rules existed when he filed his application should apply. The state Department of Housing and Community Development agreed, writing to city officials that the developer has "vesting rights" because his completed application came in before Bass revised her ED1.

Last month, the City Council's Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee sided with the developer and forwarded the case to the full City Council for consideration.

A split council voted 8-5 last week to uphold the PLUM committee's decision to side with the developer. Councilmembers Blumenfield, Imelda Padilla and Monica Rodriguez — who all have these projects pending in their own districts — as well as Traci Park and Kevin de León, voted against letting the developer use the streamlined approval process in Sherman Oaks.

Raman, who represents Sherman Oaks, said she understood that upholding the developer's appeal could set a precedent allowing the other seven proposed apartment buildings in the Valley to utilize the ED1 fast-track — a concern raised by some councilmembers.

But Raman said that denying the developer's appeal would also be problematic.

"Moving to deny projects that have followed the law also sets a really bad precedent — a dangerous one — for the city of Los Angeles," Raman said. "If we put out a message that not only are we going to deny 100% affordable projects that followed the rules ... and in doing so expose ourselves to significant legal liabilities, that message will take our already disastrous housing crisis and deepen it further."

Blumenfield felt differently and introduced a motion during the meeting to deny the developer's appeal. His motion failed.

He said he understood the mayor's executive directive was drafted quickly to respond to L.A.'s housing and homelessness crisis. But, he said, "when you do something quickly, sometimes mistakes are made. And we have to be prepared to deal with those mistakes."

The City Council went into a lengthy discussion about whether developers who submitted applications before the mayor updated her directive have "vesting rights" that lock them in to rules in place before ED1 was revised.

Although the state Department of Housing and Community Development believes these developers have vesting rights, the city's planning department disagrees.

"We worked closely with the mayor's office, looking at the intent of Executive Directive 1," Lisa Webber, a deputy director in the planning department, told the council. "We also worked closely with our city attorney's office, and we've come to a determination that ED1 does not carry vesting status."

A representative for the city attorney's office told the council that it considered the state's opinion "persuasive at most, not binding" should this issue come up in court.

Response from Sherman Oaks residents

Neighbors near the proposed 7-story Sherman Oaks development, some of whom spoke during Tuesday's council meeting, describe Ethel Avenue as a two-lane street with traffic in both directions — portions of which have no sidewalks. Many people walk along Ethel on their way to a synagogue down the road. Pedestrians, including young children and parents with strollers, must share the road with drivers, they say.

They worry traffic will increase and the road will become more dangerous with the addition of 200 housing units on a street where, according to one neighbor, there are about 20 homes.

"They want to increase the amount of residences in our neighborhood tenfold," said resident Scott Greenberg. "The issue for our neighborhood is not affordable housing in and of itself. ... It's the fact that they want to put in too much housing."

"I would be supportive of affordable housing on this site, provided it's done sensibly," he added.

Neighbors also cited a school for autistic children in the neighborhood, saying they're worried that students with sensory issues will have difficulty dealing with noise and other disruptions that come with construction.

Dave Rand, an attorney for the developer of the Sherman Oaks project, said in an interview his client wants to work with the neighbors.

Rand said they've agreed to design the building so the balconies won't look down into neighbors' yards, to take measures to minimize disruptions during construction, and to meet with neighbors to present their plans and hear from residents. The developer is also open to adding speed humps or implementing other traffic safety measures, Rand said.

At the end of the day, the project will be a benefit to the community, Rand said. "There will be 200 affordable units in an area that has desperately needed them," he said.

The developer still needs the planning department to sign off on various aspects of the project before final approval is granted.

What's next?

Hours after the L.A. City Council meeting, the Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council's Government Affairs Committee met and approved a draft motion stating opposition to "irresponsible densification" in a single-family residential zone. The motion will be considered by the neighborhood council's full body. If approved, it would become the neighborhood council's official position.

In the meantime, some residents near the Sherman Oaks project site say they're weighing their options, including a potential lawsuit.

It's unclear what will happen to the eight applications submitted to the city by developers before Bass revised her executive directive, all of which seek to build multi-storied complexes with dozens of apartment units in single-family residential neighborhoods.

The Sherman Oaks project was the first case to come before the City Council on appeal over the ED1 vesting rights issue.

There are two more cases pending appeal, Webber, of the planning department, told the City Council.

REAL DEAL

Can LA claw back order that allowed tall buildings next to homes?

When Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass** signed an executive order seven months ago to relax affordable housing rules for developers, she hoped it would encourage larger projects. It did, but some homeowners don't like it.

The mayor's order to fast-track housing may allow for eight apartment complexes up to 80 feet tall to be built next to homes in five single-family neighborhoods across the San Fernando Valley, the Los Angeles Daily News reported.

Her executive order known as Executive Directive 1, signed in December and revised six months later to bar apartments on single-family streets, created a loophole for projects proposed in Sherman Oaks, Canoga Park, Reseda, Pacoima and Sun Valley.

The directive was meant to speed approval of 100-percent affordable housing and homeless shelters without public hearings, environmental studies and nods from either the city's Planning Commission or City Council. A revision, which came in June, said such projects couldn't be built on single-family streets, long protected from developers of large apartment buildings.

But in the interim, developers filed for eight ED1 apartment projects across the Valley.

They include a 200-unit, 80-foot-tall complex by Chatsworth-based Uncommon Developers at 5501-5511 North Ethel Avenue in Sherman Oaks.

Also they include a 78-unit complex at 10898-10900 West Olinda Street in Sun Valley; a 360-unit complex at 8217 North Winnetka Avenue and an 85-unit complex at 8550 North Variel Avenue in Canoga Park; a 114-unit complex at 19448 West Saticoy Street, a 190-unit complex at 7745 North Wilbur Avenue and an 85-unit complex at 18430 West Vanowen Street in Reseda; and a 202-unit complex at 11070 North Borden Avenue in Pacoima.

Critics accuse the mayor, who issued the directive until it was later clarified, of being asleep at the switch. Maria Pavlou Kalban, co-vice president of the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association, called the loophole "terrible."

"The mayor's office made a mistake and what they need to figure out now is how to mitigate that impact," she said.

In March, Uncommon Developers proposed the seven-story, 200-unit affordable housing project on Ethel Avenue, a single-family neighborhood, before the mayor revised her executive directive, according to the Daily News.

In July, after **Bass** revised her directive, the Planning Department told the developer its application no longer qualified for the ED1 track. The developer appealed, saying whatever rules existed when it filed the application should apply.

The state Department of Housing & Community Development agreed, telling city officials the developer has "vesting rights" because its application fell before the revised order.

Last month, the City Council's Planning & Land Use Management Committee sided with Uncommon Developers, and sent its case to the City Council, which voted 8-5 to uphold the decision.

Councilman Bob Blumenfield, whose district contains five of the projects, introduced a motion to deny the developer's appeal, which failed.

Blumenfield said the mayor's order would impact "all of those neighbors, all of those folks who can't necessarily speak for themselves, who live next door, who, their property value is going to get cut in half, they're going to have a big shadow over their place ... when that was not the intent of ED1."

City officials are now wrestling with whether the applications to build affordable apartment complexes in single-family residential zones, submitted before the mayor updated her directive, should be allowed to use the ED1 approval process.

The mayor's office said Executive Directive 1 was intended to cut red tape, not allow a loophole.

"The mayor updated her executive directive to make it clear that projects that don't meet these requirements are not eligible for administrative expediting and instead must use the standard application process which typically includes a public hearing in front of the City Planning Commission," it said in a statement.

The state Department of Housing & Community Development believes the developers now have vesting rights to complete their projects. The city's Planning Department disagrees.

A representative of the City Attorney's Office told the council that it considered the state's opinion "persuasive at most, not binding" should

the issue come up in court. Some residents around Ethel Street in Sherman Oaks say they're weighing whether to file a lawsuit.

INDIAN CONSULATE

INSIDE THE GAMES

Mayor claims Los Angeles 2028 will strengthen ties with India and calls for consulate in city

By Dan Palmer

Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass** believes the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games can be used to strengthen the city's ties with India as she urged the country to open a consulate there.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced in June that two new consulates would be opened in the United States - adding to those already in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Houston and Atlanta.

Bass has now written to India's ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, to ask that one of the consulates is opened in Los Angeles.

"With the largest port complex in the Western Hemisphere, thousands of start-ups and the third largest venture capital market in the United States, and a slate of international sporting and entertainment events scheduled over the next decade including the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games, I am excited by endless opportunities to strengthen ties between Los Angeles and India," said **Bass**.

"It would be my honour to work with you to open and provide continued support for this important platform for engagement and exchange.

"Tourism between India and Los Angeles is another source of mutual benefit, and Los Angeles has invested in India with a dedicated Tourism Office that opened in 2019 and remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As the second largest city in the United States and home to more than 150,000 Indian Americans, I respectfully request you choose Los Angeles to host a new consular mission."

India is set to have an increased interest in the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics as cricket is expected to be added to the sports programme.

The move is due to be confirmed at the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Session which India is hosting in Mumbai between October 15 and 17.

IOC President Thomas Bach is keen to tap into the sport's money making potential, particular in India and the subcontinent where the world-leading Indian Premier League generates massive television deals.

Major League Cricket side Los Angeles Knight Riders are owned by Indian Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan, and his KKR Group.

Eric Garcetti, the former Los Angeles Mayor who was a key figure in the city being named as the 2028 host in the historic joint award with Paris 2024, is now the US ambassador to India.

INDIA TODAY

Consider City of Los Angeles for new Indian Consulate: Mayor Karen Bass

Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass** and the Indian-American community have urged the Indian government to open a consulate in the second-largest US city and the entertainment capital of the world.

Currently, there are five Indian consulates in the US, in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Houston and Atlanta.

During the historic State Visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June, it was announced that India would open two new consulates in the US, one of which would be in Seattle. A group of Indian American organisations and the Los Angeles (LA) Mayor are urging that the second consulate should be opened in their city.

"I ask that you consider the City of Los Angeles for a new Indian Consulate. It would be my honour to work with you to open and provide continued support for this important platform for engagement and exchange," **Bass** wrote in a recent letter to India's Ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu.

"Tourism between India and Los Angeles is another source of mutual benefit, and Los Angeles has invested in India with a dedicated Tourism Office that opened in 2019 and remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic," **Bass** wrote in her letter, a copy of which has been seen by PTI.

With more than 100,000 Indian visitors to Los Angeles every year, a consulate will not only provide important services but become a key partner to expand bilateral cooperation, she said.

"We are proud to host 94 foreign missions as part of our diplomatic corps, and my Office of International Affairs is dedicated to deepening our engagement with partners around the world," she said.

"As the second largest city in the United States and home to more than 150,000 Indian Americans, I respectfully request you choose Los Angeles to host a new consular mission," **Bass** said.

"With the largest port complex in the Western Hemisphere, thousands of start-ups and the third largest venture capital market in the United States, and a slate of international sporting and entertainment events scheduled over the next decade including the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games, I am excited by endless opportunities to strengthen ties between Los Angeles and India," the Mayor said.

While acknowledging the important work of the Indian Consul General in San Francisco, she said 23 countries maintain consulates in both Los Angeles and San Francisco.

"Twelve G20 countries have consulates in Los Angeles and San Francisco and an additional five G20 countries have consulates solely in Los Angeles," she said.

"Southern California's diverse economy stretches well beyond the entertainment industry, and includes a thriving biotechnology and life sciences sector, global leaders in space and aerospace, and a booming sustainability and green technology field," she said.

The Los Angeles region, she noted, is also home to more than 180 universities and colleges, centres for student experience, research, and innovation.

"California is proud to host more than 10 per cent of all Indians studying in the United States, and we value the bridges they create between our communities," **Bass** said.

Gunjana Bagla, an eminent Indian-American from Los Angeles, who has launched an online campaign on the matter, said Los Angeles is one of the largest cities in the US without having an Indian consulate.

"We in the community feel that having a local consul general would be useful and beneficial not only to the Indian-American community but also to the business community at large," Bagla told PTI.

"Over 40 per cent of all trade in the United States goes through the twin LA/Long Beach harbours. As a top five economy it is embarrassing for India to not have a diplomatic mission in such an important location," said the online petition signed by more than 3,600 Indian Americans.

"The time to act is now: Prime Minister Modi and President (Joe) Biden announced in June that two new Indian Consulates will be opened. Los Angeles needs to take its rightful place before any other location in North America. Hurry and sign this petition," it said.

CONNECTED TO INDIA

Los Angeles lobbies for an Indian consulate for stronger business ties and to serve 150K+ Indian Americans

Los Angeles Mayor Karen **Bass** and the Indian American community have urged the Government of India to open a consulate in the second-largest city of the United States of America and the entertainment capital of the world.

Los Angeles is synonymous with Hollywood and all the glamour and economic opportunities that come with it. Mayor **Bass** pointed out that the diverse economy of south California went beyond entertainment to include biotechnology and life sciences; space and aerospace; and green technology.

At present, there are five Indian consulates across the United States — in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, and Atlanta.

During the historic State Visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US in June, at the invitation of US President Joe Biden, it was announced that India would open two new consulates in the US, one of which would be in Seattle. A group of Indian American organisations and the Los Angeles mayor are urging that the second consulate be opened in their city.

"I ask that you consider the City of Los Angeles for a new Indian Consulate. It would be my honour to work with you to open and provide continued support for this important platform for engagement and exchange," **Bass** wrote in a recent letter to India's Ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu.

"Tourism between India and Los Angeles is another source of mutual benefit, and Los Angeles has invested in India with a dedicated Tourism Office that opened in 2019 and remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic," Bass wrote in her letter, a copy of which has been seen by the Press Trust of India.

With more than 100,000 Indian visitors to Los Angeles every year, a consulate would not only provide important services but also become a key partner to expand bilateral co-operation, she said.

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CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

RANDOM LENGTHS

Following Climate Week Mayor Bass Highlights Progress Towards A Greener LA

Mayor Karen **Bass** Sept. 25 announced recent progress in the fight against climate change following Climate Week NYC. The mayor highlighted efforts taken during her tenure to further electrify Los Angeles' transportation system, decarbonize power generation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from commercial and residential buildings.

Electrifying the Transportation System

In August, Los Angeles launched the first 100% electric full size street sweeper in the United States.

The city has installed nearly 100 level 2 chargers and 12 fast chargers throughout Los Angeles.

In line with the city's efforts to reduce carbon emissions, more than 25% of new cars sold in Los Angeles County are electric vehicles.

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation or LADOT added 18 electric DASH buses across Los Angeles this year. The fleet continues to grow.

The city has put out a Request for Proposal to create a 100% public EV truck charging depot at the Port of Los Angeles expected to be in service by 2025.

Increasing Energy Affordability with Energy Efficiency and Building in a Cleaner Way

There are more than 100 projects and 9,500 housing units in the pipeline in the Comprehensive Affordable Multifamily Retrofits or CAMR Program that LADWP created to support low-income, multifamily property owners and residents who want to expand their energy efficiency and install local solar on their rooftops.

LADWP relaunched the Cool LA program, which through rebates, is designed to help Angelenos better manage the impacts of extreme heat caused by climate change, especially for older adults, income-qualified families, and those living in underserved communities where hot weather has an especially significant impact with nearly 5,000 AC units and more than \$1,100,000 in rebates.

LADWP launched the zero by design construction program that encourages high efficiency buildings for commercial and high-rise residential projects.

LADWP is providing \$4.6 million in community emission reduction grant programs that fund the installation of cool roofs, solar arrays, electric vehicles and charging stations.

Progress Towards Running On 100% Clean Power

LADWP became the first municipal utility to establish science-based targets for greenhouse gas reduction as work continues to limit climate change throughout the world.

LADWP applied for approximately \$825 million in federal funding to advance clean energy goals to further electrify the transportation system, decarbonize power generation, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from commercial and residential buildings.

LADWP completed six major transmission infrastructure upgrades that will allow for Los Angeles to import more renewable power.

This year, Los Angeles added 35 megawatts of rooftop solar power, which now totals 665 megawatts of new solar power installed – that's the equivalent of 77,000 homes and businesses participating in LADWP solar programs. Los Angeles remains a leader in solar energy.

LADWP launched the Commercial Energy Storage 2 Grid or CES2G pilot, which allows for large energy storage and elective vehicle owners to provide energy storage services.

LADWP continues to work on the green meadows project, which will serve as a resiliency hub for the community of Watts. The project will feature solar, energy storage, and EV chargers and will provide grid resiliency and a cooling center during heat storm events. The estimated project completion is August of 2024.

PROPUBLICA

LA Housing Department Proposes Increasing Residential Hotel Enforcement

by Robin Urevich, Capital & Main, with additional reporting by Gabriel Sandoval, ProPublica

A 2008 city law was intended to preserve Los Angeles' residential hotels as safety net housing. But the city has failed to enforce the law, leaving some lower-income Angelenos with nowhere to go amid a homelessness crisis.

This article was produced for ProPublica's Local Reporting Network in partnership with Capital & Main. Sign up for Dispatches to get stories like this one as soon as they are published.

The Los Angeles Housing Department is proposing to significantly increase staff and double the frequency of inspections of residential hotels in an effort to stop some landlords from renting the low-cost housing to tourists in violation of city law.

The recommendations, detailed in a report to the mayor's office last month, follow an investigation by Capital & Main and ProPublica that found some residential hotel owners had turned their buildings into boutique hotels and were advertising nightly rentals on travel websites.

Since taking office in December, Mayor Karen **Bass** has made a major push to tackle the city's housing and homelessness crisis by providing shelter for people living on the streets and speeding up construction of new affordable housing.

The city has paid less attention to preserving some of its already existing low-cost housing in residential hotels. Some 300 such buildings — which typically consist of basic single rooms, sometimes with shared bathrooms — were protected under a 2008 city ordinance. The law requires landlords to keep the buildings for long-term tenants or replace the units by building new ones or paying into a city housing fund.

But until recently, the law has gone largely unenforced. In response to the news organizations' findings that 21 residential hotels were marketing rooms to tourists, **Bass'** office requested that the Housing Department investigate the hotels. The department has since sent warning letters to 17 of the hotels and fined 13 of them. Nearly all the hotels have appealed the city's enforcement efforts, and some have sued the city in federal court.

The mayor's office also asked the Housing Department to report on how the lack of enforcement occurred and to make recommendations to prevent it from happening in the future. In the report, Ann Sewill, the Housing Department's general manager, and Anna Ortega, an assistant general manager, blamed short staffing. They said that the department has only one inspector to oversee all 300 residential hotels across the city's 487 square miles, and that his priority had been the conditions of the buildings.

"With additional resources and support, LAHD can dramatically and successfully elevate its ability to stop rogue property owners from violating the Residential Hotel Ordinance and undermining the availability of the housing stock," they wrote to Mercedes Márquez, the mayor's chief of housing and homelessness solutions.

In addition to more frequent inspections, Housing Department managers said they've requested funding for five residential hotel inspectors and two support staff in next year's budget. They plan to continuously monitor online advertising and use "stakeouts" to collect evidence of tourist activity at hotels. They also want the city attorney's office to have more resources to investigate cases and defend against lawsuits.

LA Deputy Mayor of Housing Jenna Hornstock said the Housing Department has taken "comprehensive" and "meaningful steps" toward residential hotel enforcement. More funding for enforcement, she said, will involve "hard conversations about the resources that we have and how we can best allocate them."

The department said it would soon complete an audit of all of the city's residential hotels to determine whether they are placing tourist ads. If it finds such ads, the department said it can use the city attorney's administrative citation enforcement system to quickly sanction violators. However, the \$527 fines — designed to keep minor offenders out of court — are relatively light. Maximum penalties for noise complaints or drinking in public are nearly double that amount.

Deepika Sharma, a University of Southern California law professor who directs the school's housing law and policy clinic, said the Housing Department's proposed approach won't have teeth unless the city uses its legal authority to sue hotel owners who routinely ignore citations.

"It takes important impact cases to make a difference," Sharma said, because taking a repeat violator to court sends a message that deters others. But she said the city attorney's office hasn't routinely done that.

Past attempts to enforce the residential hotel law from 2016 to 2018 fizzled when housing inspectors issued citations but failed to follow up on them. Afterward, the hotels continued to offer their rooms for short-term rentals in violation of the department's orders.

The 17 hotels that were recently cited are also appealing to the Housing Department to reconsider their residential hotel status altogether. Sewill and Ortega said the department will hear all appeals by Nov. 30.

Barbara Schultz, director of housing justice at the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, questioned whether such appeals are permitted. She pointed out that the ordinance specifies that owners have 60 days after they're notified of their residential hotel status to challenge the designation. The Housing Department made those notifications between 2008 and 2014.

"I'm curious as to why they're allowing appeals at this point," she said. "That's a lot of units that could potentially be lost."

Meanwhile, the owners of 12 of the residential hotels have sued the city in federal court in Los Angeles, alleging the Housing Department has infringed on their constitutional protections against unreasonable searches and seizures and government taking of private property.

Frank Weiser, the attorney who represents the owners, said in a text message he would not comment on the cases, "given the pending litigation with the city." Weiser has unsuccessfully challenged LA's residential hotel law at least twice in the past.

Ivor Pine, a spokesperson for the city attorney's office, said the lawsuits won't have an effect on the city's current enforcement of the residential hotel law. He declined to comment on the lawsuit's allegations.

Hornstock said the mayor's office is currently working on setting Housing Department priorities for the coming year, including whether it can meet the department's request for a beefed-up enforcement budget.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

LA TIMES

Fallen from the middle class: 60, living in an RV and fighting to be housed

BY PALOMA ESQUIVEL, RACHEL URANGA

At first, when she became homeless at 59 last year, Laura Garciaros felt lucky to have her motor home, a 1989 Mallard Sprinter she bought with the help of friends.

It ran and the A/C worked. She found a spot that felt somewhat safe, just off a street lined with RVs near Hollywood Burbank Airport and parked next to a shady tree near a business where the owners let her fill her water jugs from a spout and plug her coffee maker into an outdoor outlet.

But it wasn't long before she was anxious to leave. After a series of relentless summer heat waves, her A/C sputtered out and she felt at times as though she was suffocating inside the vehicle, soaked in sweat. She grew increasingly fearful when several nearby RVs went up in flames. The rumor in the camp was the fires were acts of arson.

She didn't feel comfortable venturing into the neighborhood. Just to use the bathroom, she had to walk to a grocery store nearly half a mile away. And when she walked down the street, men harassed and followed her.

"I became homeless three months ago and am desperately trying to find housing of any kind," she wrote in a plea for help on Facebook.

Across the region, officials and a growing number of residents are pushing to get rid of the RV encampments that have proliferated on the streets since the COVID-19 pandemic. The Los Angeles City Council backed an effort to crack down on the renting of RVs to homeless people and is considering a motion to create a program that would restrict RV parking around schools and homes.

For Garciaros, the motorhome was better than the alternative — staking a tent on the sidewalk or sleeping on a cot in a shelter — though it was far from the life the former homeowner and makeup artist had imagined for herself.

She wanted a home, one with an address, where she could have running water and cook a meal. But like thousands of other homeless residents across the city, to get there she would face a labyrinth of obstacles, big and small, systemic and by happenstance, that made climbing out of the hole near impossible. Even a minor miracle in her favor — securing a Section 8 voucher for housing — was no promise of getting off the streets.

At her age, Garciaros reflects many of California's unhoused men and women. Nearly half of all single adults living on the streets are older than 50. Many of them became homeless after an event that kicked a fragile financial situation off kilter.

Garciaros grew up middle class in Hacienda Heights, in a home that was "idyllic from the outside," and for most of her adulthood maintained the trappings of that life.

In her teens and early 20s, she had been part of L.A.'s rock music scene, one of a "bunch of girls" who spent their nights hanging out at clubs like the Troubadour and their days working jobs to support themselves, the musicians and other artists, she says. She was so enmeshed in that scene that there's even a thank-you to her on Guns N' Roses' debut album, "Appetite for Destruction," one of the bestselling records of all time.

In her mid-20s, she left that drug- and booze-fueled world, went to rehab and met the man who would become her husband. They had two children and bought a house in a neighborhood of big trees and two-car garages in Sherman Oaks. When they separated and sold the house a few years later, she moved into an apartment and struggled to make ends meet as a single mother.

Then, when she was in her late 40s, she suffered a violent attack that left her cycling between psychiatric hospitals and living with family, she says. Post-traumatic stress made it difficult to keep a job, and for a time she rented rooms in homes across the San Fernando Valley, paying about \$1,000 a month. But the rooms never worked out long term, and eventually she ran out of money to secure another apartment. She stayed with friends for a few years, and when they left the state in the summer of 2022, she became homeless.

It was like walking off a plank, as the world of the housed and employed sailed on. She was in shock, with little idea of what to do next.

She drove her RV to an industrial stretch of the Valley that she knew well, not far from the apartment where, years earlier, she had lived with her two sons, and a few miles from the home she had once owned with her husband.

A person stands in a room surrounded by racks of pastry.

Garciaros picks a pastry from a bakery a short walk from her RV. (Irfan Khan/Los Angeles Times)

She took comfort in the familiar surroundings. There was the small colony of cats she fed and a family-run bakery up the street that extended her credit when she didn't have money for a pastry.

"It's the safest place I could be under the circumstances," she said. "I know that if I needed to I could stand out right in the middle of the street and somebody would hear me."

She quickly learned that it was best to try to make herself as invisible as possible to avoid the men who would harass her from their cars, on the bus and as she walked down the street.

"I put myself on mute," she said. "That's what I call it. I just muted myself."

The RV was a way to hold on to something resembling a home. It kept her safe at night and allowed her to keep her cats and her storage boxes filled with photos and keepsakes. The place she chose is lined with RVs, whose dwellers tend to police themselves, said LAPD Senior Lead Officer Gabriel Ahedo, who is responsible for the area.

"You have a lot of good people in the RVs," he said. The biggest challenge many of them face is the long wait for housing, he added.

Early on, Garciaros' son Jonathan and his girlfriend thought they could help her find a space in an RV park. But they discovered that most don't accept older vehicles, and that even if they do, a spot is expensive.

They created a Google spreadsheet with a list of housing and mental health agencies and nonprofit groups that might help her secure an apartment, and spent hours calling, sharing her story, getting transferred, sharing again and growing increasingly frustrated at the lack of a clear pathway.

Eventually, someone gave them the name of someone at the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health who helped Garciaros pursue what she thought was her best chance at getting out: a federal Section 8 housing voucher that would allow her to rent a one-bedroom apartment.

She was asked to submit a 57-page application and pages of bank accounts, verification letters and detailed explanations for the transactions in her accounts — such as a \$50 donation she received for cat supplies.

In L.A. last year, nearly a quarter-million people vied for the small chance of getting placed on a voucher wait list. But nearly half of the more than 60,000 vouchers are set aside for homeless people, who can skip the list. Garciaros got lucky, receiving one of about 4,300 vouchers set aside for homeless people with disabilities.

By the time she had secured the voucher, it was January and she had been on the streets for seven months. It also came with a catch: It would expire in six months, with the possibility of a 60-day extension. After that, if she hadn't found a landlord to rent to her, she would lose the voucher. About 48% of Section 8 recipients in L.A. don't meet that deadline, meaning that thousands of people who receive vouchers are never able to use them.

Garciaros' final deadline, including the extension, was Sept. 8.

At first, she felt confident. She was convinced she could find a place within a month.

"Finally I can see a faint light at the end of this dark homeless tunnel!" she wrote on Facebook when she learned about the voucher. "I've been through some stuff! But I'm feeling better about the future right now, and I'm hoping it's going to get so bright I gotta wear shades."

She spent hours at the library scrolling through sites listing potential apartments, only to find most were no longer available, some having been scooped up by one of the thousands of other voucher holders trying to do exactly what she was doing. Others simply disappeared as they do in a rental market that is daunting even for those with money.

By the summer, she had been met with rejection after rejection. Her moods cycled between excitement at learning about an available apartment and dejection when it failed to work out.

In mid-July, as a punishing heat wave settled on Southern California, she took a walk to get coffee. On the way, she stopped to check on her elderly neighbor Ramon, whose RV had burned several days before, a common occurrence in RV encampments across L.A. Police say sometimes the fires are acts of arson. Sometimes they are accidents caused by people trying to stay warm.

A person stands in a charred room.

Ramon in his RV that burned in North Hollywood this summer. (Irfan Khan/Los Angeles Times)

After the fire, Ramon continued living in the charred remains of his RV, its walls lined with soot and ash, shards of glass scattered across the floor.

"Ray, are you here, honey?" Garciaros called from the sidewalk, where the acrid smell still lingered. "How are you? How can you breathe in there?"

Ramon emerged holding a rifle round between black-stained fingers. He found it on the ground, outside his RV, he said. He believed there were men who were trying to kill him.

"Do you need a coffee or anything? A bread or anything?" Garciaros asked.

"No," he replied as he sifted through his blackened belongings. He was one of the only RV dwellers she had befriended in the area, Garciaros said. His was the third RV that had burned since she arrived. She had recorded one of them on her phone as it went up in flames around the corner from her.

A hand holds a bullet.

Ramon holds a bullet he found near his RV. (Irfan Khan/Los Angeles Times)

On the way back, she stepped off the sidewalk and into the street to avoid interacting with a group of people who had been up all night using drugs.

Since Ramon's RV fire, she was too afraid to venture from her camper for more than quick walks to grab coffee, shower at a nearby gym or use the bathroom at the grocery store. Driving the camper was not an option. She knew another RV would swoop in and take her spot.

"It's time to go," she said. "I'm done with all this."

But she still hadn't found a landlord to rent to her. The voucher expired in less than two months.

By early August, she tracked down a studio apartment less than two miles from her RV. The listing showed vaulted ceilings, a refrigerator and access to a pool. The manager assured her they welcomed Section 8 and even recommended an upstairs unit. She filed the \$45 application fee.

"I'm so close," she said.

Then she lost her wallet on the bus and her application was delayed as she scrambled to get copies of her ID. In mid-August, she learned that it hadn't made a difference anyway, the application had been rejected. The property manager told her they wouldn't accept her voucher after all, she said.

Even after California made it illegal for landlords to discriminate against Section 8 voucher holders, property managers have continued rejecting prospective tenants who hope to use the vouchers. Section 8 still holds a stigma, and some landlords are wary of would-be tenants. Others are hesitant because prolonged bureaucratic delays can extend move-in times. The region's low vacancy rate has also allowed housing managers to be especially choosy.

Two days after the rejection, as Tropical Storm Hilary flooded her street, she gathered her cats on her lap, trying to avoid the leaks that dripped from her roof. After the storm cleared, with just 13 days left on the voucher, she got word that she had been accepted into a studio in Hyde Park. She had surmounted one of the biggest obstacles housing officials say exists to using the voucher: getting a landlord to agree to rent to you.

The tidy, gray apartment complex sat next to a liquor store along a palm-lined street. It had a small courtyard and succulents dotting the yard.

"This is really happening," she said.

But while the landlord approved her application, the Los Angeles housing authority would need more information about Garciaros' bank accounts, marital status, a disposition of joint property with her husband and the financial aid she had received for college classes she was taking in hopes of earning a bachelor's degree.

For many people living on the street with no computers or bank accounts, the verification process has been near impossible to complete, so much so that Mayor Karen Bass pleaded with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to waive certain requirements, and in August the agency announced changes to the documentation rules.

But Garciaros wouldn't reap the benefits. In early September, a housing authority worker reached out to her asking for updated financial documents, and she scrambled to file them before the weeks' end. After she met that deadline, she got yet another request for more documents.

Then, she lost her phone and with it a way to access emails. Desperate and without money to replace it, she scrambled to get another one from an organization that helps low-income residents. She also persuaded a relative to drive from Laguna Niguel to sign documents showing he intermittently gave her money.

It was now six days after her voucher expired, and Garciaros had started to fear that the landlord wouldn't hold the apartment. That afternoon, an official called to say that she needed to bring paperwork to the San Fernando Mental Health Center by 2:30 p.m.

Outside her RV, she was crying and despondent. She didn't know whether she could get there in time.

But a reporter following her case who had showed up to check on her agreed to give her a ride. As she waited for the woman helping her with her case, Garciaros scrolled through her phone trying to pull up the last piece of information she needed: the sum of financial aid

received. The phone's connection was slow, adding to her anxiety.

"My heart is beating so fast right now," she said.

When Elena Green Adraneda called her into the office, Adraneda was apologetic about the daunting paperwork requirements and said she was worried that Garciaros might lose the apartment.

"I am afraid," Adraneda said, explaining the long delays, "the property manager Flora will change her mind because it's taking forever."

She explained that it was not Garciaros' fault. Housing applications can drag on for a year, she said.

Garciaros was growing frustrated with the explanations.

"The voucher expires before one year" she objected. "It only gives you 240 days."

She left the office believing she had finally submitted everything she was required to submit. On the bus ride home, she got a call saying more documentation would be needed.

Weeks later, by the end of September there was still no resolution to her case. She had gone from experiencing a constant roller coaster of emotions to feeling, she said, comfortably numb, like the Pink Floyd song.

"I'm tired," she said. "Way down deep tired."

The expiration date on the voucher had passed. But if the landlord who had agreed to rent to her continued holding the apartment, she could still use it. If not, she would have about two weeks to try again before she was out of luck.

As she sat in her RV, waiting for an answer, she kept pushing away the thought that things might not work out. That she might have to start over again. There was a part of her that wasn't sure she could. But she didn't let the thought linger.

"I see the people out here that have given up," she said. "There really is no other choice but to fight. The other is just too hell on earth."

CITY WATCH

Emergencies, Bad Ideas, and Secret Deals. Is This How We Solve Homelessness?

BY TIM CAMPBELL

In the little-known but classic 1959 British comedy, "The Mouse That Roared", the tiny fictional European Duchy of Fenwick declares war on the United States with the intent of immediately surrendering and receiving American aid, much like the former Axis powers after World War II. It's a clever take on Cold War politics and how leaders manufacture crises to advance hidden agendas. A more modern real-world example is the US' involvement in Iraq, which was predicated on false evidence of "weapons of mass destruction" and mired the nation in its longest and costliest war.

The politics and policies behind Los Angeles' homelessness programming continue the tradition of the Duchy of Fenwick. For years, the City and County have done much of their homelessness financial business behind closed doors or with minimal community outreach. Just a few examples include:

Councilmember Yaroslavsky's botched public roll-out of a proposed shelter on Midvale, using the city's emergency declaration as an excuse to circumvent public comment.

The proposed upzoning of several Westside communities, supposedly with input from a 52-member community advisory committee that was handpicked by the city, and consists mainly of nonprofit leaders, housing advocates and builders, with few actual members of the community.

The City's and County's habit of awarding no-bid sole-source contracts to corporate nonprofits for outreach and shelter management, again based on "emergency needs".

It would be quite an understatement to say most of these decisions and policies are ethically dubious. For example, Councilmember Yaroslavsky's first announcement of the Rancho Park-Midvale interim shelter was a general email on July 24, 2023, less than two weeks before a purported "informational session" with the Councilmember and Mayor Bass. That email claimed there had been previous community outreach, but as reported in the Westside Current, that outreach consisted of a few notification emails the night before the email blast. The "informational session" was quickly shut down when residents had the temerity to oppose Yaroslavsky's predetermined plan. As the Current's article also points out, the Councilmember got herself into an ethical problem because her lead staff person for homelessness is a recent former employee of Los Angeles Family Housing, the nonprofit that happens to have received the sole source contract for managing the Rancho Park facility.

Things south of CD-5 are just as murky. As has been reported earlier, some—but not all—communities in CD-11 are undergoing updates to their community housing plans, with some areas proposed to absorb tens of thousands of units while others are unaffected. As reported by City Watch's James O'Sullivan, nothing about this process has been transparent. A "community advisory committee" with 52 members has been front-loaded with Housing First advocates and nonprofit service providers. Very few of the 52 are true community representatives. Once again, "community outreach" consisted of hand selected representatives who could be counted on to deliver the desired results. At a September 5 Neighborhood Council meeting, Councilmember Park and the Planning staff were confronted by large crowd of residents who wanted details on the proposed upzoning—details the City appeared unable or unwilling produce, including the total number of units to be shoehorned into the Westchester/Playa community, (but not the wealthier and whiter Pacific Palisades and Brentwood, which conveniently aren't subject to this year's update).

Despite assurances the upzone plan is still conceptual, the fact is the City is only willing to discuss plans it's already produced, with virtually no community input. As O'Sullivan points out, the City has already set the rules and established the playing field, stacking the odds in its favor. That became obvious when City Planning staff left the meeting before the community group Concerned Westchester/Playa presented a more realistic plan that meets State housing targets without massive expansion of multifamily housing into residential areas.

The City tried this kind of opaque planning, using questionable data and zoning exemptions that violated its own codes, in its Hollywood Community Plan Update, resulting in a lawsuit from Fix the City, which the City lost in 2013. Significantly, the city intended to use the Hollywood Plan as a template for the Westside's upzoning plan.

The excuse City officials use for the rush to sign contracts and implement plans that the public hasn't seen is that homelessness is an "emergency". Mayor Bass signed an emergency declaration on her first day in office, giving her broad powers to circumvent normal contracting procedures, and the Council has dutifully renewed those powers each month. But homelessness has been increasing every year since Housing First became the state's official policy in 2016. Apparently, it wasn't an emergency until January 2023. But why?

Consider who was advising her just before and after her inauguration. Va Lecia Adams Kellum was one of her chief homelessness advisors, and she just happened to be CEO of St. Joseph's Center at the time, one the largest recipients of City and County money for service provision. Like the so-called community advisory committee in CD-11, our elected leaders tend to favor representatives of organizations that profit from the obsession with construction that is Housing First's lynchpin. LAHSA's Board of Directors is full of "community advocates" and Housing First cheerleaders, with the exception of Rev. Andy Bales, who unfortunately is retiring at the end of the year. Only one member has a medical background, even though well over half the unhoused have serious mental or substance abuse problems—and she is a public health administrator, not a medical professional.

If there is a homeless industrial complex, it starts here. The entire structure of homelessness programs in the City and County is heavily loaded with No Barrier Housing First advocates and corporate nonprofit executives who depend on a failed system for their existence. In keeping with false emergencies of the past, these leaders keep a relatively small but fanatical cadre of self-appointed "activists" in an eternal state of agitation, ready to be unleashed on anyone who dares to speak truth to power. Elected leaders, even those with good intentions, are trapped in a system where the only voices they hear tell them more housing and using the same small cabal of ineffective service providers are the only answers to homelessness.

All of this is done in the name of a homelessness "emergency" that's existed for years and is only getting worse. City and County leaders claim the need to meet this emergency is why so many projects and contracts are kept out of the public limelight. The emergency is why millions of dollars are awarded to the same group of providers with no bidding and virtually no performance standards. An "emergency" is why the Council narrowly approved a seven-story apartment complex in the middle of a residential neighborhood, even though they admitted the ordinance that initially allowed it was poorly written. At least two Council members breathlessly declared we "desperately" need to build hundreds of units and the city's current housing situation is "disastrous". But instead of rationally and calmly taking a comprehensive view, the City is approving questionable projects piecemeal, in an effort to look like they're doing something. People who question this system are branded "NIMBY's" and shouted out of most discussions about homelessness.

But here's a couple simple questions. If these projects are so wonderful, why are they hidden from public comment until the last minute? Is it really NIMBY-ism or is it because many shelters are surrounded by vast tent cities, and crime in the surrounding communities is higher? If only a small number of large nonprofits can provide needed services, why hasn't homelessness decreased, and why can't anyone tell the public what the real long-term outcomes of their efforts have been? Doesn't the public have a legitimate expectation that the \$4 billion in taxpayer money spent on homelessness in 2023-24 will have a positive effect? Who is profiting from new development, when only 10 percent of the units in many developments are required to be affordable?

To whom are our leaders accountable? A small but loud group of advocates, cynically supported by developers and self-interested nonprofits. Or the public at large, including those who are homeless and who are left to languish on the streets while they're waiting for housing that will never be built?

But things may be changing. There is a growing sentiment on the LA City Council that LAHSA must be held accountable for failing to implement meaningful performance measures and producing real results. More Council members are speaking up about unbridled multifamily development in residential areas. Fix the City had filed a suit to reign in the City's authority to grant no-bid sole source contracts to favored nonprofits. A true grassroots effort has sprung up to stop the destruction of the Marina Freeway for a housing development. Across the state, United Neighbors is working to combine the voices of dozens of local community groups who want well-planned, rational affordable housing in their cities, rather than the one size fits all overreach of state laws like SB-9, which is little more than a gift of public assets to corporate developers.

It is important to note these efforts aren't intended to stop homeless relief or affordable housing. Quite the opposite; they are being made to bring accountability and real results to the homelessness and housing narrative. For example, United Neighbors has a comprehensive plan that offers several options for affordable and multi-family housing in different kinds of areas, from dense urban to suburban. Rather than the overbearing, monolithic plan thrust upon communities by the state and developers, United Neighbors' plan is nuanced and sensitive to individual neighborhoods. Numerous groups are trying to force the City and County to use the resources at hand to deliver desperately needed services to people on the street. For far too long, the service models and narratives around homelessness and housing have been controlled by an insular group of government officials, nonprofit executives, and special interests. The results can be found in encampments and on sidewalks all over the city. It's time to change the structure and demand an end to secrecy, panicky decision-making, and failure masquerading as success.

LA PROGRESSIVE

An Open Letter: Mayor Karen Bass and the Aetna Street Community
BY ANANYA ROY

We write as urban planning experts and social science researchers to express our grave concerns about your office's displacement of the unhoused community at Aetna Street in Van Nuys and the continuing police violence being unleashed on Aetna residents. As an ongoing research collective based at the UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy and as scholars and students involved in the Master of Urban Planning Community Collaborative course that took place at UCLA's Department of Urban Planning from January to June 2023, we have extensive research-based knowledge of the Aetna community, their housing trajectories and needs, as well as of the various forms of criminalization that have been imposed on them.

In this research capacity, we have also witnessed, documented, and analyzed the displacement that your office and related public agencies have enacted, including through the Inside Safe program. Since we are on the ground conducting research, we also continue to bear witness to law enforcement actions targeting unhoused persons at Aetna Street. Please find below a set of concerns and queries that we hope your office will address promptly and publicly.

1. The untold costs of Inside Safe

On Tuesday, September 12, 2023, staffers from your office, along with those from numerous public agencies and service providers as well as law enforcement and sanitation officers, descended on Aetna Street in order to implement an Inside Safe operation. Just a few months ago, in an open letter addressed to you, this unhoused community had clearly laid out a set of expectations and demands regarding Inside Safe. These included the completely reasonable demand that offers of shelter be provided in writing, that there be medical and other services at the hotels that connect people to housing, and that there be no 41.18 enforcement or other reprisal for those that choose to stay on Aetna Street.

Your September 12 operation ignored all of this, with staffers pressuring Aetna residents to accept Inside Safe without any written offers or even clearly communicated information about where they were headed and for how long. All of this is in violation of LAHSA's own principles and best practices for addressing street encampments and unsheltered homelessness, which require the provision of "voluntary, client-centered, and trauma-informed care."

Let us be clear: many community members living on the streets are eager to go inside. Indeed, it is Los Angeles politicians who have cynically spun a convenient myth about shelter and service resistance. Our analysis of LAHSA data as well as our interview-based data demonstrates the shelter and service eagerness of the unhoused people, including those belonging to the Aetna Street community. The problem lies elsewhere: with the homeless services system which is unable, or unwilling, to place people in housing, instead cycling them through temporary placements that keep them in a state of what we call permanent displaceability. For each such temporary placement, an unhoused person bears untold costs, giving up a considerable part of their belongings, severing social ties, and losing community, thereby often ending up in a more precarious state than prior to such a placement.

We are concerned that this is precisely the case with the Inside Safe operation that your office conducted at Aetna Street on September 12. It is offensive that unhoused people were required to state, often on camera, what they were giving up (their tent, their belongings, etc.) in order to enroll in Inside Safe. And what is it that they received in return for this sacrifice? It seems that it is temporary placement in a bed bug infested motel, the Palm Tree Inn, one that is notorious for its lack of safety and hygiene.

Unlike the Echo Park Lake displacement, which our research collective studied and documented with great precision, in this case, there wasn't even the pretense of placing people on a path to permanent housing. What then was the purpose of this extremely expensive operation, one that took 50 staffers and service providers, flanked by 25-30 law enforcement officers, to pressure 40 or so unhoused persons to move to a motel for a few days or weeks? Not only were significant public resources expended, but also it had untold costs for those who acquiesced to the promise of going inside but were effectively displaced from their community with no path to housing. In this way we find that the housing services system as deployed through Inside Safe is itself shelter and housing-resistant. Its utter failure to house a community that has long been demanding permanent housing is a deep indictment of the mayor's approach.

We ask that your office respond to the original demands for Inside Safe presented to you in April 2023 by Aetna residents, including written clarification of the duration of shelter and the provision of housing navigation and other services.

We ask that your office provide a public statement detailing the financial costs incurred by the September 12 Inside Safe operation at Aetna Street including law enforcement, motel rooms, and service provider contracts. Please note that we will also be asking the City Controller to conduct an audit of this operation.

2. Inside Safe's relationship to sweeps and arrests

We are concerned that the purpose of the Inside Safe operation was to break up, scatter, and disappear the Aetna Street community through violent means. The Inside Safe Operation on September 12, 2023, included investigations of "gang-affiliation," which, as witnessed by our research team, racially profiled Latinx community members and destroyed all their belongings, with at least one Aetna resident losing all possessions including rent money he had saved up for his family. On Thursday, September 14, 2023, two days after the Inside Safe operation, law enforcement officers surrounded Aetna Street and conducted a vicious sweep that destroyed the tents and belongings of remaining residents.

Members of our research team were on the ground and documented that Black residents were explicitly targeted, harassed, and even detained and arrested. Some of these arrests were conducted by officers in the LAPD Transit Division in LACMTA cars who targeted, violated, and arrested Aetna residents trying to retrieve their belongings from the Orange Line parking lot. Given your office's adamant statement that Inside Safe is not connected to sweeps, we were alarmed to find staffers from your office, notably Janet Monteon, Mayoral Aide and lead on Inside Safe, at the sweep and related arrests. We have included a photograph that documents Monteon's presence and involvement.

This connection confirms what the Aetna community has feared: that Inside Safe will be followed by reprisal, including sweeps and other law enforcement actions, against remaining residents. It is not surprising then that in a recent research interview conducted by us, one of the Aetna residents noted that his belongings were destroyed as direct punishment for refusing to participate in Inside Safe. In his words, "this isn't a genuine program; it is done by force and coercion."

We ask that your office provide a public statement explaining the relationship between Inside Safe and sweeps, including the CARE+ program, and specifically explain Janet Monteon's involvement in the Thursday, September 21, 2023 sweep at Aetna Street.

Staging of Care+ Sweep, Aetna Street, Thursday, September 14, 2023. Note the presence of Janet Monteon, Mayoral Aide, and Councilmember Imelda Padilla.

Staging of Care+ Sweep, Aetna Street, Thursday, September 14, 2023. Note the presence of Janet Monteon, Mayoral Aide, and Councilmember Imelda Padilla.

3. Law enforcement is the real goal

Since the Inside Safe operation of September 12, the Aetna Street community has been subjected to relentless law enforcement actions, including another brutal sweep on Thursday, September 28, 2023, and significant police escalation and violence on Friday, September 29, 2023. Each sweep has culminated in a fencing of the sidewalks at Aetna Street. Of course, it is an irony that these fences block the public-right-of-way and is a violation of the ADA, something for which many an unhoused person has been cited and ticketed across this city.

These sweeps at Aetna Street demonstrate that city programs that purportedly provide shelter and services, whether it be the ABH shelter (see our next point) or Inside Safe, are simply an excuse for punishing and policing unhoused persons. We are troubled by the coercion and reprisal deployed by Inside Safe as well as by the fact that Councilmember Imelda Padilla has been present for subsequent sweeps and arrests, as evident from our September 14 photograph.

Especially troubling is the police violence unleashed on unhoused persons at Aetna Street on Friday, September 29, 2023. We share here two instances of the violence documented and recorded by members of our research team although there is a great deal more evidentiary material collected by Aetna residents themselves.

With complete disregard for human life, well-being, and dignity, Friday's sweep at Aetna Street involved LA Sanitation, LAPD, and LAPD Transit Division officers who willfully destroyed the belongings and slashed the tents of unhoused persons, including those such as the elder pictured here who is a longtime resident of Aetna Street and had just been released from a convalescent home with a pacemaker. She asked members of our research team to share this photo saying "I want the world to see us."

It is important for the Los Angeles public to understand the escalation of police violence at Aetna Street. Under your watch, the police have turned this community into a war zone, as evident in the gunpoint invasion evident in these stills from a video recorded by a member of our research team, on September 29, 2023, as police harass and handcuff unhoused persons.

It is vitally important to note the impact of these actions, which is the breaking up and scattering of a vibrant community. Our research with the Aetna Street community has been ongoing for a year now. It involves analysis of LAHSA data for 976 unhoused persons who are identified in this data as former or current residents of the Aetna Street and neighboring encampments. It also involves our own interviews and data collection with former and current Aetna Street residents. Governed by a community advisory board made up of unhoused organizers, our research collective is especially attentive to the aspirations and experiences of those most impacted by housing precarity.

Our research shows that the Aetna Street encampment has been a place of refuge and return for those pushed out of stable housing and employment in the San Fernando Valley. This is a community of native Angelenos who in many cases have grown up with each other in the valley. There are many family ties that thread across the tents at Aetna and sometimes stretch across a couple of generations. Known as the "Skid Row of the valley," Aetna must also be understood as a key node of Black life and belonging, with many Black residents, including Black veterans.

We ask that the city immediately take down the fences that are currently blocking public-right-of-way on the Aetna Street sidewalks.

We ask that your office and that of Councilmember Imelda Padilla immediately cease sweeps and law enforcement actions at Aetna Street and neighboring encampments, including those that use the excuse of this being a Special Enforcement and Cleaning Zone yoked to the ABH shelter which has just closed.

4. The short-lived ABH shelter

In 2020, the city opened A Bridge Home shelter on Aetna Street. With a hostile architecture façade, the shelter run by the Salvation Army and designed by Lehrer Architects, provided little by way of shelter and services for the unhoused community which had been at Aetna since 2017. As with many other ABH shelters, it has been a bridge to nowhere. Instead, people evicted and expelled by the shelter sought and found refuge in the Aetna community. The shelter was yoked to a Special Enforcement and Cleaning Zone, whose implementation expanded policing and sweeps at Aetna. It has come to our attention that the ABH shelter will soon close its doors. Already, its residents have been steadily pushed out, many onto the streets. There are two urgent questions at hand: i) What are the city's plans for this facility and for the land which was leased from LACMTA? ii) How and when will the city retract the Special Enforcement and Cleaning Zone?

It is imperative that your office pay serious consideration to how the soon-to-be-closed shelter can serve as a space and resource for this community. While your Inside Safe operation and subsequent sweep displaced people from Aetna, we anticipate that with the lack of housing they will soon need to return. In addition, the mobile showers that were occasionally available to Aetna residents have disappeared. People dispersed by the sweep, pushed out of the soon-to-close ABH shelter, and soon to be stranded by Inside Safe, all need basic sanitation facilities, such as showers and laundry. All of this adds to the urgent need for the reuse of the ABH shelter space by the Aetna community.

This is also an opportunity for LACMTA to step up and do the right thing. At the start of this letter, we made note of the Community Collaborative course that was taught at UCLA Urban Planning earlier this year. A capstone course for Master of Urban Planning students, it focused on the Aetna Street encampment and included community participants, including Aetna residents. Surveys conducted by the class found a clear need for a reuse of the "bridge to nowhere" shelter. The class also took on the question of Metro land, especially in light of LACMTA's repeated public pronouncements of a commitment to address homelessness. This informative policy brief, published by UCLA's Institute of Transportation Studies, and written by two of the MURP students from the Community Collaborative class, presents the land-use

and community engagement vision developed by the class including recommendations to be taken up by LACMTA.

We ask that your office along with LAHSA and LACMTA publicly share the plans for the facilities and land of the Aetna Street ABH shelter and prioritize the needs of the Aetna Street community in the use of these resources.

Mayor Bass, we know that you understand that mass homelessness is one of the most pressing social problems of our city, manifesting the stark inequalities of housing and employment. Policing the poor is no solution to this problem. Nor is displacing and scattering them through the lure of temporary shelter. While temporary shelter might indeed be welcomed by many unhoused persons, it should not be accompanied by coercion and reprisal and should not require the sacrifice of belongings, safety, and community. With the ABH shelter closing at Aetna, you have an opportunity to make repair for the many forms of harm done by this city to unhoused persons and LACMTA has the opportunity to make real its public pronouncements about standing with unhoused communities. We look forward to this.

Sincerely,

The Aetna Street Research Collective, UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy The Community Collaborative Course, Winter-Spring 2023, UCLA Urban Planning

ASIAN JOURNAL

Part 2 Of 2: The Rippling Waters Of Giving And Reaching Beyond Ourselves

by PROSY ABARQUEZ DELA CRUZ, J.D.

"The joy in loving is guaranteed by loving one another as Jesus loves us. God's love goes round and round! His circle of Love is humankind! Thank you for giving me that kind of love. — With the love of the Lord, Fr. Camilo Pacanza, 2016.

Fr. Pacanza wrote that, in giving me Pope Francis' book: 'The Joy of Love.' It meant a lot that he understood my life's theme: leave a legacy of service to others, each place better than you found it. He made it simpler — to write love in people's hearts.

Hearts Expanded with Indescribable Sweetness of Love

Two weeks after the wildfires and the crazy winds whipping them in Lahaina, as if aerosolized gasoline, frenzied fundraising was held in Chino Hills by small businesses, around Kokua Maui, the call of Chef Charles Akau, who shared that Kokua is unconditional support without expecting anything in return, on September 9, 2023.

His beautiful wife, Jamie Borromeo Akau, was days from defending her dissertation, "The Polysemy of Diversity in the State of ChaosMos: A Design Thinking Approach to Diversity Management." towards a doctorate, which she obtained with high honors. Had we not responded to Chef Charles' call, we would be weaker and more anxious.

Amy Besa, who lives in New York, graciously took the time to design a new post on Facebook and led her New Yorker friends to give, as she did. We did, too. Jamie and Charles reported exceeding their goal of \$10,000 reaching \$12,000, selling plate lunches, orchid arrangements, and t-shirts. Days after, the monies got remitted and confirmed by texts, as received.

"That we may awaken,

To live to the full

The dream of the earth

who chose us to emerge

And incarnate its hidden might

In mind, spirit and light

-John Donohue's 'Bless The Space Between Us', who was a poet, scholar, and had a Ph.D. in philosophical theology.

Pope Francis described the Benedictine Nuns, with "their hearts expanded with indescribable sweetness of love," similar to what these folks did.

The goodness to Lahaina is also what Pastor Adiel DePano's life as a Pastor of the United Methodist Church is all about. Having served in six churches, he ascends with unwavering faith, and in his abilities to collaborate and unify diverse cultures and languages, with his signature warmth and love for all.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank, resident bishop of the California-Pacific Conference, is described as a catalyst for church transformation in the United Methodist Church. She describes herself as "I am Immigration," embodying both cultures of American and Mexican. She has pioneered founding a church Farmer's Market, including working with immigrants and opening a hospitable transition place, called "The Inn," for gathering the community folks crossing the borders and looked upon as potential residents with diversity richness to offer. I requested her to describe DePano, who reports to her.

"Rev. Adiel DePano embodies the Wesleyan spirit of "The World is my parish!" He cares for his community and works tirelessly to bring hope and Christ's love in all spaces and places. Grace y Paz, -Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank, 2023.

It is a beautiful statement of "I see you, I see your essence."

DePano graduated in Ateneo in 1981, obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, where he learned to be "a man for others," while Claremont broadened his scope to "The World is My Parish."

DePano was hailed by Claremont School of Theology as one who lives the values of his alma mater, as seven others who embody Compassion, Justice and Belonging. He was a 2021 Distinguished Alumni. The School recognized their lives are in moral alignment, leaning more to altruism for others, as well as self-sacrifice.

I wondered how DePano's family thought of him as head of the household? Katerina DePano, the eldest daughter of Pastor Adiel, wrote: "When I think of Dad, I think of his faith, leadership, and love for our family. Everything about his life and leadership is rooted in his faith, and he has blessed many people with his ministry and service. When I think of Dad and our family, I think of him in the kitchen! He enjoys cooking for us and I'm thankful for his spaghetti and sinigang (Filipino sour soup with meats and vegetables) – my faves! Dad has always been and continues to be an example of unwavering faith, service and love for our family and community."

God's Favor in Leading Six Churches and Leaving Them Better Than He Found Them

He served at the First Filipino-American United Methodist Church (7 years) in San Gabriel Valley, his greenhorn assignment. As luck would have it, this is where he met Brenda, the granddaughter of two parishioners, and got married after a year. He credits the congregation for hosting their wedding with 500 guests, from all over the country and Manila, "Both of us immersed in growing the Christian education ministry, youth group's camps and retreats, adult ministry. He led the transfer of the church from Covina UMC to its present home, Hacienda Heights."

He got transferred to National City (7 years) where he united the Filipino Ministry with the chartered Caucasian congregation and together, "addressed the deferred maintenance of the church campus, built up Christian education and family ministries, undertook the contemporary worship ministry, youth ministry and together with his wife, Brenda, introduced family camp program, and participation in ecumenical grouping of churches."

"My family and I found ourselves totally at home in this multicultural congregation, St. Paul's Oxnard (7 years) and we were deeply involved in leading the church in developing a discipleship system, renovating the campus with new roofs, upgraded church office and classrooms, "Turning Point" coffee house, confirmation classes, Friday study and prayer groups, active membership in the Interfaith Clergy Association in town, membership in the choir."

He was then promoted to become the New Pasadena District Superintendent. Little did he know that this promotion would present challenges for growth and mental fitness.

"Becoming part of Bishop Mary Ann Swenson's cabinet for 5 years represents the pinnacle of my service as a United Methodist ordained elder. I never imagined nor did I seek to be part of the bishop's cabinet. My ministry was focused on administration and conflict management. I am strong in administration. But, I loath managing conflict (my DNA at work). This deflated me, causing two stress-related episodes of anxiety attacks that landed me in the emergency room and soul-searching and self-doubts. Through Bishop Swenson's encouragement and colleagues' support, I recovered and fulfilled all my responsibilities. Before I could finish another year to a 6-year term, the Bishop appointed me to lead Pasadena UMC. Being a district superintendent opened up the world to me, taking me to travels like Lake Junaluska, in North Carolina; Kauai and Oahu in Hawaii, South Korea, Japan, Saipan, and Philippines."

Fellow clergy whom I served, he continues, "express their continuing gratitude for my leadership, kindness, support, wisdom, guidance and spirituality, leading to a bishop nomination, which I gratefully declined."

He was then presented with another challenge at FUMC, Pasadena (2 years), where the congregation was in transition from their predecessor's departure and healing their collective wounds from a dysfunctional atmosphere under the prior pastor. He had to endure the suffering with them.

This prepared him for his next assignment at St. Andrew's by the Sea (3 years) where "I learned to suspend my views, in favor of a higher calling of being a shepherd to God's flock in the community."

DePano now heads the Santa Ana United Methodist Church whose parishioners speak Cambodian, English, Filipino, French, Korean, Spanish, Peruvian, Puerto Rican and Tongan. Imagine how he immerses in their cultures, being particularly sensitive to each by balancing their needs with all others.

How do they become all grace-filled people, I asked? They agreed to love others, as they love God, being a positive force for goodness, towards gentle humanity.

Legacy Square: A Triumph of Humanity

Abraham Verghese described the Cochin heat as "The Cochin [Santa Ana] heat and humidity are so stultifying that houseflies lose altitude and tumble to the floor. Shop boys sit heavy-lidded after lunch, as unmoving as the cement barriers in the harbor. The city will come to life again only in the evening, when it is cooler."

It is similar to the Santa Ana winds, dry, humid, and deaden folks. Picture downtown with encampments from the street – living folks inside their tents, drenched as they attempt to stay incognito, but cannot. They change into their clothes on the sidewalks; do their basic necessities, even brushing their teeth, while trash litter and stench permeating your nostrils for at least a thousand feet mark their daily existence.

Next to downtown Sta. Ana is a row of century old, well maintained French style houses in a row called French Street. The contrast is glaring, in your face, asking you to do something,

Santa Ana United Methodist Church (SAUMC) had to talk to these residents about building a complex of 93 apartment homes.

From 2017 – 2018, the congregation was persuaded to approve the idea of repurposing their downtown site into an affordable housing complex.

The following year was on vetting developers and the Renaissance Corporation was chosen, their first collaboration with a church. For 3 years, 2019 – 2021, community support, permits and funding have to be lined up and finally, two years to complete the construction.

Legacy Square is situated near a Metro station, a bus stop and a stone's throw away from downtown. Its courtyard is inviting with a children's playground and some picnic tables. SFUMC inaugurated the complex June 21, 2023 and residents were just moving in. Each unit is spacious and the rent is based on their income, 30 to 60% of \$15,000 a year. They had 6,000 applicants for 93 units, an indicator of a huge need for affordable housing.

I found it to be well designed which allows tradewinds into the open hallways and to move warm air, and other improvements to make it eco-friendly. It included improvements to the streets, to the sidewalks, and turnabouts for controlled traffic. It has a community center as well as flexible space that could be used for piano lessons, computer lessons and other workshops needed by the residents.

In Oakland, then led by Mayor Jerry Brown, who was behind the construction of a multistory apartment building where students are co-residents of low-income working mothers and those on welfare.

Much like the First AME Church that is now managing over 300 rental units for working families while offering training on HVAC, air conditioning and electrical to prepare the residents for living wages – jobs. Its membership has grown to 19,000 and several ministries within 13 corporations. It is a church that is prayer-empowered, Christ-centered in spreading love to the community and Holy Spirit-led Church, socially active, a church of growth that is a result of God's faithfulness and care for others.

In Los Angeles, Mayor Karen Bass has succeeded in cutting the construction period of affordable housing from the usual 2 years to 47 days. Imagine what city permitting expedited process has changed to.

"That interior law of charity and love begins with vision. Long before love is a corporate virtue that improves team performance, it is a personal leadership stance. The love-driven leader possesses the vision to see and engage others, as they are, not through the cultural filters, prejudices, or narrow-mindedness that diminishes them. Jesuits view [AmerIndians] with the same divine energy that gave them "existence, life, sensation, intelligence" and made them God's temple. If the interior law of charity and love begins with a vision, it is completed in action...to achieve what Voltaire called "a triumph of humanity." – Chris Lowney on Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-year-old Company that Changed the World.

Adiel means an ornament, a treasured jewel of God. True to his name, "I want people to know me as somebody who tried to follow Jesus – sa aking pagkatao si Cristo. It is a daily battle. As I learned in Ateneo to be "a man for others," I also know that we are inherently good and we are inherently flawed. I have my demons to fight."

For example, St. Photini who said to Jesus: "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and whom it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink," you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

DePano also heads the Fil-Am United Methodist Foundation, now in its 50th year. He is nearing the end of his 2nd year two-year term, which ends December 2024. Recently, the foundation raised funds to support [a church whose membership] is 95% farmworkers in rebuilding their chapel of worship. Nearly 800 came to the concert featuring Dodjie Simon and Odette Quesada, exceeding the goal of \$15,000 to \$25,861, about 172%.

Dodjie Simon is a composer and songwriter of over 100 songs, some popularized in commercials, film and television, and a friend of Pastor Adiel DePano for 45 years, wrote: "Reverend Adiel DePano is a humble, kind, and committed servant of God. His leadership is founded on the principles of teamwork, democracy, dedication and alignment with God's will. My brother and I have a long history of friendship with the DePano family since our teenage years at Kamuning First United Methodist Church in Quezon City."

Telly Encarnacion recalls growing up as a Methodist in Quezon City, where he credits the Methodists for her fond childhood memories: "attending daily vacation church school every summer, becoming a teacher in the kindergarten level one summer, a member of the Methodist Youth Fellowship and annual 5-day Christmas Institute (sleep away camp for 5years). I was shy and this structure was very helpful for me to have regular fellowship with youth from other churches."

Adiel DePano might have been named God's ornament, but each day, he lives as God's humble servant, where community service is a component of worship. "There is no personal piety without social impact. Social holiness rests on personal holiness – they feed into each other. We are meant to be in community. We are poorer by our inability to come together in person."

PUBLIC SAFETY **CROSSTOWN**

The Los Angeles wave of retail theft spreads to The Grove

By Marika Sonoda

The Grove is one of the most popular shopping and tourist destinations in Los Angeles. A February Vanity Fair article reported that 18 million people a year visit the pedestrian-oriented, open-air complex.

Yet shopping and dining is not the only thing happening in large numbers at the attraction in the Fairfax neighborhood. This year, the complex owned by billionaire developer Rick Caruso is recording more crime reports than at any time in the past.

According to publicly available Los Angeles Police Department data, there were 45 crime reports at The Grove in August, following 42 in July.

From 2017, when LAPD data for The Grove first became publicly available, through November 2022, there were never more than 27 crime reports in a single month. That figure has been eclipsed seven times in the last nine months.

Line chart of monthly crime reports at The Grove, 2021-Aug. 2023

From Jan. 1–Aug. 31, there were 278 crime reports at The Grove. That represents a 183% increase from 98 incidents in the same period last year. The first eight months of 2023 have already surpassed the number of reports in any previous full year in which data was available.

Bar chart of annual crime reports at The Grove

Issue in the mayor's race

The numbers at The Grove are notable in part because, during his failed run for mayor last year, Caruso made crime a prominent campaign issue. During a Sept. 22, 2022 debate with Karen Bass, he proclaimed that Angelenos, "just don't feel safe. They don't feel safe to go for a walk. People are taking off their jewelry before they go to dinner."

A representative for Caruso's company declined to comment for this story.

The majority of incidents at The Grove have involved thefts of relatively low value. According to police data, nearly 60% of the crime reports in the first eight months of 2023 were for petty theft shoplifting, with the worth of stolen goods below \$950. Another 38 incidents were classified as grand theft shoplifting, meaning the value exceeded \$950. That is classified as a felony.

As Crosstown previously reported, shoplifting in the city reached unprecedented levels this spring and early summer, with monthly counts far above pre-pandemic levels.

There were nine reports of pickpocketing at The Grove in the first eight months of the year, and six car break-ins. There were also three reports of vandalism.

Violent crimes at the mall are rare. There have been six robbery reports this year. Two incidents at the complex involved handguns.

High-profile thefts

The rising crime numbers at The Grove come as Los Angeles has endured a series of high-profile "flash mob" robberies. That includes the brazen Aug. 12 theft of a Nordstrom in the Westfield Topanga Shopping Center, by more than 30 masked individuals.

None of the headline-grabbing incidents have occurred at The Grove. However, three days before the Nordstrom heist, a band of 30-40 thieves stole more than \$300,000 worth of merchandise from an Yves Saint Laurent store in the Americana at Brand in Glendale, another outdoor mall owned by Caruso.

Department store crimes across Los Angeles have reached historic levels this year. According to police data, during the first eight months of 2023 there were 3,361 crime reports at the establishments. That is a 123% increase from the same time last year.

Yet in July and August, as crime reports rose at The Grove, they went down overall at Los Angeles department stores. According to police data, after 470 incidents in June, there were 382 in August.

The rise in complaints from store owners, and the thefts that garnered national attention, prompted regional law enforcement and political leaders in August to form a multi-agency Organized Retail Crimes Task Force. On Sept. 19, LAPD Chief Michel Moore told the Los Angeles Police Commission that the unit has made 40 arrests. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, another agency involved in the task force, last week secured an additional \$15.6 million from the state to fight retail theft.

How we did it: We examined publicly available crime data from the Los Angeles Police Department from January 1, 2017–Aug. 31, 2023. Learn more about our data here.

LAPD data only reflects crimes that are reported to the department, not how many crimes actually occurred. In making our calculations, we rely on the data the LAPD makes publicly available. LAPD may update past crime reports with new information, or recategorize past reports. Those revised reports do not always automatically become part of the public database.

OTHER CENTER SQUARE

Op-Ed: Can Biden control the Left's monster?

By William Haupt III

"In a hierarchy, every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence." – Laurence J. Peter

Many of us boomers recall having our eyeballs fixated on the Saturday matinees where mad scientists created a monster that eventually got so out of control it controlled them. Some consider this a stroke of genius while others consider it an act of desperate fiction. The results were not what we expected. Even though admission was only a dime, most of us left for home feeling cheated.

During her time in the Senate, her own campaign and the one she shared with Joe Biden, Kamala Harris was a lock-step progressive. Harris not only had the most progressive voting record in the Senate's history, she vilified Donald Trump and his justices and constantly refused to work with the GOP. As vice president, Harris cast the most tie-breaking votes in the history of the Senate at 31.

The day Biden "officially" announced Harris as a running mate, every liberal newspaper in America, led by the New York Times, reported Harris was a fair and commonsense liberal with a voting record that reflected it. Although Harris shares a past with womanizer Willy Brown that would portray "Peyton Place" as a cartoon show, desperate to win in 2020 the left felt their lap-dog media would hide her indiscretions until Biden left for the old folks home. But they soon learned the power of the press.

Everyone but Joe Biden knew he was chosen as "the default Democratic candidate" since Bernie Sanders stole the hearts of socialist millennials. At age 78, they could justify replacing him with a progressive. So the DNC decreed Biden must choose a progressive Black woman as his VP.

Democrats needed a high turnout of diverse voters to defeat Trump. They believed a Black woman would bring out the women. It is their party's new "11th Commandment", when in doubt appoint a member of an identity group, especially a woman whose qualifications they can easily manipulate.

Considering Harris was Biden's biggest adversary during the primaries, why did he choose her over other candidates with less political and personal baggage like Florida's Val Demings, D.C. insiders Susan Rice or Rep. Karen Bass? Because Harris was a far left party favorite from the former Gold Coast, the bluest state in the union. California is a melting pot of fruits and nuts, flush with a plethora of progressive donors and voters. It's also home to every green energy company.

The most personal attacks during the Democratic debates were not aimed at President Trump, but at Joe Biden from Kamala Harris. She bashed him on the issue of race, his past relationship with segregationists. She criticized him for opposing busing, and fabricating a tale about his civil rights work.

"A lot of voters and me want answers about what you really did in the past." – Kamala Harris

For years, vice presidents were chosen simply to give ideological or geographic balance to the nominee's campaign. The VP was considered a "stand-in" for the president at lesser events. But as they assumed more power, the job was taken more seriously. The VP's vote breaks ties in the Senate. They lead commissions and are advisers for presidents and they head special committees.

During the Democrats party's primary, Harris ran to the far left of the winner Biden yet was chosen his running mate? Amid speculation about whether Biden, 77, could pledge to serve only one term in office, her political positions are coming under intense scrutiny from many Democrats. They claim the party is deserting the middle class in favor of identity groups and special interests.

According to GovTrack, an independent nonpartisan website, Kamala Harris is listed as the most liberal of all 100 senators. The NY Times, who labeled her the most progressive candidate before her appointment as Biden's VP, now calls her "a pragmatic moderate." Fox News reacted to her appointment labeling her the most progressive elected official in the federal government today.

For the last four years, Harris has sidestepped questions about many issues of concern for every American. She pledged to consider expanding the size of the Supreme Court if elected. Harris openly solicited money on social media, asking her voters to bail BLM rioters and thugs out of jail.

Harris describes herself as a "progressive prosecutor" and "top cop" in California. Yet as DA of San Francisco in 2004, she infuriated police by declining to seek the death penalty for a gang member who gunned down an officer in a hate crime. In 2015, she ruled against police wearing body-cams and said they were racist and showed hostility towards Blacks and other identity groups. She is a huge supporter of teaching CRT to grade school children and alternative sex education to minors.

Due to some Beltway politicians, a deal had been made for Biden to run for president, choose the unpopular Harris as his running mate to get her into office through the back door. After mentoring her extensively, he would then retire in his basement bunker in Delaware and play Pinochle.

But the man who spent his life running for president loved his job too much. Instead of mentoring his successor, (which is not the president's job), Biden wants to go out with a bang. While Biden has been co-mingling with party leaders, signing executive orders and giving away money, Kamala Harris has been relegated to what she calls "shadow duties."

"There are two kinds of failures: those who thought and never did, and those who did and never thought" – Laurence J. Peter

Within days, Harris' political integrity was tested when Biden put her in charge of his border fiasco. When Harris landed in Guatemala, Catholics lined the streets carrying signs protesting her support for abortion. Others read, "Trump won so go home!" After President Alejandro Giammattei met with Harris, he told the media, "We are not on the same page as VP Kamala Harris or President Biden."

When NBC News anchor Lester Holt asked Harris when she will be going to the border, she said, "This whole thing about the border, we've been to the border." Holt retorted, "You haven't been to Mexico and we'd like to know why?" Harris annoyingly giggled, "I haven't been to

Europe either."

According to beltway Democrats, although they created the Harris problem by pandering to identity group voters, they refuse to bail Biden out for fear of losing the Black vote. According to Politico, CNN interviewed 32 top Democratic leaders. Their consensus is too few Americans have a positive view of Biden's current successor, and they fear an exodus to the GOP. By protecting Harris, this will give them the identity vote and help them defend programs that appeal to those on the far left.

All of America is aware Joe Biden flunked rocket science, but, throughout the years he has learned when to pull the switch. But putting the guy who barely passed the course in charge of teaching the least capable student in class how to blow up the world is scary. The press did too good a selling job on Kamala Harris' shortcomings to undue the damage they did while she ran for president.

NEW YORKER

London Breed's Cynical Swing to the Right

By Jay Caspian Kang

Is California headed for a right-wing backlash? This question has hovered over the state's politics for years now, as the public's frustration with homelessness and property crime has escalated. To date, the evidence has been decidedly mixed. The most recent mayoral election in Los Angeles was supposed to be a referendum on this matter, but much to the chagrin of those declaring a new purple wave in Southern California, Karen Bass, an establishment progressive, defeated Rick Caruso, a real-estate billionaire and former Republican who promised to "clean up" the city. Up north, the recall of Chesa Boudin in San Francisco was supposed to be proof that voters in a famously liberal city had had enough, but soon after Boudin was recalled, Pamela Price, a fellow-progressive, was elected as the district attorney of Alameda County. Now Price herself is facing a similar recall campaign, which some would marshal as proof that "the wokes" have lost for good.

The lack of clarity has led to some strange decisions by a few of California's most prominent liberal politicians, who are responding in a myriad of ways to the possibility of a rightward swing. Last week in San Francisco, London Breed, the city's mayor, announced a bill to deny welfare benefits to anyone "suffering from substance-use disorder" who was not enrolled in a drug rehabilitation or treatment program. "No more handouts without accountability," Breed said. "In order to receive resources from our city, you will need to be in a substance-use-disorder program and consistently seeking treatment." The plan received an approving "bravo" tweet from Elon Musk. The city's progressives and homeless advocates voiced their dissent to what they correctly see as an egregiously punitive policy, straight out of the Reagan era.

Breed's plan demonizes the "service resistant" homeless population that so often becomes the center of any conversation about homelessness in California. These people, the story goes, refuse all government assistance and shelter, and choose instead to take advantage of a liberal city's lax enforcement laws to openly use drugs and cause public disturbances. In reality, such people make up a small minority of the homeless population. But, even if we were to indulge in Breed's fantasy, and say that there are hundreds of addicts in San Francisco who would finally enter treatment under threat of losing their welfare benefits, it seems clear that there are not enough "substance-use disorder" programs that can take on any new patients. A report in the San Francisco Standard found that roughly half of the city's drug users who sought treatment were not admitted into San Francisco's biggest drug-detox center. As I've reported before, the existing services suffer from chronic staffing shortages that lead to long delays. People fall through the cracks, and end up either back on the streets or dead.

Breed has her usual combatants, most notably Dean Preston, a leftist, Democratic Socialists of America-backed board supervisor (San Francisco's equivalent to a city-council member), but both Rafael Mandelman, a moderate who represents the Castro district, and his colleague Matt Haney, the darling of the powerful pro-development yimby movement in the Bay Area, suggested that the city wouldn't be able to handle the increased demand for treatment that could come with Breed's new punitive program. "With the city failing to provide immediately accessible substance use services for those currently seeking such services," Mandelman wrote on Twitter, "I have concerns about the City's ability to successfully move this initiative forward."

Haney said that Breed's proposal was "shockingly unserious for a city facing a horrific and deadly public-health-and-public-safety drug crisis." He also pointed out what should be obvious to anyone who knows anything about basic economics: "Taking away limited assistance from people who may be sick with an addiction or simply unable to make an appointment and putting them on the sidewalk again will lead to even worse chaos on our streets."

I've written extensively about how the homelessness crisis in California cannot be solved by big ideas, for as long as the underlying staffing and infrastructural problems persist. Municipalities and the state can throw billions of dollars at the problem, but until they find a way to replace the existing patchwork of third-party nonprofits, much of that money will go to waste.

Breed, I imagine, knows all this. We can guess that her motivation for such a silly policy likely comes, instead, from her electoral ambitions. Breed is up for reelection in 2024, and as Joe Eskenazi of Mission Local, a San Francisco news site, pointed out last Tuesday, her main challenger, Daniel Lurie, a forty-six-year-old philanthropist and an heir to the Levi Strauss fortune, will likely try to compete with her for the moderate vote. Lurie says that he decided to run for mayor when he was walking his two young children to school and saw a naked man stumbling down the street. His platform includes increased police staffing, compulsory psychiatric treatment for severely mentally ill people, and more shelter beds. Breed's office, in turn, told the New York Times that Lurie lacked the current mayor's government experience, but that his ideas "did not depart from what the mayor was already trying to do."

Essentially, the voters of San Francisco will be faced with two candidates having a tough-talk competition. Both candidates are worried about escalating crime and homelessness, and believe the city has become far too permissive on both fronts; both seem to be trying to create a coalition between standard conservatives and the increasingly conservative and highly influential Chinese American voting bloc. (Lurie, for his part, promised to put foot patrols in Chinatown in response to attacks against Asian elders.) This may make sense in an electoral sense, but if Breed's most recent proposal is any indication, the incoming rightward flex-off between Breed and Lurie will be totally divorced from reality.

There is no question that homelessness and addiction in the state should be the top priorities for any elected official—not just because voters

care but because the crises deserve real solutions. Blaming people battling addiction and threatening them with potential financial ruin might satisfy someone like Elon Musk, but the game that Breed is playing now is both cynical and a waste of everyone's time. Maybe all of this will teach Breed the lesson that she should have learned when she cheered on the recall of Chesa Boudin: if the problems—homelessness, crime—stay the same once you've disposed of your political enemies, the next backlash is coming straight for you.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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