

***Empowerment Congress North Area
Neighborhood Development Council***

**P.O Box 7536
Los Angeles, CA 90007**

**Problem Properties and Public Safety
Prevote Final Report for August 2008**

Issued by the council's
Public Safety Committee
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For review by the Governing Board at its September 4, 2008, meeting.

Resident and stakeholder complaints about problem locations and other public safety issues in the Empowerment Congress North Area Neighborhood Development Council area for the month of August 2008.

The list below is the Public Safety Committee's final Problem Properties report for August 2008, covering priority chronic nuisance problem locations reported by residents within the boundaries of the ECNANDC.

The boundaries of the council are: on the north the 10 Freeway. On the south Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. On the east the 110 Freeway. On the west, Western Avenue from the 10 Freeway to Jefferson and then Arlington from Jefferson to Martin Luther King. The council refers to city agencies the determination of the extent or validity of stakeholder complaints, although it has made a reasonable effort to eliminate frivolous ones.

Photographs are included in separate PDF files of locations on reported for City Council Districts 1 and 8.

The next Public Safety Committee meeting will be Thursday, September 18, 2008, 5:00 pm at the St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 3651 S. Vermont Avenue at 36th Place. Parking available in the church lot on 36th Place. Please enter the church from the parking lot.

Homicides

We are including information from the Los Angeles Times Homicide Blog (<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/homicidereport/>) of killings in and near the ECNANDC area. The text is by the Los Angeles Times.

In our area:

None in August

Near our area:

Isaiah Quinones, 40, a Latino man who worked as an armed security guard, was fatally shot about 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 27, in a bank parking lot at 29th Street and Crenshaw Boulevard in Jefferson Park. Quinones was approached by two black men in the parking lot at a Bank of America branch, said Officer Kate Lopez, a spokeswoman for the Los Angeles Police Department. She said there was an altercation and one of the men pulled out a gun and shot Quinones several times.

Locations Cleared in August

1. **Northbound Normandie offramp from the 10 Freeway.** Complaint from members of the Van Buren Place block club of trash and debris. Placed cleanup order with Caltrans online July 30, 2008. In observation of August 20 it had been cleaned but some new trash has appeared. A little better than before but drivers exiting freeway throw trash out their windows.

Current Problem Locations

City Council District 1 (Ed Reyes)

1. **912 W. 20th Street.** Single family house with small second unit behind. Reported to Housing September 2, 2008: "Inoperable vehicle parked on lawn (sliding gate opens on curb, not on a driveway), excessive junk storage in yard and on front porch." Case number is 212726.
2. **1038 W. 24th Street.** Burned-out Queen Anne house surrounded by contractor fence. The house burned in 2004 and has been under city orders to clean up the hazardous situation since then. Building and Safety issued orders to repair the fire damage on April 4, 2003. Permits were only issued four years later, on May 9, 2007. Those permits expired on September 13, 2007, with the work still undone. New permits were issued on November 5, 2007 and again expired, on December 27, 2007. The owner early in 2008 submitted plans for fixing the building. The property was inspected by an electrical engineer on February 22, 2008, and there was a plan check on February 25. LADBS Inspector John Cordon reports that the owners finally cleared their restoration plans with the HPOZ and Planning Dept. in August and are seeking a loan to begin the renovation. No work in progress in observation on September 2, 2008
3. **1121 W 24th Street.** Inoperable vehicles and junk storage on property. Put on our list in May 2006. Assigned to LADBS Inspector Hector Rodriguez, 213-252-3032. The owner had already been cited for this violation in May of 2004. Orders issued (#1263163) specifying violations: "Maintenance and repair of existing building; excessive or overgrown vegetation; open storage of inoperable vehicles; rubbish, garbage, trash and debris on the premises; the approximate 15'x10' construction of a covered patio was/is constructed without the required permits and approvals; and open storage within the required yards." Compliance date of 9/27/06. The owner, who no longer operates a business from these premises, began to slowly clear the junk storage without ever completing the cleanup. A delegation including CD1 Deputy Lynnelle Scaduto, Building and Safety inspectors Javier Alipio and Hector Rodriguez, Deputy City Attorney Jan De Andrade, and Leslie Evans for the ECNANDC met with the owner and inspected the property on August 12. It was agreed that the vast amount of old recycling materials stored on the property would be removed by the LA Conservation Corps with City aid on successive Fridays and Saturdays beginning September 5.
4. **Walkway between Budlong and Raymond next to Salvin School.** There is extensive dumping near the Raymond Ave. end of the pedestrian walkway that runs between the 10 Freeway and Salvin Elementary School to the north. It appears to be just dumping but it may mean the homeless person who had been camping here is back. Put back on our list in August 2008. Observations of August 20 and September 2.

City Council District 8 (Bernard Parks)

1. **1921 W. 23rd Street.** Neighbors and police complain that people at this apparent duplex carry on an illegal car repair business. Put on our list in November 2006. Photo as of October 2, 2007. Unusually deep front yard, all dirt, used to park vehicles. Numerous vehicles were impounded in the spring of 2007. Housing Inspector Keith Gordon during an inspection in July 2007 ordered the owners to clean up the dirt yard and to limit parking to the right side that would be the driveway between the apron at the curb and the gate to the back but is not currently marked. In observations of July 5 and 15, August 20, and September 2, 2008, two cars were parked on the "lawn" dirt.
2. **1883 W Adams Blvd at LaSalle, recycling center (see photo).** This corner has been a major crime and nuisance problem for the neighborhood, with strong complaints from residents, local block clubs, and several small business owners. The owners in 2005 demolished the original building and constructed a small market at the south end of the property. Building and Safety revoked the recycling center conditional use permit January 13, 2006, because the building had been demolished and the recycling business moved to the north of the property, too close to the adjacent apartment house on La Salle. The owners appealed but lost the two levels of appeal, to Zoning and Planning and to the South Los Angeles Planning Commission, in 2006. Building and Safety in January 2007 issued orders to stop using this property as a recycling center. The owners appealed to the Building and Safety Board of Commissioners. At a June 5, 2007, hearing the Board voted 4-0 to reject the appeal. Building and Safety also justified the revocation saying the owners had submitted a false site plan that specified a required six parking places for the new market. The recycling business has effectively taken over the whole parking lot, and they lock up the lot when they are closed, leaving the market without even the pretense of having parking. Criminal charges were filed on the grounds of not providing the required parking. The civil case on the Building and Safety permit revocation and the criminal one are still in the courts. In observation of July 5, 2008 (see photos) the two parking spots at the north end were blocked by plastic trash cans. A large white truck belonging to the recycling business frequently double parks in the street blocking access to the parking lot. In observation of September 2 new rules have the north lot gate closed. The criminal case got a continuance to September 12. Reportedly there is also an IRS investigation of this business.
3. **Homeless encampments/trash and shopping cart accumulation in alleys between La Salle and Hobart south of Adams Blvd.** Part of the general complex of homeless and drug problems near La Salle and Adams involving the recycling center at 1883 W Adams are a complex of alleys with regular encampments of drug addicted and mentally ill homeless people. One alley runs south from Adams to 27th Street between La Salle and Harvard. In the next block to the west an alley runs east-west from Harvard to Hobart behind the commercial buildings that face Adams Blvd. and has a T connection that runs south to 27th Street. There is an effort by the local block club with support from Councilmember Parks and LAPD to gate the Harvard-Hobart alley but it has been making no progress over the last year. There were five or more transients camped in the LaSalle-Harvard alley on March 31, two on April 16, but none since then with the most recent observation September 2.
4. **1476 W 29th Street.** Tenants at this house (listed as a duplex, so was a Housing Dept jurisdiction) continually store large amounts of objects in the yard and on the front and back porches. This location was on our list all spring 2007, when yard sales were held repeatedly. Housing issued orders to desist on May 11, 2007. The sales and extensive outdoor storage began again in September 2007. Put back on our list in November 2007. Complaint submitted to Housing: 12/4/07: "The tenant regularly stores large amounts of material for yard sales on porch and in yard. Have observed 21 yard sales on nonconsecutive days this year." Early in 2008 Housing transferred the case back to Building and Safety, which got the tenants to stop the yard sales but failed to get them to cease the extensive storage on the front and back porches. It is now on its second LADBS inspector, John Utreras, (323) 789-2795. Building and Safety issued two cleanup orders, order #1709805 with a compliance date of March 20 and order #1772067

with a compliance date of May 7, 2008. Neither had any effect. There was still excessive storage on the front and back porches on August 31, 2008. A reinspection of the property has reportedly been ordered and if it is not found to be in compliance a city attorney hearing will be scheduled. We emailed Inspector John Utreras July 30 asking for a status report on this property. He had not responded as of September 2. We left a phone message for Utreras's supervisor, Principal Inspector Leo Fuller, on September 2.

5. **1533 W. 30th Street.** On the complaint of LAPD Senior Lead Officer Brian Hun that there are people living in the garage of this single family house we reported them to Building and Safety July 14 to have LADBS investigate. They have assigned Inspector John Utreras, (323) 789-2795.
6. **1783 W. 35th Street (see photo).** Extensive damage to roof and general deterioration. Put on our list in August 2005. Various LADBS inspectors have had the case. Most recently Inspector Michael Tuck (213-252-3936). He issued orders with compliance date of 8/17/2007, specifying: "Water heater venting. Plumbing not installed per code. Insufficient size of flooring or floor supports. Hazardous or unclean premises. Hazardous wiring in the dwelling. Lack of adequate heating. General dilapidation or improper maintenance as required by Section 91.8104. The interior floors, walls, and ceilings, or portion thereof are in need of general maintenance and repair. Deteriorated or ineffective weather protection including crumbling or loose plaster, waterproofing of exterior walls, roofs, floors, foundations, broken windows or doors, broken, rotted, split or buckled exterior wall or roof coverings. Deteriorated or ineffective weather protection including crumbling or loose plaster, waterproofing of exterior walls, roofs, floors, foundations, broken windows or doors, broken, rotted, split or buckled exterior wall or roof coverings. Lack of minimum amounts of required natural light and ventilation."

New information in August 2008 is that there is one living heir to this property but that person is considered mentally incapacitated and is unable to take possession, leaving the property permanently vacant. The case is being handled by Citywide Nuisance Abatement attorney Felton Newell, 310-575-8500. Photo dated September 2, 2008. In observation of September 2, 2008, this property had finally been boarded and fenced.

7. **Santos Plaza, 38th Street and Western Avenue.** The Community of Friends building on the southwest corner of this intersection has had long-term problems with transients, drug addicts, and prostitutes. They had installed fences to block access to decorative planter niches on the Western side of the building and have now added fences on the 38th Street side. We met with LAPD Senior Lead Officer Pierre Olega August 18 and asked him to keep an eye on this property. He says the problem is better now than in the past but that he will work to reduce the loitering.
8. **Century Liquor, 3894 S. Western Avenue.** A central focus of transients and alcoholics who hang out or live in the nearby Martin Luther King Park. Put on our list in January 2008. The new building for the Exposition Park Regional Library, formerly at 36th Place and Vermont Ave., is slated for completion this summer on Western Avenue right across the street from Century Liquor, where the problems with alcoholic street people promise to create large problems. A Zoning hearing was held January 28 where the Community Coalition Against Substance Abuse, the Empowerment Congress North, and community members testified on the negative impact of this business on the area.. Zoning Administrator Patricia Brown issued her report April 29, which determined that Century Liquor "is a public nuisance." She imposed 25 conditions on the business, including that they remove all graffiti within 24 hours, that hours be limited to 8 am to 11 pm, that they install video surveillance of the exterior of the property with the tapes retained for at least 30 days and available to the police department, that they hire a state licensed security guard to be on duty from 3 pm to closing every day, that all signs advertising alcohol be removed from windows and the door, that no individual cups or servings of ice be provided to customers. The conditions are to stay with the property and be binding on any future owner. The report required that the owners file a Plan Approval application within nine months leading to a hearing that

would review the conditions and have the power if indicated to order discontinuance of the uses of the property. LAPD Senior Lead Officer Brian Hun reports that the situation has improved since the conditions were imposed. But we have a report from a Public Safety Committee member on July 7 that there were a couple of loiterers in the parking lot and people buying alcohol and heading off into Martin Luther King Park.

9. **Alley between 39th St and 38th Place just east of Western Ave.** Part of the blight in the area around Century Liquor, there is repeated extensive dumping in the alley and it is regularly used by transients to drink alcoholic beverages purchased at Century Liquor. Put back on our list in February 2008. Reported online to Street Services February 19. It was cleaned in observation of March 4. However, it is clear a longer-term correction is needed. We have a special concern because this alley faces across 39th Street the new Exposition Park Regional Library due to open this summer. The plentiful hiding places in foliage growing through the mostly dirt alley provide cover for potentially dangerous people next to what will be a major gathering place for children. Deputy City Attorney Jan De Andrade and LAPD Senior Lead Officer Pierre Olega have requested help from CD8 City Councilmember Bernard Parks to have the alley paved to discourage the transients. At this time the alley is partly covered with asphalt and partly just dirt. We met with Dennis Rodriguez of Councilmember Parks staff August 18 to renew the request for paving the alley, but suggested if that was not feasible that the city remove the shrubbery in the alley that provides hiding places for alcoholics who may cause problems for the new Exposition Park Regional Library that opened that day.

Problems Resolved in Previous Reports

Locations Cleared in July

1. **1660-1674-1/2 W. Adams Blvd., strip mall.** Put on our list in May 2006 because of loitering and drug dealing on the sidewalks on the Adams and Kenwood sides of this strip mall. Several meetings were held with the owners to try to persuade them to hire a security guard, the most recent on June 11 attended by LAPD Senior Lead Officer Brian Hun, Deputy City Attorney Jan De Andrade and Leslie Evans for the ECNANDC Public Safety Committee. The two owners agreed to look for a security guard and an armed security guard began work the week beginning July 14.
2. **Lucky Liquor, 2109 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.** Located at MLK and Arlington, this store generates heavy sidewalk traffic of alcoholics and transients. Put on our list in January 2008. In a March 26, 2008, report Associate Zoning Administrator Anik Charron imposed 21 conditions on the liquor store. Charron ruled that the store "constitutes a public nuisance . . . [that] has resulted in repeated nuisance activities including but not limited to disturbances of the peace, illegal drug activity, harassment of passersby, prostitution, theft, assaults, batteries, loitering, police detentions and arrests." The main conditions were: All graffiti to be painted out within 24 hours, to match color of building. Hours of operation limited to 7 am to midnight. Bright outdoor lighting. Video cameras inside and out, tapes to be kept for at least a week and made available to police on request. State-licensed security guard from dusk to closing time every day, from a registered security company, not a relative of the owner. All windows free of signs "which inhibit views into the facility by patrolling City police." In a few observations since, the latest on July 15, the place looked clean and free of transients.

Dropped without being cleared in July

1. **3607 S. Vermont Avenue, Smart and Final.** On August 30, 2006, a Zoning hearing was held where this Smart and Final applied to upgrade their conditional use permit for wine and beer to allow a full line of alcoholic beverages. The upgrade was denied. Smart and Final appealed to the South Los Angeles Planning Commission, which heard the case, # ZA 2006 4385-CUB-1A, on February 20, 2007. The commission issued its report on March 23, 2007, upholding the denial. Our ongoing concern was

that its 2000 permit to sell wine and beer required a public hearing within 11 months on how well it was adhering to its imposed conditions. The store never held the hearing. Now after a year and a half it is clear that Smart and Final does not intend to hold the hearing and we have no leverage that can compel them to do so.

Locations Cleared in June

1. **Walkway just north of 10 Freeway between Budlong and Raymond.** The homeless encampment next to Salvin Elementary School was cleared in February but reappeared in March 2008. Lynnelle Scaduto, deputy to Councilmember Ed Reyes, CD1, said she would help get it cleared again. The encampment was gone in observation of July 5.
2. **Motel at Normandie and Jefferson.** Complaint made at the June 19 Public Safety Committee meeting that there was extensive trash in a yard of this motel on the Jefferson side. We made an inspection July 5 and did not find conditions that would be accepted by Building and Safety for a citation and did not open a case on this location.

Locations Cleared in May

1. **1025 W. 25th Street.** Vacant house under renovation. LAPD Senior Lead Officer Sam Salazar reports that unsecured windows result in frequent occupation of the house by transients. Put on our list in January 2008. We had an additional complaint of transients on this property from a neighbor in mid-February. Work had stopped on the property throughout March and April, but has now resumed on a daily basis.
2. **22nd Street between Juliet and Catalina.** On complaint of a neighbor, two people, a man and a woman, appeared to be living in a brown Ford station wagon with California plates license number 3RFK937 located in front of 1605 W 22nd Street. The neighbor stated that the vehicle had been parked there next to the 10 Freeway for "many weeks" and has received numerous parking tickets. Put on our list in April 2008. Vehicle was gone in observation of May 14.
3. **1422-24 W. 29th Street.** On our list since March 2007. One of our worst cases. A large pile of burned timbers from a garage fire in an unfenced back yard that opened directly on a city alley. Soon this was complicated by heavy illegal dumping in the yard and massive graffiti on the back of the house, yard fence, and wall of neighbor's garage that faces this lot. The owner is ill and did not have the money to do anything. The case bounced between Building and Safety and Housing for nine months and no one was willing to accept it. Finally the Building and Safety website opened a case on October 23, 2007, and assigned to inspector William Jimenez, (323)789-1488, who issued orders to comply with a deadline of November 25, 2007. Building and Safety failed to enforce the ruling or to step in and do the cleanup themselves. After six months of further inaction our Neighborhood Prosecutor Jan De Andrade went outside of the City agencies altogether and appealed to the nonprofit Los Angeles Conservation Corps to do the cleanup, paint out the graffiti, and build a new fence. A team of 18 or 20 young people in green hardhats turned out on May 14 and 15 with a big city dumpster to do the job. Our neighborhood council paid for the materials for a fence and the Conservation Corps came back and built a beautiful redwood fence, completely solving the problem.
4. **3011 S. Budlong.** Burned and vacant single family house. Put on our list in March 2008. The property has been properly fenced, but large heaps of partially burned debris remained in the front yard, leading neighbors to fear vandals may be tempted to start another fire that could endanger their homes. Reported to Building and Safety March 31. Inspector William Jimenez, (323)789-1488, cited the owners for "Rubbish, garbage, trash and debris on the premises. The dwelling or portion thereof is in need of general maintenance and repair. [and] Excessive or overgrown vegetation on the premises." He set a compliance date of May 2. Debris was cleared from the front yard in observation of May 28.