

**Empowerment Congress North Area
Neighborhood Development Council**

P.O Box 7536
Los Angeles, CA 90007

**Problem Properties and Public Safety
Prevote Final Report for January 2009**

Issued by the council's
Public Safety Committee
Committee chair: Leslie Evans
Civilian Cochair, Southwest LAPD
Community Police Advisory Board (CPAB)
lbevans@earthlink.net
323-574-5586

For review by the Governing Board at its February 5, 2009, 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 January 2009.

The list below is the Public Safety Committee's final Problem Properties report for January 2009, 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, February 19, 2009, 5:00 pm. at the Exposition Park Library, study room, 39th Street and Western Avenue. Parking available in the library lot.

City Council District 1 (Ed Reyes)

1. **110 Freeway between Washington Blvd. and Estrella.** Heavy graffiti on outside of freeway southbound wall. We first reported this to Cal Trans October 20, 2008. Reported online again to CalTrans January 3 and January 13, 2009. Graffiti still there in observation of February 3, 2009.
2. **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. Assigned to the regional office: 3550 Wilshire Blvd, #1500 Los Angeles, CA 90010, (213) 252-2800. No change in observation of November 18. Has been referred to Housing inspector Aydin Akbarut, 310-524-1249. We have been informed that a Housing Dept. senior inspector will check out the location. Car still on lawn on January 3, 2009. Housing at first declined to act because of the appearance that the place is owner occupied and had held an owner occupied exemption from Housing jurisdiction. Further investigation has shown that no owner occupied form has been filed with the city since 2006 so Housing is supposed to proceed to request compliance.

3. **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. In The long delay in the owners beginning repairs has led the city attorney to refer this location to their Problem Property Resolution Team. On November 5 the Public Safety Committee received a call from a neighbor saying a woman was moving into the roofless house. Leslie Evans for the Public Safety Committee went to the location the next day and spoke to a neighbor who said a woman owner has been living in the house on and off over the last year. This was reported to the police. No change in observation of January 13, 2009. Emailed LAPD Senior Lead Officer Sam Salazar February 3 to ask him to check to see if the person is still living there. In an observation of February 3 major renovation work has begun on this property and if this continues steadily we should be able to remove this property from our list next month.

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 and 30, 2008, two cars were parked on the "lawn" dirt. At the Sept. 18 public safety committee meeting it was reported that there has been a recent drug arrest at this location. LADBS had closed its case on April 14, 2008. Deputy City Attorney has asked LADBS Senior Inspector Todd Robertson to reopen the matter. He has said he will make a personal inspection. A new case was opened on September 18, Inspector Marcos Mendez, (323)789-1491. Has been referred to the Problem Property Resolution Team. One car parked on dirt off driveway on January 3, 2009, two on January 13. There was another drug bust at this location on January 8, 2009, in which five persons were arrested and the children living there were removed from the property. The Deputy City Attorney is checking to see if there are sufficient arrests to qualify for abatement.
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. The owners filed a civil action to reverse the Board's ruling. This was heard by Judge James Chalfant November 7. Chalfant in a decision issued later in principle upheld the closure order, but contingent on the Board providing specific numbers on the owners' investment as a test of their claim to have made a large enough investment to establish vested rights to the business. This requires another hearing before the Board and Building and Safety Commissioners at which the owners' attorney would submit specific records of their investment in the property. A concurrent criminal case was won against the owners. Sentencing is scheduled for December 4. On January 12 the two owners were sentence to 24 months probation, a \$500 fine each, ordered to pay \$3232 in city investigative costs, and ordered to comply with any civil judgment. They are also required to provide all six parking places as a condition of their parole.

3. **30th Street and Western Ave.** Complaint that a catering van sets up each evening on Western Avenue using electricity from E.M. Auto at 2945 S. Western. Stakeholder says the manager of E.M. Auto says no permission was granted for this usage. We have requested help on this from CD 10 Deputy Albert Lord III and LAPD Senior Lead Officer John Biondo. Officer Biondo spoke to the owners on February 2, where he found them operating on private property in the parking lot of the auto repair shop. He is checking with the health department to see if their permits are extensive enough to cover the kind of operation they are running, and with the owners of the property to verify if they do have permission to set up there.
4. **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. This property was boarded and fenced in August 2008. We have been told that there is a party interested in purchasing this property. No change in observation of January 13, 2009.

5. **Alley between 39th St and 38th Place just east of Western Ave. , Los Angeles 90062.** 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. We have a special concern because this alley faces across 39th Street the new Exposition Park Regional Library. The plentiful hiding places in foliage growing through the mostly dirt alley provide cover for potentially dangerous people next to what is 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. At our request the

City cleared the alley of heavy illegal dumping in December, but there is extensive graffiti on most of the walls facing the alley as of observation of January 3, 2009. Submitted online graffiti paintout request January 13, 2009. ECNANDC Acting President Yolanda Jones has written to Councilmember Bernard Parks asking that the alley be paved.

6. **3665 S Vermont Avenue.** In response to a concern of the Los Angeles Police Department we are joining USC in requesting that the City proceed to demolish the abandoned library building at 36th Place and Vermont Avenue. The building was vacated in July of last year and the CRA is charged with selling the property to a developer. LAPD has been informed that the building itself is condemned and will be torn down to make way for a new construction to be negotiated between the CRA and a yet-to-be named developer. In the interim the property has had a temporary chain link fence erected, but the fence is being hit by gang members and vandals to gain entry to the secluded portions of the building frontage from which to launch street robberies and muggings against pedestrians on Vermont Avenue. The main offenders in the area are the Fruit Town Brims, a Bloods street gang that has preyed on pedestrians and USC students for a number of years on that part of Vermont. USC in particular is concerned for the safety of their students as they pass by the deserted building and feels that an empty lot with clear visibility would improve safety. This issue of course equally or more so affects community members who are not connected to USC but walk on Vermont Avenue. In observation of January 6, 2009, chain link was bent inwards in several places indicating persons had scaled the fence and gained entry to the property. At this time the fence has not been cut to provide opportunity to waylay passersby, but that risk is quite high. ECNANDC Board member Joshua Watson is sending a letter to the city to support demolition request.

Problems Resolved in Previous Reports

Locations cleared in November

1. **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. Building and Safety recently ruled in this case that there is no law against piling household goods for storage in visible areas such as porches, only a prohibition on public storage of rubbish. We are investigating if this reading of the LAM Code is accurate. In the meantime the residents of the property have removed a majority of the materials on the front porch; the remaining storage is unsightly but would not by itself have justified being on our list. We need to determine the law in general as this kind of open-air storage is common in the community and we received frequent complaints about it.
Current Problem Locations

Locations Cleared in October

1. **1121 W 24th Street.** Inoperable vehicles and junk storage on property. Put on our list in May 2006. The owner had already been cited for this violation in May of 2004. The owner, who no longer operates a business from these premises, had stored a huge amount of recycling, lumber, old motorcycles, etc.. 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. Lynnelle Scaduto organized three work sessions at the location, the largest of which had 27 volunteers. Four large city dumpsters were filled for a total

of just under 10 tons.

2. **1533 W. 30th Street.** On the complaint of LAPD Senior Lead Officer Brian Hun that there were people living in the garage of this single family house we reported them to Building and Safety July 14 to have LADBS investigate. LADBS inspected October 16 and found no evidence of anyone living in the garage.
3. **Century Liquor, 3894 S. Western Avenue.** Had been 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. 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. Hanging out at the location, possibly beyond the owners' control, continued through July but the place seems to have been orderly since then.