

**Empowerment Congress North Area
Neighborhood Development Council**

P.O Box 7536
Los Angeles, CA 90007

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

Issued by the council's
Public Safety Committee
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For review by the Governing Board at its July 10, 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 June 2008.

The list below is the Public Safety Committee's final Problem Properties report for June 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, July 17, 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. NOTE NEW TIME.

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:

Near our area:

Jessica Corona, 30, a Latina woman, was shot and killed outside a bar at 4253 Main St. in South-Central Los Angeles about 2 a.m. Sunday, June 29. She was pronounced dead at the scene, according to authorities.

Kevin Johnson, 40, a black man, was shot to death in the 4100 block of Sutro Avenue near Leimert Park about 3:35 a.m. Monday, June 30. Police said Johnson was standing alongside his car when a suspect or suspects approached and shot him multiple times. Family members and neighbors went outside and found Johnson lying on the sidewalk. Paramedics pronounced him dead at the scene, authorities said. Anyone with information about the shooting is asked to call South Bureau Homicide Dets. Carreon and Tylee at (213) 485-1383

Christopher Taylor, 19, a young black man, was shot and killed outside his home in the 3600 block of 7th Avenue in the Jefferson Park area at about 10:15 p.m. Friday, June 13. According to a neighbor, Taylor and a friend were leaning against a car, text-messaging on their cell phones, when a vehicle drove up next to them. A person from inside the car said "what's up homie," then began shooting, hitting Taylor at least once in the head.

Jose Villalobos, 37, a Latino man, was shot following a bar fight near Hill and 24th streets near downtown Los Angeles at about 2 a.m. Sunday, June 8.

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.

Current Problem Locations

City Council District 1 (Ed Reyes)

1. **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 are clearing their restoration plans with the HPOZ and Planning Dept. and were to have started restoration in April. No workers have been present in multiple observations between early April and June 18, but we have been informed that the holdup is because of ongoing discussions with the HPOZ.
2. **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. In response to further orders from Building and Safety and a city attorney hearing the owner began to move storage to the front of the lot for removal. We spoke to the owner on January 15, 2008. He is 74 and working alone. He said two loads had been picked up by a recycling company. A very large amount of heavy metal and wood storage remains and it is not clear that one elderly man is capable of clearing this. He said he has been given a 45-day notice to complete the work. Deputy City Attorney Jan De Andrade spoke to him again at the end of February and he agreed to accept help in clearing the old storage. In observations of June 3 and 18, 2008, it appears that efforts to clear the property have stopped. Jan De Andrade has spoken to Ed Reyes' deputy Lynnelle Scaduto and they are trying to enlist the Los Angeles Conservation Corps' Clean and Green unit to do the cleanup.

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 observation of July 5, 2008, two cars were parked on the "lawn" dirt.
2. **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. There is currently a persistent problem of loiterers who hang out in the parking lot on the Normandie Avenue side. The lot is shared with a Head Start children's campus. There is also another group of loiterers who often gather on the Adams Blvd. sidewalk side of the strip mall. The Public Safety Committee discussed the situation at its November meeting and felt that the owner needs to hire a full-time security guard. Senior Lead Officer Brian Hun has met with the owner several times beginning on November 30 and raised this proposal. A June 11 meeting was held with the owners attended by LAPD Senior Lead Officer Brian Hun, Deputy City Attorney Jan De Andrade and Leslie Evans for the ECNANDC Public Safety Committee. One of the owners said he had personally received a death threat from one of the loiterers. The two owners agreed to look for a security guard.
3. **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, the 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 permissible 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 this order to the Building and Safety Board of Commissioners. At a June 5, 2007, hearing the Board voted 4-0 to reject the appeal. There Building and Safety justified the revocation also on the grounds that the owners had submitted a false site plan which specified a required six parking places for the new market, landscaping setbacks, and recycling limited to a small corner. Instead the recycling business has effectively taken over the whole parking lot, and lock up the lot when they are closed, leaving the market without even the pretense of having its required parking. Criminal charges were filed against the owners on the grounds of not providing the required market parking. The civil case on the Building and Safety permit revocation and the criminal one on the market parking 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. Three of the four spots next to the market were taken up by vehicles unloading recycling materials.

4. **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 June 18.
5. **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 to hold many yard sales. By city code only 5 two-day yard sales are permitted per year. 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." This continued in January with observed sales on 1/12, 1/16, 2/2, and 2/16 2008. Housing responded by handing the case back to Building and Safety, where it was assigned to inspector William Jimenez, (323) 789-1488. Spoke to Inspector Jimenez February 19. He said he had spoken to the tenant and told them more than five yard sales a year are not legal in Los Angeles. We suggested as a compromise to focus on the storage issue. If the yard and porches are kept clear we would not raise further complaints about the yard sales. He said this seemed reasonable. Housing reportedly still has an interest in this case. Spoke to Inspector Jimenez again March 17. He says he has contacted the owner and spoken to the tenant asking them to remove the storage currently on the front and back porches. There was still excessive storage on the front and back porches on June 18 and July 5, 2008. A reinspection of the property has been ordered and if it is not found to be in compliance a city attorney hearing will be scheduled.
6. **1783 W. 35th Street (see photo).** Apparent extensive damage to roof and general deterioration. Put on our list in August 2005. Photo as of 8-26-05. 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."

Probate has not so far succeeded in locating a definite heir to this apparently uninhabitable building. The case is being handled by Citywide Nuisance Abatement attorney Felton Newell, 310-575-8500. Photo dated October 17, 2007. According to Attorney Newell an earlier probate in the 1990s assigned the property to four heirs, all of whom have since died. Newell is working with the LA County Public Administration who say they will try to reopen probate. If this drags out it may be necessary to have the city fence this property to secure it. State Assemblyman Mike Davis is sponsoring a bill to order absentee owners of properties to bring their buildings into code compliance. We have written to his staff asking if they can do anything

about this case where there is no known owner.

7. **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. Supporting the upgrade request were Smart and Final's representatives and the representative for City Council District 8. Opposing it were the Community Coalition, our neighborhood council, and St. Mark's Lutheran Church, which abuts the property to the south. The proposed hard liquor sales were denied in part because the property is "surrounded by sensitive uses," namely USC across the street, the church to the south, and nearby Weems Elementary School. Our ongoing concern here is that when this market was built after the Los Angeles civil unrest of 1992 it agreed not to sell alcohol. In March 2000 it applied for and was granted a conditional use permit for wine and beer. One condition was that within 9 to 11 months Smart and Final would file a Plan Approval triggering a public hearing on how well they had met all conditions. They have never done so. The Planning Commission in its current report states: "The applicant's failure to file a Plan Approval that was required by the previous conditional use approval leads the Zoning Administrator to question the applicant's reliability and credibility and the ability of the applicant to comply with any other conditions." We share that view and wish to see the market undertake the required public review of its effectiveness in applying the conditions of 2000.
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.
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 support that request.
10. **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 response to a

January 29 Zoning Administration hearing to consider imposing conditions to mitigate the problems. This business is of special concern to the Community Coalition against Substance Abuse and the Southwest LAPD Community Police Advisory Board. We made progress on this case in March, with a March 26 report by Associate Zoning Administrator Anik Charron, who imposed 21 conditions on the liquor store. Charron rules 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 are: 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." Property to be kept free of trash and debris at all times and swept daily. We will keep this property on our list for a while to monitor compliance with the conditions.

Problems Resolved in Previous Reports

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.

Locations Cleared in March-April

1. **Car sales on Normandie.** We had received many complaints from three of the block clubs in the Adams-Normandie area about many cars lined up with For Sale signs taking up much of the parking on Normandie Ave. between the 10 Freeway and Adams Blvd. and also that the street car sales look shabby. Put on our list in January 2008. Many of the cars have no license plates. They usually also have the Vehicle Identification Number in the driver's window taped over to make identification of the vehicle to prevent the police from running a check to see if the car's registration is current. A 1991 Ninth Circuit Court decision ruled that California law does not require that VIN numbers be displayed and failure to display is not grounds for police to open the vehicle. CD1 City Councilmember Ed Reyes' deputy Suzanne Jimenez working with the Adams-Normandie block club got the city to install 1-hour parking signs on that stretch of Normandie. The worst offender was arrested in mid-February for interfering with a police officer towing one of his for-sale cars. He was found to have illegal temporary permits on several vehicles, prosecuted, and given a two-year stay-away order for Normandie Avenue from the 10 Freeway to Jefferson Blvd. While there have been some cars parked for sale since the signs went up it is much reduced. In observations of April 15 and 16 in the afternoon there were no vehicles offered for sale between the 10 Freeway and Adams Blvd.

Locations Cleared in February

1. **Walkway north of 10 Freeway at Budlong.** Homeless encampment next to Salvin Elementary School. This had been a persistent problem in 2005-06, cleared numerous times with the help of CD 1 Councilman Ed Reyes. Put back on our list in December 2007. Southwest LAPD Senior Lead Officer Sam Salazar at our request worked with Rampart Division to clear this in mid-February. The transient has returned, however, so the problem is back on the list.
2. **22nd Street west of Vermont Avenue.** Complaints from the Budlong-Juliet-Catalina (BJC) block club of a homeless encampment in this dead end cul de sac between the 10 Freeway and the back wall of a strip mall at 2207 S. Vermont Ave. Put on our list in December 2007. Ed Reyes' (CD1) deputy Suzanne Jimenez in a December 16 email said she had sent a Los Angeles Homeless Services Agency agent to the location and they succeeded in getting the homeless there to go for services, but the homeless returned afterwards. A February 5 email from BJC reports that the principal occupant of the tarp camp has died and that an auto accident on February 2 almost killed a woman staying there while damaging the store wall and its electrical system. LAPD Senior Lead Officer Sam Salazar had the remaining shopping carts and tarp cleared in mid-February.
3. **3811 S. Western Avenue, Los Angeles 90062, Danmar Motor Inn.** This location was on our list previously and cleared in May when there had been only one prostitution arrest and a few arrests for parole violation and possession of drug paraphernalia in several months. We put it back on the list because Los Angeles Associate Zoning Administrator Larry Friedman held a revocation hearing at City Hall June 21, 2007, Planning Department case # DIR 2007-2403(RV). According to Deputy City Attorney Felton Newall, who handled the prosecution, the case was settled for a \$25,000 fine for the Danmar. Conditions imposed on the motel included permitting police officers to ask the names of those staying there, that guests provide drivers' licenses, and that they keep lists of people arrested there and not allow them to come back.