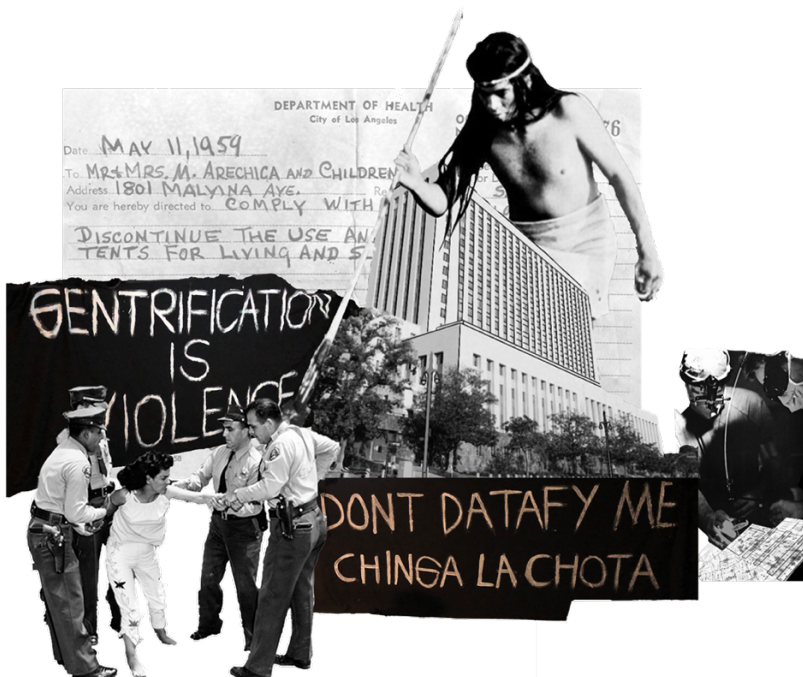


AUTOMATING BANISHMENT

The Surveillance and Policing of Looted Lands

Report Summary



Automating Banishment was researched and written by dozens of community members collaborating through the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition's **Land and Policing Workgroup**. Over the past decade, the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition has been building community power to abolish LAPD surveillance. This report grew out of that organizing and examines the relationship of data-driven policing to real estate development, displacement, and gentrification.

While more people are beginning to understand the role of data in policing, less attention is paid to data-driven policing's relationship to land. This report studies that relationship with a focus on the process that has always bound policing and capitalism together: colonization. The report also examines the evolution of data-driven policing, including through LAPD's new **Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing**, which combines data-mining and surveillance with the reformist notions of "community policing" and "police accountability." This report is intended to frame an organizing agenda against this new program and beyond.

This summary is a part-by-part overview of the report's contents. The full report with maps and citations is available at automatingbanishment.org.



Part 1: Not a Moment in Time

The first section of the report examines the historical lineage that stands behind data-driven policing today. The primary focus of U.S. settler colonialism has been to occupy land by controlling and policing it. This means everyone and everything existing on that land must also be dominated, managed, or eliminated to make way for the white American settler project. In order to sustain its violent occupation, the settler state has to not only defend the territory it stole, it also needs to defend the ideology that perpetuates settler colonialism.

The Tongva people indigenous to Los Angeles have resisted centuries of elimination and forced assimilation. Likewise, as Black people fleeing the racial terror of Jim Crow came to L.A. for opportunity, policing was combined with racist housing policies to constrict Black autonomy. Later, as deindustrialization and neoliberal economic policies cratered the economy in Black communities, wealthy developers and the state alike eyed Black neighborhoods as places to generate white wealth. Meanwhile immigration police agencies like ICE viciously enforced the boundaries of not just neighborhoods but the state itself.

Part 2: The Architecture of Data-Driven Policing

The second part of the report introduces the architecture and experiments that data-driven policing is built on. We begin by focusing on **Bill Bratton**, who was appointed police chief following a series of LAPD scandals that culminated in a 2001 federal consent decree placing LAPD under external oversight. Under Bratton's leadership and using the consent decree as a justification for new "reforms," LAPD pursued a series of experiments that expanded LAPD's data-collection and surveillance powers, including community policing, "broken windows" policing, behavioral surveillance programs, and integration of military-grade surveillance technologies.

While the basic idea of "broken windows" policing – draconian criminalization of trivially harmful behaviors to "prevent" larger crimes – is nothing new, Bratton expanded and standardized this violence, particularly in Skid Row. Bratton also built out Compstat, a data system that helped organize "broken windows" policing and furthered the collection and legitimization of crime data. Bratton also wedded police data to "community policing" – which refers to the idea of embedding police deeper in community relationships where they cultivate collaborators, map relationships, and secure assent for violent policing – in order to strengthen coordination with "stakeholders" like real estate developers and businesses.

As for the technology that feeds police data systems. LAPD has long been one of the country's most technologically resourced police forces, with a \$3.2 billion yearly budget that consumes half the city's discretionary spending. The surveillance technology LAPD has tested in places like Skid Row includes **Closed Circuit Televisions** cameras (CCTV), **Automatic License Plate Readers** (ALPR), **Body-Worn Video** (BWV or body-cams), and **Stingrays** and **Digital Receiver Technology** (aka "Dirt Box"), which monitor all phone communications. But technology isn't the only way LAPD gathers surveillance data. Every time police stop or question you, they can fill out **Field Interview (FI) cards** that generate data that police harvest and use to map our social networks. **Craig Uchida**, who built the "predictive policing" program Operation LASER, explained that the purpose of police stops is to generate this data: "Most of the time it didn't lead to anything," he explained about police stops producing FI cards, "but it was data that went into the system, and that's what I wanted."

All the data LAPD collects from daily policing and surveillance is run through **Palantir**, a data-mining platform built with CIA support. LAPD is the only major metropolitan force using Palantir today. LAPD uses Palantir to identify people's friends, relatives, locations, and movements, as well as to track vehicles using ALPRs. LAPD also feeds data through "**fusion centers**," which are data analytic centers used for real-time processing, analysis, and sharing of

surveillance information. One of the largest federal fusion centers is located in Norwalk in Los Angeles County. Since 2016, LAPD has grown its use of local data analytic centers, adding Community Safety Operation Centers (CSOCs) in each LAPD bureau as well as Area Crime Community Intelligence Centers (ACCICs), which produce “daily mission maps” and monitor social media.

The Palantir architecture as well as CSOCs were used to run LAPD’s homegrown predictive policing program, **Operation LASER** (Los Angeles Strategic Extraction and Restoration). LASER was built in collaboration with the police consulting firm Justice and Security Strategies (JSS), headed by Craig Uchida. JSS’s materials promoting LASER compared the program to laser surgery, “where a trained medical doctor uses modern technology to remove tumors.”

LASER outlined sections of neighborhoods to target for extreme policing, labelling them “**LASER Zones**.” LAPD killed 21 people in 2016, the year LASER expanded across the city. Of these, we have identified six LAPD killings associated with LASER zones – all Black or Latino, four of them shot in the back, four of them teenagers – all in a short six-month period. Within LASER Zones are “anchor points,” locations that LAPD identified for even more targeted policing as well as displacement leveraged through nuisance abatements.

LASER also targeted individuals through hit lists called **Chronic Offender Bulletins**. LAPD created these lists by assigning individuals risk scores. Nearly half the people targeted were Black (even though Black people are 9% of the city’s population), some were as young as 16, and many are unhoused. Even though LAPD had criteria for how placing people on the lists, an internal audit later uncovered that around a fifth of the people targeted had zero points under the criteria.

Another data-driven policing system used by LAPD was **PredPol**, a for-profit business co-founded by **UCLA professor Jeff Brantingham**, with UCLA Ventures as a “lead investor.” PredPol originated in Brantingham’s academic research funded by U.S. Army Research Office

to algorithmically “predict” insurgent activity in Iraq and Afghanistan. Brantingham later applied these algorithms to policing, claiming that “the mathematics underlying the insurgent activity and the criminal activity is very much the same.” PredPol harvests calls for police service and crime reports to make statistically driven predictions about which “hotspots” have the highest expected crime rate. These hotspots are then used to guide officer patrols.

Another way land is controlled to criminalize communities is what police call “**Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design**” (CPTED). The goal of CPTED is installing or removing physical and natural structures (including clearing of foliage and trees) to facilitate policing and surveillance. This environmental racism is part of LAPD’s new Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing framework, which includes a section on CPTED that recommends “the removal of hiding spots or physical barriers” to facilitate surveillance.

Another component of LAPD’s architecture of banishment is the **Citywide Nuisance Abatement Program** (CNAP), which targets buildings for investigations and civil lawsuits that can serve to displace tenants, break up communities, fuel gentrification, and expand surveillance. LAPD works to criminalize, track, and surveil residents of these buildings and passes this data to the **City Attorney**, which can open an investigation of a building and then send a demand letter to or meet with the owner to discuss changes. Not only is police data the primary basis for CNAP investigations, CNAP prosecutors used LASER data to determine enforcement priorities.

Once a building is targeted by CNAP, it can be subject to random inspections for compliance with municipal codes or become subject to other rules, restrictions, and changes requested by police. CNAP can also be used to make threats about a building’s conditional use permits, which can exercise extreme leverage over commercial properties that need those permits to operate. The City Attorney also uses CNAP to require changes that expand criminalization, including LAPD patrols, warrantless police access, installation of LAPD

surveillance systems, hiring of private security who screen and harass residents and guests, and strict rules on how people can use common areas. For residents, all of this can amount to a takeover of their homes by police, bringing the violence of “broken windows” policing and stop-and-frisk right onto people’s doorsteps, all under the threat of eviction.

Part 3: Real Estate and Capitalist Crisis

This part uses a series of vignettes to illustrate the links between capitalist crisis, real estate development, police data, and enforcement of both property and criminal law. Our analysis here begins with the 2008 recession, which corporate investors used to take over a large part of the housing supply in South Central by acquiring distressed residential properties. Now those areas are gentrifying as the new owners demolish existing housing stock to build luxury developments. Many of the places most targeted for this gentrification are also major sites of data-driven policing. Residential property ownership in one “predictive policing” LASER zone in the Crenshaw corridor illustrates this dynamic: today, 2,135 out of the 4,550 housing units in this zone (**shown below**) are corporate owned, and 76% of properties were acquired post-2008.



A crucial way that developers and police collaborate on displacement is the CNAP program we introduced above. Research into every CNAP case filed by the City Attorney between 2013 and 2018 show that these programs “mostly target housing, be it single-family dwellings or multi-family rental buildings, and residential hotels and motels” and a “large number of these properties are located in South Central Los Angeles, specifically in census tracts where Black residents make up 30% or more of the population.” Real estate developers also leverage market-subsidy housing policies and nonprofit organizations for their land grabs. For example, luxury developers enter contracts with nonprofits that provide subsidizing housing through MediCal funding but guarantee the landlord top market dollar, helping cover a new building’s development cost. Because subsidies often expire, developers can use these programs to temporarily ease into an area with the goal of fully transforming them.

Another way real estate developers coordinate their displacement is through **Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)**. These are nonprofits where property owners pool money to hire private security that double as a personal police force for themselves as well as an auxiliary police force for LAPD. Most BIDs in L.A. are “property” BIDs, meaning they are composed of the district’s property owners rather than merchants. This is deliberate: concentrating power within those who own the property mean rich developers invested in gentrification are the ones policing the street.

BIDs are typically run by predatory developers with close ties to police. For example, emails obtained through the PRA show the LAPD, City Attorney, and a real estate developer who runs the Chinatown BID collaborating to banish unsheltered activist and Chinatown resident Theo Henderson, as well as using LAPD facial recognition to identify another unhoused resident targeted by the BID. BIDs also fight broader efforts at community empowerment. When Skid Row residents organized to create a Neighborhood Council separate from the two existing downtown councils, the BIDs mounted an aggressive opposition campaign.

Part 4: Containment, Development, and the Fight for Freedom in Skid Row

In the middle of downtown is Skid Row, a vibrant community of poor and predominantly Black, migrant, indigenous, and disabled people. Data-driven policing has created a system of enhanced coordination to criminalize this community and make way for gentrification. Our analysis of Skid Row begins by chronicling the city's decades-long strategies of containment, criminalization, and blight in the area. These years of state neglect and violence were a strategy of "underdevelopment" that created conditions where real estate investors now stand to secure wealth from "redevelopment."

Throughout the history of Skid Row's policing and containment, "blight" has been a key concept used by the state to target land used by poor communities and redevelop it for profitable commercial and housing markets. In 1945 the state legislature empowered local governments to target "blight" through development, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of residential, commercial, industrial, and retail districts. The city soon created a **Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)** for this purpose. Through the years CRA would evolve to preserve the supply of housing for the city's poorest residents, including Skid Row's **single room occupancy (SRO) hotels**. Many of Skid Row's SROs eventually fell into disrepair though, and many owners found it cheaper to demolish them rather than comply with municipal codes requiring improved conditions.

In the late 1960s, the city expanded its efforts to "clean up" Skid Row. This included enacting new laws like **Municipal Code 41.18**, which criminalizes sleeping or lying outside in much of the city. Police also increased arrests for petty crimes like public inebriation—which, in 1975, became the single most common "crime" for arrest in Los Angeles. Around the same time, a coalition of housing advocates as well as residents of other neighborhoods who didn't want Skid Row spilling into their areas advanced the **"Blue Book" plan**, which deflected proposals to eliminate Skid Row by formalizing

borders for where poor and unhoused people could continue to take refuge. Baked into this plan was also targeted criminalization in what would become known as the area's "buffer" zones, allowing unhoused people to "live freely as they choose" within boundaries that also "contain" them away from the developing and gentrifying areas of downtown.

While this containment strategy helped to shore up resources for Skid Row residents, it also facilitated carceral policies and demonization of the community, along with millions in public investment to construct mega-shelters. Not only did these shelters proliferate and entrench themselves in lieu of policies that secured real housing, wealth, or land ownership, they have created a revolving door of poverty linked to criminalization, surveillance, and precarity. The coming of the **1984 Olympics** accelerated these harms. By this time L.A. was already dubbed the nation's "homeless capital." As in previous decades, City Council responded to a crisis of poverty with criminalization. "We're trying to sanitize the area," an LAPD captain announced a week before the Olympics began. Unhoused people were arrested en masse, sent to detox centers, or forced to relocate while their belongings were discarded. The county also built an "overflow" jail with a special computer system to automate processing and prosecution of mass arrests.

In May 1987, LAPD chief Daryl Gates declared Skid Row's encampments "intolerable" and threatened mass arrests. Criminalization of Skid Row's residents continued over the next decade. A decade later, the forces transforming downtown ramped up again with the 1997 launch of **CNAP** and 1999 passage of the **Adaptive Reuse** law, which allowed for converting vacant commercial structures into new residential buildings. This led to the creation of luxury housing where poorer residents previously lived. Around the same time, city officials identified 11 residential hotels in Skid Row as public nuisances. The hotel owners were ordered to renovate the buildings and install surveillance cameras. The pressures on hotels to undergo costly renovations forced many hotels to close altogether.

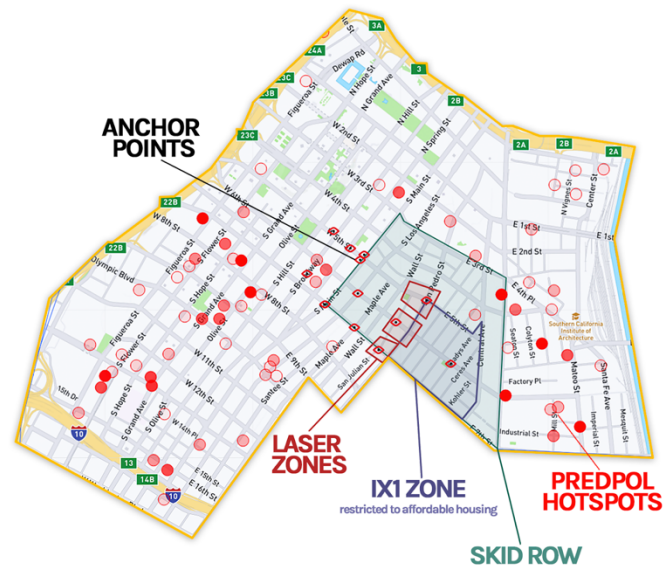
Starting in the mid-2000s, LAPD launched new campaigns of violently occupying Skid Row. As part of the **Safer Cities Initiative (SCI)** “broken windows” offensive launched in 2006, LAPD in two years “conducted 19,000 arrests, issued 24,000 citations, incarcerated 2,000 residents, and dismantled 2,800 self-made housing units” in Skid Row, a community of under 15,000 residents at the time. This same period also saw an expansion of street policing by BIDs. In Skid Row, BID patrols criminalized homeless behavior and the BIDs funded new surveillance architecture, including a 2005 donation of \$200,000 worth of CCTV surveillance cameras that would be controlled by LAPD.

These developments bring us to the current moment and **DTLA 2040**, a proposal to overhaul downtown zoning plans with drastic changes to Skid Row. The plan endeavors to make room for a projected 125,000 new residents of downtown and enrich developers who have spent years closing in on Skid Row, empowering them to extract wealth generated from decades of blight that kept Skid Row property values low. The current 2040 plan creates a small zone labelled IX1 within today’s Skid Row that preserves affordable housing.

When considered in the history of the redevelopment plans of prior decades, this plan appears to be another attempt at the same strategy of rezoning and redevelopment to make space for market-rate housing instead of prioritizing the creation of housing for the thousands of people living in the streets. But this time around, city officials, developers, and police are organized through data-driven policing tactics honed over the years.

PredPol and LASER helped lay groundwork for this assault on Skid Row. As we began to map PredPol hotspots, we found that they quarantined Skid Row, forming a digital wall of hotspot around the neighborhood’s borders. The overall impact is restriction, enclosure, and punishment, the same strategy of “containment” been used to police Skid Row. As for Operation LASER, many of the locations marked Anchor Points in Skid Row are where residential hotels either exist or existed and where new market-rate or luxury development

is now occurring. Many of these locations are sites of major contestation and struggle from residents over the years, including the Rosslyn Hotel, Frontier Hotel, and Alexandria Hotel.



When the PredPol hotspots, Operation LASER Anchor Points, and LASER zones are combined, what emerges is a coordinated assault on Skid Row. Together the Skid Row containment strategy and PredPol operated to quarantine residents within heavily policed borders as luxury development pushed in. Inside that area, Anchor Points and LASER zones were how police worked to brutalize and banish people at locations targeted for gentrification. At the same time when these strategies were in full swing, the city began developing the 2040 plan, which proposes market-rate housing in the exact stretches of 5th, 6th, and 7th streets that LAPD had marked LASER zones and Anchor Points.

In September 2021, the city also revamped the notorious Municipal Code 41.18, setting in motion another campaign to criminalize and banish unhoused people. Some of the law’s harshest aspects will be activated through zone by zone resolutions passed by City Council. This framework gives each councilmember greater powers of population control in their district, marking local zones that LAPD will make uninhabitable for the poor. Surveillance will be crucial to that war, helping politicians and police map their targets zone by zone, block by block.

Part 5: Racial Terror and White Wealth in South Central

South of downtown, the historically Black neighborhoods of South Central have long been targets of police abuse. LASER helped automate the violent policing that has always been used to terrorize residents of South Central, including “broken windows” policing, “proactive” and pretextual targeting of Black pedestrians and drivers, stop-and-frisk, militarized raids, and gang injunctions. This racialized policing cannot be separated from the gentrification the community is experiencing.

LASER’s demographic targeting was intentional. An internal report from the LAPD consultants hired to build LASER matched crime data to characteristics like race to conclude that crime was more likely to be “located in areas where there is a higher percentage of African-American residents,” and “more likely to be located in areas with lower owner-occupied housing and higher female-head of households.” Many of the areas deemed “high crime” in this analysis coincided with what would later be labelled Anchor Points or LASER zones, turning everyone in these areas into a potential suspect. Once areas were declared “high crime” under LASER, legions of police were deployed into them armed with **data-driven “mission” sheets** that offered vague profiles and “trends” of potential “criminal” suspects for them to hunt, often as vague as “Black male.”

LAPD’s LASER zones and Anchor Points for the Crenshaw corridor are **shown to the right**, along with the names of people who LAPD shot or killed inside those LASER zones. These shootings and killings were some of the most tragic excesses of LAPD’s data-driven racial terror. LAPD “use of force” reporting from 77th and Southwest Divisions also indicate how police viewed everyday conduct by community members in their neighborhoods such as talking with a friend on the sidewalk in the evening or sitting in one’s car waiting for the radiator to cool down as “suspicious” and subjecting people to injury, arrest, and threat of death.

The racial disparities in this policing are stark. Black people are 9% of the city population yet made up 27% of people stopped by LAPD in 2019, while white people are 29% of the population and 8% of stops. LAPD uses these stops to collect and mine data on Black people at far higher rates, filling out FI cards during 16% of stops of Black people and only 5% for stops of white people.

This data-driven racial terror was closely coordinated with police efforts to attack Black self-determination while securing white wealth. As noted in part 3 above, corporate landlords and wealthy investors exploited the post-2008 foreclosure crisis to extract wealth from Black and brown neighborhoods. That encroachment grew with the 2017 federal **Opportunity Zone** program, which offered major tax breaks for banks investing in historically underdeveloped communities. Yet when Black residents of these neighborhoods such as **Nipsey Hussle** tried to use those same investment opportunities to prevent displacement and secure Black wealth, they were targeted and harassed by police.

In 2017, Nipsey purchased the Marathon Clothing Store at Slauson and Crenshaw, a corner where he had spent much of his teenage years. Two years after that, Nipsey sought to purchase the entire strip mall around the store,



with plans to build a six-story plaza that included low-income residential units. The project was part of a plan to link properties to a new investment fund called Our Opportunity that would take advantage of the Opportunity Zone program. While the Trump administration and others promoted Opportunity Zones as a vehicle for capital gains in Black neighborhoods, Nipsey recognized that the program would enable displacement. The idea behind the Our Opportunity fund was to allow smaller local investors to preserve homes and wealth in the community while receiving a tax break that otherwise would have gone to outsiders.

While Nipsey pursued ways to benefit the community he grew up in, LAPD continued its long-term surveillance of residents. By Nipsey's own account, police would "come through and get to know you. . . . They'd come hop out, ask you questions, take your name, your address, your cell phone number, your social, when you ain't done nothing. Just so they know everybody in the hood." This aligns with what we know about LAPD's use of FI cards, a major information-gathering component of LASER. Unknown to the community was that the intersection of Slauson and Crenshaw had been marked a LASER Anchor Point since at least 2016 and was part of a larger LASER Zone since 2015. A Palantir mission sheet for the intersection from 2017 shows a single patrol car making 103 stops and 3 arrests in a 7-day timespan. The mission sheet directed police to look for a robbery "suspect" described simply as a 16 to 18 year old Black male – not at all descriptive but apparently enough to justify 103 stops. Another mission sheet for the 7 days prior shows 58 stops and 7 arrests, all apparently looking for the same 16 to 18 year-old Black male "suspect."

At the time of his death in March 2019, Nipsey was being investigated by LAPD based on their claim that Marathon was a front for "gang activity." City Attorney Mike Feuer was also trying to remove the store from Slauson Plaza. Nipsey's business partner David Gross reported that the City Attorney had harassed Nipsey for years based on a "maniacal zeal to expel the Marathon Store from Slauson Plaza."

At the same time LAPD was working to criminalize the area and the City Attorney was working to expel Nipsey, mega-developers and real estate speculators with close relationships to LAPD were competing against Nipsey and other local Black investors to acquire land and wealth in the area. One of these developers is CIM Group, a global commercial real estate firm that has multiple developments along Crenshaw Boulevard, at intersections that were Anchor Points within a LASER Zone. In January 2019 the firm capitalized on the Opportunity Zones law by creating the CIM Opportunity Zone Fund with a goal of \$5 billion. In April 2020, CIM announced its intention to buy the Crenshaw Mall, though they withdrew their bid just two months later due to the opposition and quick action of local residents.

CIM has long collaborated with police on displacement. A CIM Group principal with close ties to LAPD also served as president of the Hollywood Property Owners' Alliance (HPOA), which manages two BIDs (Business Improvement Districts). Since November 2014, HPOA paid for an upgrade to LAPD's network of wireless surveillance cameras with monitors in the Hollywood Station. CIM also donated rent to LAPD from 2008 to 2018 for the establishment of a substation and "logistical base" at a CIM-owned shopping mall.

Another investment entity transforming South Central is the investment firm Goldman Sachs, which helps LAPD acquire new technologies and resources without public scrutiny through the Los Angeles Police Foundation (LAPF). In 2019, Goldman Sachs anonymously donated \$250,000 through LAPF to fund the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) "community policing" program in Harvard Park, which is also in an Opportunity Zone. CSP sites also have been testing grounds for LAPD surveillance, for example with wireless cameras streaming live video to local cop cars at the Jordan Downs public housing complex. Within days of the Opportunity Zone announcement, Goldman Sachs moved fast to pursue these tax breaks and claimed it would "voluntarily measure the outcomes of its projects" to "align their goals with community priorities." So not only would the firm exercise massive power to

gentrify neighborhoods, it would also assume the role of measuring and translating the community's priorities.

What is starkly clear from these relationships is that while Black residents of South Central were forced to navigate threats of police violence and banishment, outside investors and developers collaborated with LAPD on displacement, even donating salaries, weapons, surveillance equipment, and real estate for police officers deployed in the communities.

Part 6: "Reform" of Data-Driven Policing and "Predictive Policing 2.0"

Back when LASER and PredPol launched, "predictive" policing was a trendy reform concept pushed by advocacy nonprofits like the **Vera Institute for Justice**. In 2014, Vera and the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance collaborated on a report that described "predictive policing" as a new "paradigm" of police analysis and highlighted LASER as "an example" of this trend. The report encouraged police departments to adopt "data-driven strategies such as hot-spot policing, problem-oriented policing, and intelligence-led policing," and it even advertised the role of Palantir and JSS in persuading LAPD to build and expand the LASER program.

As the community organized against LASER's violence, LAPD officials pointed to Vera's report as evidence that the program should be preserved. But eventually we won. In April 2019, LAPD announced it would end LASER. In April 2020, LAPD announced it would also discontinue use of PredPol. But that same month, LAPD announced Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing, which uses three reformist strategies to advance the next generation of data-driven policing: (1) reframing "predictive policing" systems as using data for "police accountability," a notion promoted by police reformers as "Predictive Policing 2.0" (2) standardizing the use of these systems using legal criteria and transparency rules, which we call surveillance bureaucracy, and (3) combining data-driven policing with "community policing"

programs that draw from counterinsurgency tactics to contain and control people.

Predictive Policing 2.0

LAPD's announcement of the "Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing" declared: "As part of our ongoing effort to improve the Department and the service we provide, we will continue to implement systems that measure results, improve efficiency, and provide overall accountability." This is LAPD's latest spin on data-driven policing. Facing criticism about the notion of "predicting" crime, LAPD now characterizes its efforts to generate, gather, and mine data about our lives in the language of making policing more transparent about "results," more efficient, and more "accountable."

A year after LAPD stopped using PredPol, the company changed its name to **Geolitica** and announced: "We run operations for public safety teams to be more transparent, accountable, and effective." Police reform professionals had long been advocating for this rebranding. LAPD emails that we obtained through PRA requests show law professor **Andrew Ferguson** providing LAPD Deputy Chief Sean Malinowski suggestions for how to frame what Ferguson called "predictive policing 2.0." Ferguson also made these suggestions to HunchLab, another "predictive policing" business, telling them this "accountability" spin could help escape the "predictive policing bad press trap." A few months after those emails, HunchLab was acquired by **ShotSpotter**.

This past year, ShotSpotter led to the police killing of 13-year-old Adam Toledo. News reports also revealed that ShotSpotter staff manually alter the system's AI evidence. But after acquiring HunchLab, the company now sells algorithmic products that harvest police data to supposedly "prevent crime" as well as "mitigate bias and over-policing." This along with PredPol's rebranding into Geolitica and LAPD's repackaging LASER into Data-Driven Community-Focused Policing represent the Predictive Policing 2.0 that police departments and police reformers have been looking for. The transformation to predictive policing 2.0 helps

illustrate the evolution of policing, which for centuries has followed a process of reforming to become more expansive and more durable. Whether under the banner of “prediction” or of “accountability,” LAPD continues its largely identical practice of collecting information on our people that is used to decide who is policed and how. The algorithms might change – along with which reformist trend is applied as the veneer – but the intent to monitor, control, and harm remains the same, as does the role of data in controlling and managing the population.

Surveillance Bureaucracy

While some reformers work to actively welcome, promote, and rebrand new policing innovations, others work to create bureaucratic rules for acceptance and approval of these technologies over time. Even when framed as critical of these technologies, the terms of the criticism accept that the technology is necessary or inevitable, just used excessively, incorrectly, or in a concerning manner.

Surveillance bureaucracy allows police to claim official approval for their violence, so long as they followed the procedural steps. For example in 2020 the **ACLU** led a campaign to supposedly “ban” predictive policing in Santa Cruz, where PredPol is also headquartered. The ordinance they passed says police can use these tools upon “the city council’s finding that the data that informs the technology meets scientifically validated and peer reviewed research.” As we know from our work to dismantle predictive policing in Los Angeles, finding “peer reviewed” support for these tools is easy, and in fact PredPol was developed – and the company founded – by UCLA academics who first tested the program with LAPD’s Foothills Division and then published their “findings” in a peer-reviewed journal.

As soon as the Santa Cruz ordinance was enacted, PredPol announced that their software will meet the approval criteria. Once those companies win this approval from Santa Cruz’s Republican-controlled City Council, they go around the country claiming that their harmful tools were approved under the ACLU’s rules.

Community Policing

LAPD’s current Data-Driven Community-Focused Policing reform framework is built around “community policing.” LAPD’s community policing strategies borrow directly from the U.S. Army’s Counterinsurgency Field Manual, written to instruct American forces on how to ensure “peaceful” imperial rule over the lands they’re occupying.

The basic premise of community policing is that embedding police deep in a neighborhood as well as using them to deliver otherwise denied resources will increase trust in police and help portray law enforcement as part of the community rather than an occupying force. The overall objective is to secure assent for violent policing. Nationally, a significant source of funding for community policing has been the D.O.J.’s Community Oriented Policing Services grantmaking program, created by the 1994 crime bill that then Senator Joe Biden wrote. In response to widespread mass demands this past summer to defund police, Biden doubled down on calls to expand police funding through the COPS office, saying police departments need more resources to embed in communities and promising a \$300 million investment.

LAPD’s largest community policing program today is called **Community Safety Partnerships (CSP)**. The program was tested over the years in public housing developments, where it was funded through donations from real estate developers, along with outside funding directly linked to counterinsurgency in military occupations. In 2012, LAPD received a COPS grant that required hiring of military veterans with at least “180 consecutive days of active military duty post September 11, 2011.” LAPD deployed these former troops – many of them fresh from occupying Iraq and Afghanistan – to CSP sites in public housing developments. In addition, three of the first CSP sites were funded with \$750,000 in donations by the Ballmer Group, which expressly mandated that the city fund this program using tax dollars after its donation expired, and Goldman Sachs also made an anonymous donation of \$250,000 to fund one CSP.

Along with developer, investor, and military support, the expansion of CSP has also depended on the complicity of academics who have a history of working closely with police. When the CSP program was converted into a full-fledged LAPD bureau in summer 2020 – as a bludgeon against widespread community calls to defund policing – the announcement celebrated a study released a few months earlier by academics at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs. That study was funded by major real estate developers. UCLA students and faculty wrote an open letter condemning the study and naming a recent trend of developers “funding pro-community policing research as a means to increase police presence in communities of color and incarcerate residents to contrive conditions of perceived safety for future gentrifiers.”

Community policing’s notion of securing assent for police violence by gaining trust through community-based programs is a familiar tactic through which an occupying force maintains control. Community policing is yet another way that the state refuses to address the underlying structural issues that create what it calls “crime” – like intergenerational poverty, systemic racism, and housing insecurity, all of which are an inevitable and intended result of a violent settler state that survives by controlling people and land – and instead uses those issues to expand police violence.

This cycle of violence is not an accident. It is the point, spanning the settler state’s entire history. The myth of benevolent community policing is a way to avoid that reality and undermine organized resistance against it.

Our Demands

The abolitionist response to the policing of land has nothing to do with reforming these practices by “cleaning up” the data or creating new rules for “safer” use of these weapons. Abolitionist analysis also teaches how reform has always been integral to making the police-industrial complex more durable and difficult to dismantle. In contrast, reformist objections to

data-driven policing either question the efficacy or warn about “dirty data” or “feedback loops” that encode biases. These criticisms object to the execution of predictive policing, rather than the premise. What they ignore is how powerful institutions use the veneer of science to obscure how these systems are banishing people, controlling land, and hiding the actors who are complicit in all this.

Our **demands** regarding these programs are the same ones we’ve long advanced:

1. **Ban data-driven policing tactics.**
2. **Purge data** collected through LAPD’s “broken windows,” “predictive,” and data-driven policing tactics and programs.
3. **Defund, divest, and disarm** LAPD of all weapons of surveillance.
4. Provide **full disclosure** on the use of data-driven policing tactics to all individuals, organizations, and locations targeted.
5. Provide **full reparations** to individuals and neighborhoods harmed by surveillance and data-driven policing programs.
6. Fund **public hearings** on the human impact of data-driven policing, hosted by a community-based body with no relation to LAPD.
7. **End LAPD siphoning of funds and data** from other city departments.
8. **Abolish the Community Safety Partnership** surveillance program.
9. **Abolish LAPD’s fraudulent “oversight” body**, the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners.

Our fight to abolish predictive policing must organize against the entire ecosystem that serves to strengthen policing. No matter what we face – predictive policing yesterday, data-driven policing today, who knows what tomorrow – our power grows in the culture of resistance we build. Policing is part of a war launched centuries ago by slavers and colonizers trying to control our ancestors. For just as long, people have been fighting back.

Choose a side.

STOP LAPD SPYING!



JOIN THE FIGHT!

838 E. 6th St. Los Angeles, CA 90021

stoplapdspying@gmail.com

[@stoplapdspying](#)

automatingbanishment.org