

AUTOMATING BANISHMENT

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
City of Los Angeles

Official
Notice

Date MAY 11, 1959
To MR & MRS. M. ARECHICA AND CHILDREN
Address 1801 MALIBU AVE. Re Premises at
You are hereby directed to COMPLY WITH THE
DISCONTINUE THE USE AND OCCUPANCY OF
TENTS FOR LIVING AND SLEEPING

GENTRIFICATION
IS
VIOLENCE



DONT DATAFY ME
CHINGA LA CHOTA

The Surveillance and Policing of
Looted Land

November 2021



Conquest is a process, not an event. Taking land is not simply a matter of signing a treaty or conducting a massacre. Elaborate ideologies and attendant practices are required – before, during, and after.

Laura Pulido

We ain't scared of no Mayor,
We ain't scared of no Chief,
We ain't scared of CCEA,
'Cause they ain't nothing but thieves.

Los Angeles Community Action Network

Displacement is when you have somewhere else to go.
Banishment is when there is nowhere, except jail or death.

Pete White

Both decolonization and abolition are not simply seeking an end result. Instead they are continuous creative processes: an imagining of life beyond prisons and the theft of land.

Charles Sepulveda

This community-based report was envisioned, researched, drafted, and edited by dozens of people coming together to study the relationship of “data-driven policing” to real estate development, displacement, and gentrification.

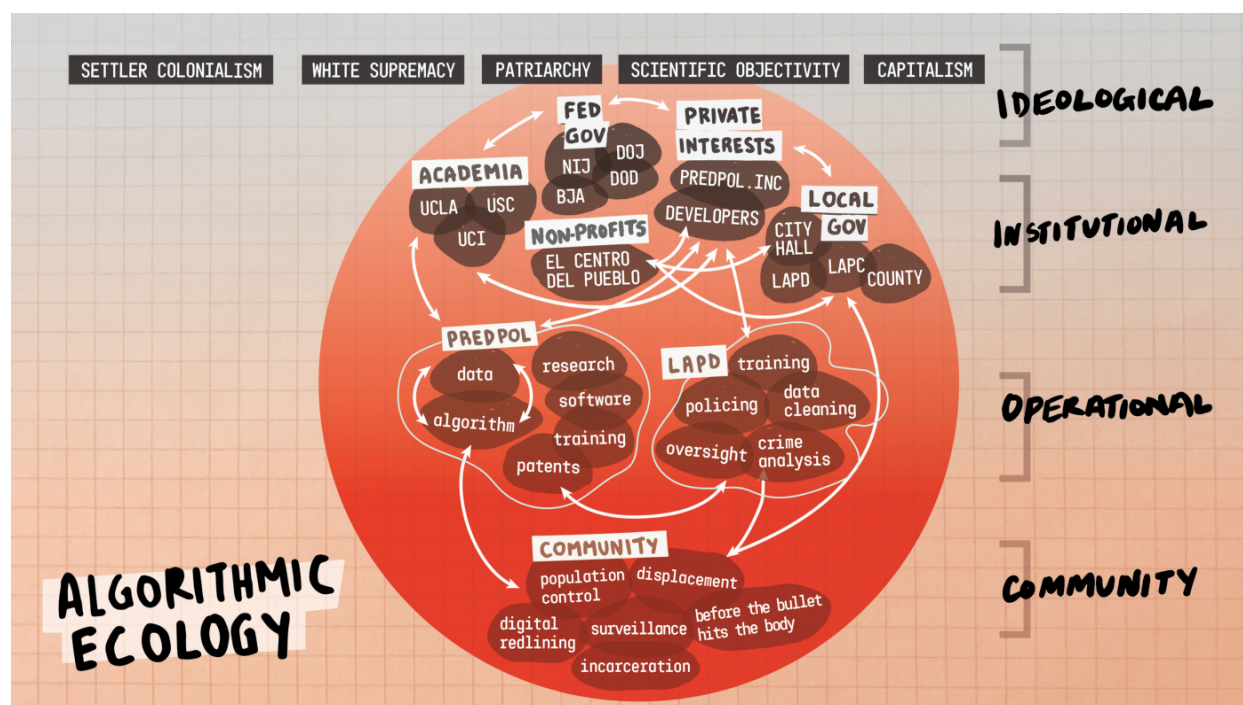
The report comes from the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition’s **Land and Policing Workgroup**. But it belongs to the community, produced through collective study and grassroots self-defense as named in our Statement of Principles, which you can read at stoplapdspying.org/principles-zine/. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to this work.

The report is also available in an interactive form at automatingbanishment.org along with a story map of LAPD’s architecture of data-driven banishment.

Cover Art

1. Department of Health citation for “Mr + Mrs. M. Arechiga and children” in 1959 that reads: “You are hereby directed to comply with the following, discontinue the use and occupancy of tents for living and sleeping purposes”
2. Collage of Tongva elder with a spear aiming at the U.S. Courthouse in downtown Los Angeles
3. “Gentrification is Violence” and “Don’t Datafy Me / Chinga la Chota” banners from Data Driven Displacement: Luna Ride in Boyle Heights (December 7, 2018)
4. Collage from Stop LAPD Spying Coalition poster showing surgeons cutting communities from a map of Los Angeles
5. Mrs. Arechiga arrested during an eviction through eminent domain in May 1959, months before the area around her home was bulldozed to build Dodger Stadium

The Algorithmic Ecology



The analysis in this report builds on [Before the Bullet Hits the Body: Dismantling Predictive Policing in Los Angeles](#), which we published in 2018. Two years later, we published [The Algorithmic Ecology](#), an organizing tool we created with the activist group Free Radicals. This tool maps the need to organize against the entire ecosystem that surrounds police algorithms, beyond the technology alone.

Above is the Algorithmic Ecology tool applied to the PredPol “predictive policing” system that LAPD used from 2011 to 2020.

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Introduction

The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition is a community group rooted in the Skid Row community on Tongva/Gabrielino land, stolen territory known as Los Angeles. Over the past decade, we have been working to build power to abolish LAPD surveillance. This report grew out of that organizing and examines the relationships of policing and surveillance to displacement, gentrification, and real estate development. We study those relationships with a focus on the process that has always bound policing and capitalism together: colonization.

We often hear that police are an occupying army in our communities. Throughout the history of imperialism and colonization, occupying forces have used surveillance to monitor and contain populations they deem threatening, all for the purpose of maintaining their violent rule. LAPD's use of surveillance and data-driven policing must be understood from that perspective.

While more and more people are beginning to understand the role of data in policing, less attention is paid to data-driven policing's relationship to land. Our exploration of that connection began as we were researching whether algorithmically generated "predictive" policing "hot spots" had a role in LAPD's murder of Skid Row resident Charley "Africa" Kuenang. That research uncovered an ecology of institutions who inform police violence, including real estate developers, advocacy nonprofits, academic researchers, and the U.S. military. All those institutions show up in the pages that follow.

At the same time that we began researching data-driven policing's relationship to land, our organizing efforts succeeded in securing the country's first public hearings on data-driven policing as well as dismantling LAPD's first-generation of predictive policing programs, **Operation LASER** (ended in April 2019) and **PredPol** (ended in April 2020). Those programs are explained in detail below, using records we obtained and analyzed after the programs ended. But the analysis in this report is by no means only backward-looking or historical. The same month LAPD ended PredPol, it launched **Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing**, a new policing framework that embeds data and surveillance into everything LAPD does.

The storytelling and analysis in this report is intended to frame organizing against this new program and beyond. Our purpose is to inform that fight, helping build intersectional coalitions across communities harmed by this policing. The report also examines the role of police "reform" in repackaging the violence of Operation LASER and PredPol. Studying the history, ecology, and evolution of these programs helps expose the harms at their root.

Modern policing incorporates tactics honed during ongoing settler colonialism, genocide, and enslavement. LAPD fuses military counterinsurgency methods with the anti-Black subordination of "broken windows" policing, stop-and-frisk, the "zero

tolerance” Safer Cities Initiative in Skid Row, the Suspicious Activity Reporting spy program, Metro Units “proactively” hunting people across South Central, and gang injunctions and databases. “Predictive” and “data-driven” policing are the latest form of those harms. The purposes remain the same: speculatively criminalizing our identities, banishing us from our homes, and gathering “intelligence” to control us.

Data-mining supercharges the violence of policing, enabling deep coordination between those who seek to criminalize our communities, to transform land, and to displace and banish our people. Data-driven policing also obfuscates the purpose of this violence, hiding it behind a veneer of science and objectivity. Sometimes the purpose is **banishment**: removing us from our homes and communities. Sometimes it’s **containment**: restricting us from the areas police want to secure for gentrification. Sometimes it’s **blight**: targeting areas for neglect in order to maintain racial and class hierarchies. Sometimes it’s **extraction**: exploiting our wealth, labor, or resources. And sometimes it’s **elimination**: killing or incarcerating our people. Whatever the purpose, what links these practices is the process of conquest.

LAPD’s tactics and technologies today extend those various purposes. Predictive policing programs serve as tools of racial terror, ethnic cleansing, and containment. LAPD’s role as an enforcement arm of landlords, developers, and other property owners is analogous to the role of the U.S. military in the era of genocidal western expansion. And “community policing” programs apply counterinsurgency tactics that have been used to suppress resistance and cultivate false legitimacy in imperial occupations. Throughout those examples, Los Angeles can be seen as a **garrison state**, with police testing new forms of surveillance and harm on our people.

These examples of course have resonance beyond Los Angeles too. As we were researching this report, the 2020 murder of **Breonna Taylor** by police in Louisville, Kentucky, exposed similar connections between real estate investment, surveillance, and policing. The police raid that killed Breonna Taylor was part of a “Place-Based Investigation” program used to banish Black residents in gentrifying areas. This killing shows how both “offender-based” and “location-based” surveillance policing tactics carry out the goals of elimination in the service of private capital.

Here in Los Angeles too, surveillance strategies advance the banishment, containment, blight, extraction, and elimination that are characteristic of conquest and colonialism. And here too, these tactics are deadly.

Part 1

Not a Moment in Time

We begin with history. What lineage stands behind today's policing?

From the start, settlers in the U.S. have occupied land by policing it. Under settler colonialism, everyone and everything existing on that land must be dominated, managed, or eliminated to make way for the needs of white supremacy and capital. This is why we have police. It is impossible to separate policing from land theft and occupation. Harm to those in close relationship with land is not an accidental result of policing: it is the intended result.

In Los Angeles, land and policing have been interwoven since the beginning of European conquest. The Tongva people indigenous to what we now call Los Angeles have resisted centuries of successive Spanish, Mexican and U.S. rule which has included enslavement (downtown LA was converted into a “de facto slave market of Tongva labor”),¹ extermination, and forced assimilation.² Tongva people continue to struggle for official recognition and land rights, as well as for preservation of their landmarks. Meanwhile, Los Angeles has been the recipient of waves of Indigenous peoples displaced by colonial violence, making it the home of the “largest Indigenous population of any city in the US.”³

While the Tongva people struggle for land rights and resist their physical and cultural destruction, the settler colonial apparatus that forcibly severed them from their land has continued to target the Black and Indigenous peoples who have come to L.A. The Tongva village where downtown L.A. now stands was forced to relocate, and the Indigenous and Mexican people who came to the city in search of work were criminalized and incarcerated by police.⁴ Any discussion of neocolonialism and the continuation of conquest and land theft must be grounded in an understanding of Tongva history and ongoing resistance, and a commitment to Tongva sovereignty and land rights.

While the manifestations of colonialism and conquest faced and resisted by the Gabrielino and Tongva communities (as well as other indigenous people who have called this area home) have been diverse, what guides the state's relationship to these communities is the “logic of elimination.” This logic includes not only “summary liquidation of Indigenous people” but also the construction of a “colonial society on

¹ Annie Lloyd, “[A Brief History Of L.A.'s Indigenous Tongva People](#),” LAist (Oct. 9, 2017).

² Jenny Hamel, “[LA's Tongva Descendants: 'We Originated Here,'](#)” KCRW (July 17, 2018); Corinne Segal, “[‘We, as a people, still exist’ — artist illuminates Native American history with family photos](#),” PBS NewsHour (January 7, 2017).

³ Mapping Indigenous LA, “[Mapping Indigenous LA: Placemaking Through Digital Storytelling](#),” UCLA American Indian Studies Center (2016).

⁴ Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965* (2017), pp. 16-44.

the expropriated land base,”⁵ thus turning invasion into a political structure, which is then fiercely guarded by police. In fact, the Tongva scholar Charles Sepulveda urges us to recognize the connectedness between the struggles for police abolition and decolonization, considering them part of the same vision of “creative re-imagining of human relationships to place, beyond the structures of white supremacy.”⁶

The history of colonized Los Angeles also cannot be understood without a focus on the Black freedom struggle. At the same time Los Angeles was being imagined as a haven for white settlers, Black people also looked to the city as a place where they could seek upward mobility through industrial work and land ownership. As Black people fleeing the racial terror of Jim Crow came here for opportunity and survival, the settler city responded with housing policies like redlining and racially restrictive covenants, barring Black communities from owning land outside of specifically designated areas like the one along Central Avenue in South Central. White settlers along the perimeter of these areas feared that nearby Black neighborhoods would threaten property values. As a result, policing was concentrated along the Central Avenue corridor to violently constrict the autonomy of Black people even in their own communities.⁷

By the 1970s, South Central not only faced systematic police violence but also deliberate deindustrialization and neoliberal economic policies. These policies cratered the economy in Black communities that had relied on factory industrial jobs. Mass unemployment led to increased displacement from housing, meaning that swelling numbers of Black people in Los Angeles were forced out of their homes and then further marginalized by increased police violence. These dynamics extend into the present through the process of gentrification. As divestment from poor and working class communities of color across Los Angeles transformed from an exploited labor pool to a “surplus” population, wealthy capitalist developers and the state alike eyed their neighborhoods as places to generate white wealth.⁸

Policing was always central to those transformations. In the 1990s, policies like Weed and Seed sought to “weed out” unwanted segments of Black neighborhoods while handpicking others to “seed” for so-called “revitalization” efforts.⁹ These approaches show how police worked to advance the process of bringing white capital into spaces that in prior years had been violently segregated. Adding to banishment and displacement led by local police, immigration police agencies like ICE viciously enforce U.S. borders within our communities, policing the boundaries of the state itself.

⁵ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8.4 (2006), pp. 387-409.

⁶ Charles Sepulveda, “[To Decolonize Indigenous Lands, We Must Also Abolish Police and Prisons](#),” *Truthout* (October 13, 2020).

⁷ Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates*, pp. 167-174.

⁸ David Wagner and Pete White, “Why the Silence?: Homelessness And Race” from *Freedom Now! Struggles for the Human Right to Housing in LA and Beyond*, eds. Jordan T. Camp & Christina Heatherton (2011).

⁹ Julie Garfield, “[Landscaping Neo-Liberalism: The Weed and Seed Strategy](#),” *Advocates’ Forum*, University of Chicago School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice (2010).

More than once in the history of Los Angeles, efforts to deploy police as enforcers of neo-colonialism have been justified through “public” projects for sports or entertainment. For example, the Mexican-American communities living in the areas of Palo Verde, La Loma, and Bishop were evicted from a place that would have been slated for public housing but instead became Dodgers Stadium. Police enforced the violent Chavez Ravine eviction in order to create a space for entertainment and consumer consumption.¹⁰

This pattern of displacement to generate white wealth continued in the 1984 Olympics, which the city used to fund a huge expansion and militarization of the LAPD. Police executed a campaign of gang sweeps in order to “clean up” the city for the Olympics, upholding a project that imagines the city as a playground for white wealth while razing the homes of Black, brown, and poor communities. These dynamics directly led to the 1992 uprisings.¹¹ They also continue today, with sports projects like SoFi Stadium in Inglewood created for the 2028 Olympics receiving tax breaks and subsidies from the city, while at the same time displacing Black, brown, and poor communities.¹²

The relationship between land and policing in Los Angeles goes beyond the physical presence of police. As the rest of this report shows, that relationship also includes the structures built to maintain segregation and control even when police are not physically present. Whether or not a police officer is physically present, the conquest that policing represents is always there. Together, the systems that comprise surveillance and policing of land in Los Angeles extend and defend the power of the U.S. settler state.

¹⁰ Elina Shatkin, “[The Ugly, Violent Clearing of Chavez Ravine Before It Was Home to the Dodgers](#),” LAist (October 17, 2018).

¹¹ Dave Zirin, “[Want to Understand the 1992 LA Riots? Start With the 1984 Olympics](#),” The Nation (April 30, 2012).

¹² Jonny Coleman, “[The Struggle Against A Stadium’s Construction Became A Battle For the Soul of Los Angeles](#),” The Appeal (September 10, 2020).

Part 2

The Architecture of Data-Driven Policing

This part introduces the LAPD architecture, weaponry, and experiments that data-driven policing is built on. By “architecture” we mean not just technologies but also police strategies and legal instruments. Data-driven policing enables unprecedented coordination of these weapons.

Our story here begins with **Bill Bratton**, LAPD’s chief from 2002 to 2009. Under Bratton’s leadership LAPD built up a number of practices that are now woven together as data-driven policing, including “broken windows” policing; “intelligence-led” policing; collection and mining of mass data; and behavioral surveillance. After examining those practices, this section turns to LAPD’s testing of surveillance technologies that came to form the inputs of data-driven policing, as well as the Palantir data platform and the build-up of “fusion centers” that exchange police intelligence and coordinate mass surveillance. Next we examine LAPD’s Operation LASER and PredPol “predictive policing” programs; LAPD’s notion of “Designing Out Crime”; and the Citywide Nuisance Abatement Program (CNAP), which was used to target properties and displace people within Operation LASER.

“Broken Windows” and Intelligence-Led Policing

“The department is not organized to fight crime. It’s organized to circle the wagons. I’m trying to have it move towards being a proactive, risk-taking organization.”

Bill Bratton (December 2002)

In the late 1990s through the post-9/11 era, LAPD began adopting tactics and technology centering around “intelligence-led policing,” a model of speculative and hunch-based policing that encompasses behavioral surveillance and police data-mining. These changes accelerated with the appointment of Bill Bratton in 2002 as LAPD chief. Bratton looked to intelligence-led policing as one of the “reforms” he would use to claim that police violence was scientific and based on data.

As many of us remember, the 1990s featured both extreme police brutality and a presidential administration that accelerated mass incarceration through the infamous 1994 Crime Bill, written by then Senator Joe Biden. As L.A. watched LAPD’s violent beating of Rodney King and the Christopher Commission attempted to lay a path for “reform,” LAPD became engulfed in the Rampart Scandal, exposing further police brutality and corruption. This and other LAPD scandals culminated in a 2001

consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice, placing LAPD under federal oversight due to patterns of false arrests, extreme violence, and other illegalities.¹³

Bill Bratton was appointed police chief following those scandals. Before taking that job, Bratton was a “leading member” of the consulting team hired under a five-year, \$11 million contract with the city to implement the consent decree reforms.¹⁴ After just five months on that team, Bratton applied for the job of LAPD chief. Though police reformers declared the consent decree a victory and turning point for an embattled police department, ultimately this moment served as another LAPD power grab for new police resources and powers. Using the consent decree as a justification for new investments, Bratton pursued a series of experiments that expanded LAPD’s data-collection and surveillance powers, including community policing, “broken window” policing, behavioral surveillance programs, and integration of military surveillance technologies. Skid Row in particular became a testing ground for how counterterrorism and counterinsurgency programs would become integrated into everyday policing.

Two significant changes came to LAPD before “predictive policing” launched, both forming the foundation for LAPD’s data-driven policing programs: **“broken windows”** policing and **Compstat**. The term “broken windows” was popularized by a 1982 article published by George Kelling and James Q. Wilson.¹⁵ The basic idea is that draconian criminalization of trivially harmful behaviors like public intoxication, littering, and jaywalking “prevents” larger crimes. This practice was nothing new to Skid Row, as discussed in detail in part 5 of this report. But turning this policing into a criminological theory popularized the idea that poverty should be dealt with by criminalizing individual “behavior,” ignoring the systemic failings of white supremacist capitalist society. Bratton made this view explicit in a 2007 interview:

“The one thing I have learned—and now strongly advocate—is that the police, properly resourced and directed, can control behavior to such a degree that we can change behavior. Many social scientists are wedded to what I believe to be the failed and never proven idea that crime is caused by the structural features of a capitalist-based democratic society—especially demographics, economic imbalance, racism, and poverty.”¹⁶

Bratton also led the effort to build Compstat, a program he first popularized as chief of NYPD in the 1990s. Compstat is a data system that generates regular summaries of what a police department is doing. These summaries are reviewed at meetings where police leadership determine policing strategies and priorities. Compstat helped organize “broken windows” policing. George Kelling, who popularized “broken

¹³ Consent Decree, [United States v. City of Los Angeles](#), U.S. District Court for Central District of California, CV 00-11769 (June 15, 2001).

¹⁴ Tom Hayden, [“Chief Concerns,”](#) Los Angeles Times (August 13, 2009).

¹⁵ George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson, [“Broken Windows,”](#) The Atlantic (March 1982).

¹⁶ [“LAPD Chief Bratton Speaks Out: What’s Wrong With Criminal Justice Research and How to Make It Right,”](#) National Institute of Justice Journal (May 31, 2007).

windows” policing, once called Compstat “the most important administrative policing development of the past 100 years.”¹⁷

Compstat also furthered the collection and legitimization of crime data, treating it as scientific fact rather than a reflection of racist and subjective enforcement choices of police. Bratton’s confederation of Compstat and “broken windows” policing also laid the groundwork for expansion of behavioral surveillance, which refers to police practices of speculatively monitoring behaviors that may be indicative of future crime. This kind of intelligence-gathering, according to Bratton, is “what police have always done, to observe and identify changing patterns of behavior.”¹⁸

Bratton was not only successful in promoting police brutality as public policy, he also wedded police data to the notion of “community policing.” The objective here was to strengthen cooperation, communication, and partnership between police, city officials, and private “stakeholders” like real estate developers and businesses. In fact, the U.S. Department of Justice’s Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) office used data collected in part from LAPD while Bratton was chief to promote the “co-implementation” of Compstat and community policing, calling them both “powerful engines of police reform.”¹⁹ The broader relationship of police data to “community policing” is examined in detail in part 6 of this report, where we dissect LAPD’s current “Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing” framework.

Surveillance Inputs: LAPD’s Eyes and Ears

LAPD has long been one of the most technologically resourced police forces in the country, with a yearly budget of over \$3.2 billion that consumes half the city’s discretionary spending. Over the years, LAPD’s expansion of its architecture of surveillance has taken the form both of new digital technologies and mass surveillance equipment as well as campaigns of racial profiling, pretextual street and vehicle stops, and “broken windows” policing that generate mass troves of police data for LAPD’s Record Management System and other databases. These surveillance inputs fuel data-driven policing. For more of our research into LAPD’s architecture of surveillance, visit thestalkerstate.org/architecture-of-surveillance/.

In part 5 of this report, we explore in greater detail how Skid Row is a place where LAPD has long experimented with new forms of policing. This too is characteristic of colonization. As we’ve written elsewhere, LAPD’s testing, refinement, and “reform” of surveillance technologies “continues the legacy of colonial experimentation in service of white supremacist political ends — much in the same way colonial administrators used legal bureaucracy, surveillance technology, and even scientific study to dominate people they considered seditious or politically threatening.”²⁰

¹⁷ Police Executive Research Forum, “[CompStat: Its Origins, Evolutions, and Future in Law Enforcement Agencies](#),” U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance (2013).

¹⁸ Petra Bartosiewicz, “[Beyond the Broken Window](#),” Harper’s (May 2015), pp. 48-57.

¹⁹ James J. Willis, Tammy Rinehart Kochel, & Stephen D. Mastrofski, [The Co-Implementation of Compstat and Community Policing: A National Assessment](#), U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (2010), p. 9.

²⁰ Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, “[Surveillance: The Ghosts of White Supremacy in AI Reform](#),” AI Now: A New AI Lexicon (September 8, 2021).

Skid Row along with MacArthur Park are some of the places where LAPD first tests new surveillance technologies. For example, in November 2007, LAPD implemented a **Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTV)** camera system, paid for by the Central City East Association (CCEA), which is funded by businesses interests downtown.²¹ Skid Row was the third location LAPD put up CCTVs, following deployment in MacArthur Park²² and Hollywood.²³ Later, in 2011, the L.A. Police Foundation “donated” \$210,173 worth of **Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPR)** for LAPD to use in Skid Row. These systems, which scan license plates to track people’s movements,²⁴ were previously tested around MacArthur Park along with facial recognition and “intelligent” video capabilities.²⁵ Another camera technology tested in Skid Row was **Body-Worn Video (BWV or body-cams)**. In 2014, LAPD launched a BWV pilot run with officers assigned to the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) “broken windows” policing program. These officers were chosen because their policing includes foot beats and constant enforcement contacts with people in the community.²⁶ LAPD also tested phone surveillance technology in Skid Row, including **Stingrays and Digital Receiver Technology (aka “Dirt Box”)**. These devices mimic cell phone towers to connect and monitor mobile devices. In 2011, the Los Angeles Police Foundation gave almost \$25,000 to upgrade “Stingray” devices placed in Skid Row.²⁷

Of course, technology isn’t the only way LAPD gathers mass surveillance data. Some of the most critical and dangerous surveillance occurs face to face. Every time police stop or question people, they can fill out **Field Interview (FI) cards** that generate data for LAPD’s records systems. A person does not have to be suspected of any crime to have an FI card filled out. A large number of these cards are filled out by LAPD’s proactive policing Metro units as well as the HOPE (Homeless Outreach Proactive Engagement) and RESET (Resources Enhancement Services Enforcement Team) units that target unhoused communities. In the first half of 2018, HOPE and RESET completed over 7,800 FI cards on unhoused people.²⁸

FI cards used to be paper but became digitized in 2015 under the Connected Officer Initiative, which also expanded the Skid Row body cam pilot department-wide.²⁹ That same year, LAPD also started using the cards to collect social media, social security numbers, and email addresses.³⁰ Police use this data to map people’s social networks, including who you were seen or stopped with as well as social media friend lists and who you appear with in photos online. This information about your associations can show up in “conspiracy” prosecutions as well as for gang labeling.

²¹ [“Los Angeles Adds Skid Row to Public CCTV Sites,”](#) Security Sales & Integration (Nov. 22, 2005).

²² LAPD, [“LAPD Uses New Technologies to Fight Crime”](#) (February 1, 2005).

²³ Jessica Garrison, [“Cameras to Keep Watch in Hollywood,”](#) L.A. Times (Oct. 28, 2004).

²⁴ Los Angeles Police Foundation, [Form 990](#) (FY 2011).

²⁵ LAPD Media Relations, [“LAPD Uses New Technologies to Fight Crime”](#) (Feb. 1, 2005).

²⁶ LAPD, [City Inquiry Relative to the Implementation of Body Worn Video](#) (March 25, 2015).

²⁷ Los Angeles Police Foundation, [Form 990](#) (FY 2011).

²⁸ [LAPD’s 2018 Second Quarter Report on Homelessness](#) (September 5, 2018)

²⁹ Office of Mayor, [“Mayor Garcetti and LAPD Announce Body Camera Rollout”](#) (September 4, 2015); Miguel A. Santana, [Report from Office of the Los Angeles City Administrative Officer concerning Contracts for Body-Worn Cameras](#) (December 10, 2015).

³⁰ Sam Levin, [“Revealed: LAPD officers told to collect social media data on every civilian they stop,”](#) The Guardian (September 8, 2021).

Craig Uchida, who built the “predictive policing” program Operation LASER, described in more detail below, explained that the purpose of LAPD stops is not always to investigate or determine anything but to generate 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.**”³¹

Another system of critical importance is the **Homeless Management Information System / Coordinated Entry System (HMIS/CES)**, a database of information collected from people who receive services from federally funded nonprofits and agencies. This is the first federal database of people experiencing homelessness, storing extremely personal information like social security numbers, race and ethnicity, prior residency, what services a person has used, health status (including disabilities, pregnancy status, HIV status, mental health), education, employment, and whether they have experienced domestic violence. Anyone using the services is placed into the database, no matter the length of time one was in a program, and the information is kept for years. All this information is shared to federal agencies like HUD, HHS, and the VA without personal identifiers, and the risk of these databases being accessed by local law enforcement and DHS including ICE is very high. In 2017, LAPD told the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights that CES was a “gold mine” of information that was “only one policy decision away” from police mining.³²

Palantir

Palantir is the data-mining platform that LAPD uses to run automated profiling, hotspot maps, AI models, and other search tools on data from the surveillance inputs listed above, including FI cards, along with data from other government agencies as well as commercial brokers. LAPD built its Operation LASER “predictive policing” program on the Palantir platform, and Palantir generates the data-driven “missions” of racial terror that we examine in part 5 of this report. Today LAPD is “the only major metropolitan force using Palantir,” after police in New York City and New Orleans ended their use.³³ LAPD also uses Palantir Mobile, a phone application that puts mass surveillance data at police fingertips and sends officers real-time notifications, for example about nearby people to monitor or stop.

Palantir is a private company founded by billionaire white supremacist Peter Thiel with funding and guidance from the CIA, which used the software for intelligence missions and drone assassinations.³⁴ The system first arrived in Los Angeles in 2007, when “Bill Bratton persuaded Target to donate \$200,000 for LAPD to buy Palantir technology.”³⁵ As LAPD built up their architecture of racial profiling and

³¹ Mark Harris, “[How Peter Thiel’s Secretive Data Company Pushed Into Policing](#),” Wired (Aug. 9, 2017).

³² United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Statement on Visit to the USA, by Professor Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights](#)” (December 15, 2017).

³³ Michael Steinberger, “[Does Palantir See Too Much?](#)” N.Y. Times (Oct. 21, 2020).

³⁴ Annie Jacobsen, “[Palantir’s God’s-Eye View of Afghanistan](#),” Wired (January 20, 2021).

³⁵ Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, “[Why did Target email the LAPD after police killed George Floyd?](#)” Copwatch Media (April 2021).

mass surveillance using the software, the City Controller's website shows payments of \$15.8 million to Palantir from 2012 to 2021.

Over the years, Palantir has "helped the LAPD construct a vast database that indiscriminately lists the names, addresses, phone numbers, license plates, friendships, romances, jobs of Angelenos."³⁶ LAPD uses Palantir to identify people's friends, relatives, colleagues and other relations, "pulling people into the LAPD's surveillance system who otherwise wouldn't have been,"³⁷ as well as to "track vehicles using data from the Automated License Plate Reader" and "to examine social networks."³⁸ Officers are trained to search for people to target using attributes like race, gender, and physical features, as well as to track any phone call's "recipient phone number, the date, duration of the call, and the latitude and longitude of all the cell towers used."³⁹

Fusion Centers

Another key part of the infrastructure that data-driven policing is built on are so-called "fusion centers," the data analytic centers police use for real-time processing, analysis, and sharing of surveillance data. These spy garrisons received heavy investment in the post-9/11 expansion of local policing to encompass mass suspicion, data-gathering, and surveillance. These tactics relied on collecting and integrating law enforcement data into what federal spy agencies have called the Information Sharing Environment (ISE).⁴⁰

There are over several dozen federal fusion centers in the U.S. The one used to police Los Angeles is named the Joint Regional Intelligence Center (JRIC) and located on Imperial Highway – a fitting name – in Norwalk. Fusion centers were part of police efforts to neutralize the Occupy Movement including through infiltration, monitoring political activity, and tracking social media.⁴¹ In 2012, the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs released a highly critical report warning about "waste at state and local intelligence fusion centers."⁴² Our 2013 People's Audit of LAPD Special Order 1 documents the operation and harm of federal fusion centers.⁴³

LAPD has also built a network of its own fusion centers called **Community Safety Operation Centers (CSOCs)**. These spy centers feature conference rooms with

³⁶ Caroline Haskins, "[Scars, Tattoos, And License Plates: This Is What Palantir And The LAPD Know About You](#)," BuzzFeed News (September 29, 2020).

³⁷ Steinberger, "[Does Palantir See Too Much?](#)"

³⁸ LAPD, "[No-Cost Extension for Smart Policing](#)" (June 2013).

³⁹ Haskins, "[Scars, Tattoos, And License Plates](#)."

⁴⁰ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, "[About the ISE](#)" (last accessed October 12, 2021).

⁴¹ "[Fusion Center Intelligence on Occupy Wall Street](#)" (2011); Colin Moynihan, "[Officials Cast Wide Net in Monitoring Occupy Protests](#)," New York Times (May 23, 2014).

⁴² United States Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, "[Federal Support for and Involvement in State and Local Fusion Centers](#)" (October 3, 2012).

⁴³ Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, "[A People's Audit of the Los Angeles Police Department's Special Order 1](#)" (March 19, 2013).

rows of computers and a large screen displaying a color-shifting map of the city.⁴⁴ In 2016, the first CSOC was established in LAPD's South Bureau to coordinate and concentrate surveillance across the 77th, Southwest, Southeast, and Harbor Divisions. Today, there is a CSOC in each of LAPD's four operational bureaus.

LAPD recently launched even more localized fusion centers called **Area Crime and Community Intelligence Centers (ACCICs)**. These hyper-local spy garrisons produce "daily mission maps" (the brutal violence of which we document in part 5 of this report), perform "social media monitoring" and "surveillance camera video pulls," and search the Palantir, Lexis-Nexis, ParoleLEADS, Llnx, CalGangs, VeriTrack, and CCHRS data systems.⁴⁵ An internal LAPD document we obtained indicates that ACCICs produce daily hotspot maps with symbols marking locations as "gang related," "gang member - suspect," "gang member - victim," "transient - victim," "transient - suspect," and "domestic violence."⁴⁶ It's hard to imagine why LAPD needs daily maps of domestic violence complaints and unhoused residents besides to speculatively criminalize neighborhoods and communities.

Operation LASER

"The program is analogous to laser surgery, where a trained medical doctor uses modern technology to remove tumors. Extraction of offenders takes place in a 'non-invasive' manner (no task forces or saturation patrol activities), and the result produces less disruption in neighborhoods. Continuing with the medical analogy, by extracting offenders surgically, recovery time of the neighborhood is faster."

Craig Uchida (2012)

LAPD's homegrown predictive policing program Operation LASER (Los Angeles Strategic Extraction and Restoration) was first launched in 2009 with a Smart Policing Initiative (SPI) grant of \$899,959 from the Bureau of Justice Assistance.⁴⁷ LAPD used the grant to hire its long-time research partner Justice and Security Strategies (JSS), the police consulting firm headed by Craig Uchida. At LAPD, Deputy Chief Sean Malinowski was the lead investigator for the SPI research grant. LAPD and JSS worked together to develop LASER, which targeted both specific locations (which police deemed "LASER zones" or "Anchor Points") and specific community members (who police deemed "chronic offenders").

⁴⁴ Press Play with Madeleine Brand, "[Poverty rates are down, median income is up](#)" KCRW (September 13, 2016), at timestamp 10:16.

⁴⁵ LAPD, [Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing](#) (April 2020) p. 47.

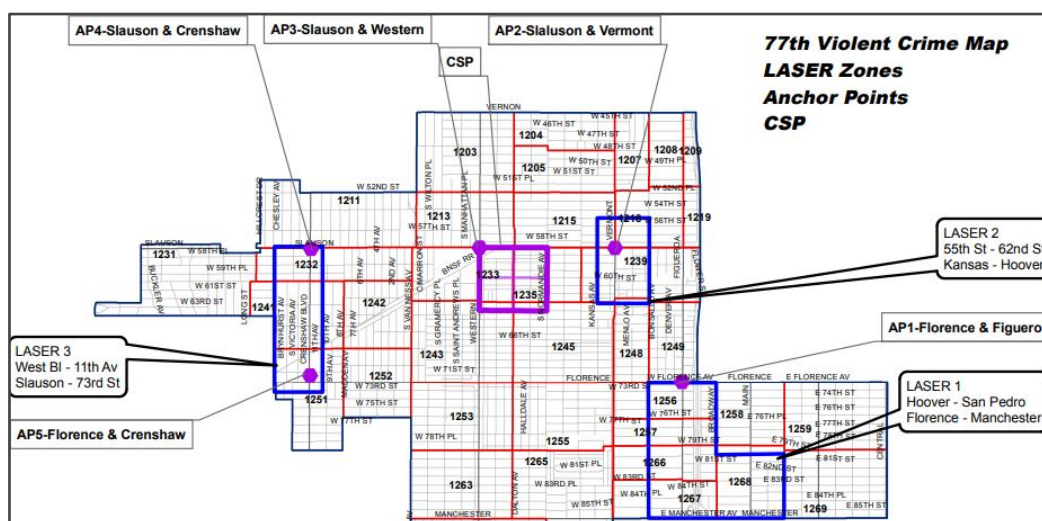
⁴⁶ LAPD, [Data-Informed, Community-Focused Policing Daily Operations Guide](#) (April 2021), p. 5 (PRA # [19-4995](#)).

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "[GMS Report: SPI Initiative Report for Reporting Period July 1st - Dec 31st 2011](#)" (2011).

LASER Zones and Anchor Points

In 2018, we filed a PRA requesting LAPD's policies, analysis, maps, and reports for targeting locations under LASER. The records we obtained confirmed what the community had suspected: while promoted as a scientific "breakthrough," LASER was yet another campaign of racial profiling and territorial enforcement.

To select LASER zones, LAPD and JSS analysts combined hot spot mapping of crime reports with recommendations from local officers. Within each zone police also identified Anchor Points, which were locations considered "possibly being responsible for crime."⁴⁸ While this designation was potentially devastating, there was no standard process or criteria for selecting the locations, which included businesses, residences, and community gathering places. JSS even noted that "public transportation centers, shopping centers, fast food restaurants, and other types of establishments . . . can be 'crime attractors' or 'crime generators' and are often at the center of hot spots in crime." Below is a map from LAPD's 77th Division marking LASER zones and Anchor Points.⁴⁹



Locations marked Anchor Points became data-driven targets for displacement. According to LAPD training documents, officers were directed to "prepare strategies to address the issues" including through the Citywide Nuisance Abatement Program, which is described in more detail later in this section, as well as "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" and changes to "licensing/conditional use permits" – all potential levers of gentrification.⁵⁰ Former Deputy Chief Dennis Kato confirmed that once a location was designated as an Anchor Point, LAPD could then employ "all the other city tools and the City Attorney's office to really abate the location, and to gain compliance by those

⁴⁸ LAPD, [Internal presentation on Los Angeles Strategic Extraction and Restoration](#) (2017) (PRA # C17-0500027).

⁴⁹ LAPD, [All in One Map](#) (Jan. 9, 2018) (CPRA 18-3148).

⁵⁰ LAPD, [Internal presentation on Los Angeles Strategic Extraction and Restoration](#) (PRA C17-0500027).

property owners to really fix that problem.”⁵¹

These data-driven “hotspots” also became targets for extreme police brutality, as detailed in part 6 of this report. By speculatively criminalizing areas and then sending officers on missions to “suppress crime” in these areas with vague profiles of who to look for, these programs ensured lethal and racialized police violence. LAPD killed 21 people in 2016, the year Operation LASER expanded. Of these, we have identified six killings linked to LASER zones in just a short six month period in 2016. All of the men and boys killed were Black or Latino, four were shot in the back, four were teenagers, and two were under age 18:

- February 6: 16-year old **José Juan Méndez** was killed by Hollenbeck Division officers Josue Merida and Jeremy Wagner⁵² during a traffic stop in what LAPD designated as the Estrada CLEAR area, a “problem area” and a LASER zone.⁵³
- May 13: 28-year old **Robert Diaz** was killed by Hollenbeck Division Gang Enforcement Detail (GED) officer Miguel Ruano on a “crime suppression” mission also in the Estrada CLEAR area. Robert is remembered for his ability to defuse tense situations with his warmth and his love of animals.
- June 10: 31-year old **Keith Bursey** was killed by 77th Division GED officer Charles Kumlander on Slauson Avenue, in a LASER zone and Anchor Point. Police shot him in the back.⁵⁴
- July 25: 18-year-old **Richard Risher** was killed by Southeast Division GED officers Francisco Zaragoza, Isaac Fernandez, and Joseph Chavez on a “crime suppression” mission inside a LASER zone.⁵⁵ Police shot him in the back.⁵⁶
- August 9: 14-year-old **Jesse Romero** was killed by GED officer and two-time killer cop Eden Medina inside a LASER zone, following a “vandalism call.”⁵⁷ Police shot him in the back.⁵⁸
- August 16: 18-year-old **Kenney Watkins** was killed by officer Evan Urias, assigned to the South Bureau CSOC in LASER Zone 5.⁵⁹ Urias claimed he was

⁵¹ Strategies for Policing Innovation (now Smart Policing Initiative), “[Successful Strategies to Reduce Gun Violence](#),” YouTube (February 28, 2018). Dennis Kato begins speaking around 30:54.

⁵² [Memorandum on Officer Involved Shooting of Jose Mendez](#), L.A. County District Attorney’s Office (June 12, 2017).

⁵³ LAPD, [Hollenbeck Problem Areas Worksheet 2/5/16 – 2/8/16](#) (February 5, 2016). CLEAR refers to Community Law Enforcement And Recovery, a federally funded city-county joint program created in 1995. In Operation LASER, CLEAR zones were treated as “hot spots” or LASER zones.

⁵⁴ [Memorandum on Officer Involved Shooting of Keith Bursey](#), Justice System Integrity Division of the L.A. County District Attorney’s Office (February 22, 2018).

⁵⁵ LAPD, [Officer-Involved Shooting FID No. 043-16](#) (June 27, 2017).

⁵⁶ [Memorandum on Officer Involved Shooting of Robert Risher](#), Justice System Integrity Division of the L.A. County District Attorney’s Office (January 29, 2019).

⁵⁷ [Memorandum on Officer Involved Shooting of Jesse Romero](#), Justice System Integrity Division of the L.A. County District Attorney’s Office (February 28, 2018), p. 12.

⁵⁸ City News Service, “[LAPD Officer Who Fatally Shot Teen Won’t Be Charged](#),” NBC Los Angeles (March 6, 2018).

⁵⁹ LAPD, [LASER Weekly Hot Spot Map Aug 15-Aug 21](#)—Southeast Area (2016).

making a traffic stop for a missing front plate, tinted windows, and “possibly a paper back plate.”⁶⁰ Police shot him in the back.

As these murders harm a community, LAPD and its collaborators characterize this violence as necessary simply because an algorithm labeled our people’s communities, streets, stores, or homes a place where crime “will” happen.

LASER’s “Chronic Offender” Bulletins

In addition to the location-based aspects noted above, LAPD’s data-driven programs also include person-based targeting. True to the term “Extraction” in the LASER acronym, the program used data-mining to target individuals for banishment. LAPD generated hit lists called “Chronic Offender” bulletins, which police appeared to use as targets whenever there was an open case or suspicion. Police subjected these individuals to criminalization, coercive prosecution, and enforcement of parole and probation conditions to remove them from their communities, including the neighborhoods where people had grown up or had always lived with their families.

The way LASER’s individualized targeting was purported to work was that LAPD’s Crime Intelligence Details (CIDs, division units comprised of three sworn officers and a crime analyst) used Palantir technology to harvest data collected through FI cards, arrest records, the CalGang database, and “crime” history to give individuals risk scores. The scores generated through Palantir were used to assemble Chronic Offender bulletins, essentially “most wanted” fliers showing a person’s picture and personal information that were shared across LAPD divisions and units as people the police should target and harass proactively. Even though LAPD claimed to use a point system to standardize this process, a 2019 audit by the Office of the Inspector General uncovered that 112 of 637 people who were in the “Chronic Offender” database at the time had zero points under the LAPD criteria.⁶¹

Once people were marked as Chronic Offenders, special units were to go knock on their doors and tell whoever was there that police are watching them.⁶² These units also served warrants, conducted parole and probation checks (even though they were not probation and parole officers), and pulled over or stopped people whenever they would see them. In 2019, a lawsuit we filed forced the release of lists of the people who LAPD targeted. Our analysis of these lists revealed that nearly half the people targeted are Black (even though Black people are 9% of the city’s population), some were as young as 16, and many are unhoused.

We recently began reaching out to the individuals on these lists and speaking to them. None knew they were being targeted, but they all lived lives of daily police abuse. After we explained what LASER was, the first thing nearly all of them told us was some version of “it all makes sense now.” Police constantly harassed them and

⁶⁰ LAPD Media Relations, “[Motorcycle Officer Confronted by Man Armed with Two Handguns](#)” (September 7, 2016).

⁶¹ Los Angeles Police Commission, Office of the Inspector General, [Review of Selected Los Angeles Police Department Data-Driven Policing Strategies](#) (March 12, 2019), p. 15.

⁶² Id., pp. 6-9.

broke into their homes, terrorizing their families and arresting them over nothing. “Why can’t I feel safe in my house?” one person said, “I just feel helpless. I can’t even walk to the bus stop without being pulled over.” Another person on the lists told us officers breaking into his home warned him that they “wouldn’t rest until they sent me away for good.”

LASER was intended to make life intolerable for people in their own communities to the point where they would either abandon their neighborhoods or end up in prison. In this way, these programs apply the “attrition through enforcement” and “self-deportation” approaches that have long been the basis of federal treatment of Indigenous people as well as how state and local governments treat migrants.⁶³ We have long known that policing of Skid Row applies this same tactic, coercing people through a flood of citations.⁶⁴ More broadly, these tactics were the latest form of speculative criminalization of entire communities, in the lineage of gang injunctions, gang databases, and stop-and-frisk – all of which have been instrumental to dispossession, banishment, and racial segregation. Many of the people we reached out to from the lists are now incarcerated in state prisons far from home, leaving behind families who have told us the stories of how their loved ones were targeted.

We are continuing to research LASER’s personal toll, meeting with and learning from people whose names were in the Chronic Offender database when the program was suspended in summer 2018 before it was completely ended in 2019. We have heard nothing from the majority of the people on the Chronic Offender lists. LASER’s experimentation with “removing” people no doubt ended in death for some.

PredPol

“The behaviors that a hunter-gatherer uses to choose a wildebeest versus a gazelle are the same calculations a criminal uses to choose a Honda versus a Lexus.”¹

Jeffrey Brantingham (2010)

Another location-based algorithmic policing program was PredPol, first deployed by LAPD as “field tests” in 2011 and ended in 2020 following a campaign of community pressure.⁶⁵ PredPol is a for-profit business co-founded by UCLA professor Jeffrey Brantingham and funded early on by UCLA as the company’s “lead investor.”⁶⁶ A

⁶³ K-Sue Park, “[Self-Deportation Nation](#),” Harvard Law Review 132.7 (May 10, 2019).

⁶⁴ “What You Need to Know About Special Order 11: An Interview with Hamid Khan,” in [Freedom Now! Struggles for the Human Right to Housing in LA and Beyond](#), eds. Jordan T. Camp & Christina Heatherton (2011).

⁶⁵ G.O. Mohler, M.B. Short, Sean Malinowski, Mark Johnson, G.E. Tita, Andrea L. Bertozzi, & P.J. Brantingham, “[Randomized controlled field trials of predictive policing](#),” Journal of the American Statistical Association 110.512 (2015), pp. 1399-1411.

⁶⁶ See [Funding: PredPol](#), CrunchBase (last accessed October 6, 2021), listing UCLA Ventures as PredPol’s sole “lead investor” alongside two other investors.

PRA request we submitted to UCLA in 2021 revealed that the UCLA Foundation (the university's endowment) purchased over 80,000 private shares of PredPol stock at the behest of UCLA Ventures (the university's venture capital arm).⁶⁷ PredPol now tells customers that its business "grew out of a research project between the Los Angeles Police Department and UCLA" and that their products are today used to police "one out of every 33 people in the United States."⁶⁸

PredPol developed its algorithms through Brantingham's academic research and field tests in collaboration with LAPD, along with technology developed to predict "insurgency" in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁶⁹ An anthropologist, Brantingham had earlier in his career focused on data-driven paleoanthropology. From that work, he began using predictive analytics to compare the choices of ancient hunter-gatherers looking for food and current day patterns of how people "forage for opportunities to commit crimes."⁷⁰ In 2006 Brantingham and his colleagues, including a UCLA mathematician named Andrea Bertozzi and a postdoctoral fellow named Greg Mohler, extended the foraging analogy to insurgents in Iraq. That year the researchers obtained the first of multiple U.S. Army Research Office grants to develop algorithms to predict insurgent activity. Brantingham has claimed that "the mathematics underlying the insurgent activity and the criminal activity is very much the same."⁷¹ In slides presented to the Air Force Research Laboratory, he drove this point home through images comparing "Afghan men and other Arab or Muslim men with their faces wrapped in scarves, gathered around a cache of automatic rifle" to "images of Latino youths in Los Angeles, labeled 'gang members.'"⁷²

PredPol's guesses about future crimes were driven by three elements of historical crime data: crime type, crime location, and a crime timestamp. This reported crime data originated from crime reports filed by police along with calls for service, both of which can be entirely unsubstantiated allegations. LAPD provided PredPol "an automated data dump that happened every 2 hours," also characterized by LAPD as "a 'direct injection information transfer,' meaning the automated data stream was compiled and sent directly to the PredPol website for consumption."⁷³ PredPol used this data to make algorithmic predictions about which 500 x 500 square foot areas, called "hot spots," had the highest expected crime rate within the city. These reports were distributed to officers to guide their patrols.

The mainstream critique of PredPol has been centered on the feedback loop that results from collecting biased and "bad" data, automating the same results. As this theory goes, when police target an area it generates more crime reports, arrests, and stops at that location and the subsequent crime data will lead the algorithm to direct police back to the same area. While this feedback effect from policing's own

⁶⁷ UCLA, [Item 2 Responsive Documents \(21-8832\).pdf](#) (UCLA PRA 21-8832).

⁶⁸ PredPol, [About PredPol](#) (last accessed October 13, 2021).

⁶⁹ Ali Winston & Darwin BondGraham, "[From Fallujah to the San Fernando Valley, Police Use Analytics to Target 'High-Crime' Areas](#)," Truthout (March 12th, 2014).

⁷⁰ "[Can math and science help solve crimes? Scientists work with Los Angeles police to identify and analyze crime 'hotspots'](#)," ScienceDaily (February 27, 2010).

⁷¹ Id.

⁷² Winston & BondGraham, "[From Fallujah to the San Fernando Valley](#)."

⁷³ LAPD, [Response to PRA # 20-4830](#) (November 20, 2020).

activity perpetuating itself has been proven (and should be no surprise), other logics also appeared when we began to map PredPol hot spots, LASER zones, and Anchor Points. We discuss these findings in part 4 of this report, situating them in the broader history of how Skid Row has been policed.

The academic community has begun to reject the harmful research behind PredPol. In 2019, a group of 68 UCLA professors and graduate students wrote to LAPD condemning Brantingham's work on "predictive" policing technologies.⁷⁴ And in June 2020, over 1,400 academic mathematicians joined a public letter condemning mathematical research that contributes to racist policing, singling out Brantingham's work with LAPD, and naming PredPol's "racist consequences."⁷⁵ In part 6 of this report, we discuss how PredPol recently now markets itself as a "community policing" and "data accountability" company, a transformation that had first been promoted by other academics who are working to expand data-driven policing.

"Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design"

Another way land is controlled to criminalize communities is what police call "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" (CPTED). Also promoted by LAPD as "Design Out Crime," the goal is usually to install or remove physical and natural structures in order to facilitate policing and surveillance. According to an LAPD press release from 2001, "Design Out Crime makes 'community policing' more than a mere buzzword."⁷⁶ The same press release also proposes CPTED as a solution to problems like "decaying public housing projects" and "abandoned public spaces." Instead of actually funding investments in public housing or shared green spaces, the city's answer is changing the environment to facilitate policing and surveillance.

In a 1997 video about CPTED described by LAPD as "a landmark video on this subject,"⁷⁷ an LAPD "Crime Prevention" officer who is shown surveilling an area explains how greenery makes his work less efficient:

Design Out Crime principles help me as a patrol officer by affording the opportunity to see into areas that would normally be concealed. I'll give you an example. If I'm patrolling past this building, I'm going to be able to patrol by here and look into this mall area and be able to see a greater area in a shorter amount of time, which translates into me going down the street and patrolling another area. If I have to stop, get out of the vehicle, get out of my vehicle and walk over to this area because it's concealed by walls and shrubbery and [unintelligible] then it's going to take more of my time.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ [Letter to Police Commission from 68 UCLA faculty and students](#) (April 4, 2019).

⁷⁵ Davide Castelvecchi, "[Mathematicians urge colleagues to boycott police work in wake of killings](#)," *Nature* (June 19, 2020).

⁷⁶ LAPD, "[Design Out Crime](#)" (January 8, 2001).

⁷⁷ *Id.*

⁷⁸ The Design Out Crime Task Force, "[City of Los Angeles CPTED / Design Out Crime \(Long Version\)](#)," (uploaded to YouTube May 29, 2020; last accessed October 6, 2021).



Trading trees for cops can be deadly in more ways than one. In addition to all the direct harms of policing and surveillance, environmental research has confirmed that historical lack of tree cover is a reason why segregated Black neighborhoods face worse temperatures and air quality today.⁷⁹

This environmental racism has now become part of data-driven policing, with LAPD's new Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing framework including a section on CPTED that specifically recommends "the removal of hiding spots or physical barriers" to facilitate data-driven policing.⁸⁰ Likewise, Craig Uchida, the consultant who built LAPD's LASER program, asserted in 2016 that "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessments are necessary ingredients for data driven crime prevention" and recommended that this information "should be collected and analyzed especially within specific neighborhoods."⁸¹

After LAPD's **Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing** framework launched in April 2020, we filed a PRA request seeking any CPTED assessments produced under the program. In response, LAPD disclosed nine assessments conducted in late 2020 for Community Safety Partnership (CSP) "community policing" sites, which are discussed in greater detail in part 6 of this report. On first glance, large portions of these assessments hardly seem tailored to "specific neighborhoods," instead repeating boilerplate recommendations about the need to install more surveillance.⁸² Even where the assessments note that some of the infrastructural changes were requested by local residents, we have learned that these same proposals had been

⁷⁹ Brad Plumer and Nadja Popovich, "[How Decades of Racist Housing Policy Left Neighborhoods Sweltering](#)," New York Times (Aug. 24, 2020).

⁸⁰ LAPD, [Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing in the Los Angeles Police Department](#) (April 2020) p. 23.

⁸¹ Craig D. Uchida and Alese Wooditch, "[Perceptions of Safety and Police in Los Angeles: Results of a Survey of Los Angeles Residents](#)," Justice and Security Strategies and Hart Research Associates (August 2016), p. viii.

⁸² These LAPD documents are available through [PRA 21-3667](#).

made years earlier by residents who were told by city officials that the changes would not be possible. For example, a community organizer who worked in the Pueblo Del Rio public housing complex told us that residents had years ago convened walkthroughs with city officials to recommend some of the same proposals for crosswalks and curb cuts that now show up in LAPD's new CPTED assessments. At the time these proposals were denied or ignored, with city officials citing costs or other excuses. But now LAPD sweeps in to propose delivering these same solutions via the institution of policing. This dynamic of "community policing" programs holding communities hostage by offering vital resources and services that the city otherwise denies is examined in more detail in part 6 of this report.

Citywide Nuisance Abatement Program

What is known today as the Citywide Nuisance Abatement Program (CNAP) is an extension of a decades-long history and evolution of nuisance abatement laws and programs. CNAP targets buildings identified by LAPD to target for nuisance abatement actions. These enforcement actions aim to coerce the owners of the property to make significant changes to the property that further the LAPD's surveillance programs and often displace tenants in the building, which can break up communities and fuel gentrification of the area.

CNAP is staffed by five core agencies: LAPD, the City Attorney, the Department of Building and Safety, the Planning Department, and the Housing Department. Three of these agencies (LAPD, the City Attorney, and the Department of Building and Safety) had worked together since 1990 through the FALCON (Focused Attack Linking Community Organizations and Neighborhoods) Narcotics Abatement Unit, funded by federal grants. FALCON expanded on a previous city abatement program that relied on the Uniform Controlled Substances Act of 1972 and California Health and Safety Code dealing specifically with narcotics abatement. Those laws were, in turn, an extension of the Red Light Abatement of 1953.⁸³

Today, CNAP enforcement operates through data-sharing between the city agencies who run the program along with whatever stakeholders and private interests each of these agencies engage. LAPD works to criminalize, track, and surveil residents. This data goes to the City Attorney, which can open an investigation and then send a demand letter or meet with the property owner to discuss changes to the building.⁸⁴ If the City Attorney determines the property owner is compliant with their proposals, then the building has "self-abated." But if the City Attorney is unsatisfied, then they can file a nuisance abatement lawsuit against the building in state court.

Much of CNAP's coercion occurs without a lawsuit ever being filed. Between 2018 and 2019, the City Attorney opened 479 nuisance case files but only filed 30 lawsuits.⁸⁵ Once a building is targeted for this kind of investigation, it can be subject to random inspections for compliance with municipal codes or become subject to

⁸³ City of Los Angeles, [Falcon Narcotics Abatement Training Manual](#) (1991).

⁸⁴ City Attorney Rockard Delgadillo, [Report on City Attorney's Gang Intervention, Prevention, Suppression Programs](#) (February 2006).

⁸⁵ Id.

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 Planning Department can also initiate administrative Nuisance Abatement proceedings to enforce municipal codes. This enforcement extends policing powers to non-police entities, expanding the city's ability to police vulnerable communities.

Nuisance abatement allows police and developers to strategically banish residents or businesses whose buildings are targets for gentrification. The evidence of criminal activity used to target properties can be highly vague, and the CNAP process lacks even the minimal transparency that occurs with criminal prosecutions. Details of the "criminal activity" used to target properties are not made public, and most abatement efforts settle without litigation, which means the city rarely advances or defends evidence before a court.⁸⁶

Although CNAP enforcement against a building can originate with information from police, politicians, neighbors, and property owners, the program is driven by LAPD allegations more than any other source. According to emails obtained through the PRA, a Deputy City Attorney (DCA) noted in 2019 that regardless of the source of a referral, an LAPD "gang officer's communication would be sufficient for the DCA to open a case on the property."⁸⁷ This is where data-driven policing's role becomes apparent. Coercion, targeting, and displacement through CNAP were one of the "strategies" that officers were trained to use for Operation LASER's Anchor Points, along with "licensing/conditional use permits," another element of CNAP coercion.⁸⁸ And as we explain in part 3, CNAP prosecutors used LASER data to determine enforcement priorities. Part 3 also looks at how developers use CNAP to displace local businesses. Further, our discussion of data-driving policing in Skid Row in part 4 reveals how locations targeted as Anchor Points were key sites of displacement.

Not only is CNAP another way the city weaponizes police data, it also helps expand LAPD's surveillance architecture. The City Attorney uses CNAP to require that residential landlords allow for LAPD walkthroughs and patrols as well as warrantless and keyless 24/7 access. CNAP prosecutors have also required buildings to hire private security who coordinate with police to screen visitors and check identification, excluding and banishing people's family and associates, as well as enforce coercive rules on how people can spend time or gather in 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.

Sometimes CNAP enforcement can require installation of CCTV cameras and other LAPD surveillance infrastructure. In part 3 below, we discuss an example of CNAP

⁸⁶ Adrian Riskin, "[In 2018 and 2019 the Los Angeles City Attorney sent out 479 demand letters in nuisance abatement cases...](#)," MichaelKohlhaas.org (January 15, 2020).

⁸⁷ [Emails From The Los Angeles City Attorney's Office About How Nuisance Abatement Targets Are Chosen](#) (2020).

⁸⁸ LAPD, [Internal presentation on Los Angeles Strategic Extraction and Restoration](#) (PRA C17-0500027).

targeting a business in the rapidly gentrifying neighborhood of West Adams, closely coordinated with a real estate firm that was trying to buy the building that the business occupied. Along the same lines, the CNAP lawsuit filed against the owner of the Chesapeake Apartments, a 425-unit complex spread out across 17 acres in Baldwin Village, asked the judge to order “the establishment of extensive security systems at the property with direct access by the Los Angeles Police Department to these systems of monitoring and surveillance.”⁸⁹ These CNAP-compelled surveillance systems expand LAPD’s vast architecture of surveillance, which includes fusion centers, facial recognition, and other data-mining initiatives. The lawsuit also demanded that the landlord implement “improved tenant screening and lease enforcement procedures” as well as “armed, licensed security guards.”⁹⁰

Just as the Chesapeake Apartments CNAP lawsuit helped expand LAPD’s surveillance and data-mining powers, the buildup to the case featured data-driven policing. Below is an LAPD mission sheet generated through the Palantir data-mining platform one week prior to the CNAP case being filed. The City Attorney describes the apartment complex as an “alleged stronghold for the Black P-Stones street gang,” and LAPD’s mission sheet directs police to target “BPS gang areas,” even specifying that “heavy pedestrian and traffic enforcement on gang members belonging to this gang is encouraged.”⁹¹ The recap lists 105 police stops, 21 arrests, and 8 field interview cards during a one week period.



LAPD’s links to CNAP show how data-driven policing directly plugs police into enforcement of property laws, multiplying LAPD’s powers of banishment and displacement. Beyond programs like LASER, nuisance abatement is increasingly being coordinated and automated using centralized data systems. For example, City

⁸⁹ Roy, Graziani, & Stephens, “[Unhousing the Poor.](#)”

⁹⁰ Los Angeles City Attorney, Press Release, “[City Attorney Takes Action to Curb Gang Activity in 425-unit Apartment Complex in Baldwin Village](#)” (November 27, 2017).

⁹¹ LAPD, [11-15 CLEAR.pdf](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

Council in 2017 enacted a motion presented by council members Joe Buscaino and Bob Blumenfield directing the agencies that comprise CNAP to improve the tracking and information sharing on these properties through “the use of shared databases and other technological tools to assist in the tracking of these properties.”⁹² The motion also invited LAPD to create “additional training on identifying and tracking nuisance properties.”

In all these examples, CNAP is another way the city uses policing and police data to coordinate displacement and racialized banishment. These practices are expanding to become more automated with the growth of data-driven policing. In part 3 of the report, we dive into different examples of how CNAP and the other policing programs and tactics introduced in this part enable coordination, collusion, and affinity between police and real estate developers.

⁹² Bob Blumenfield and Joe Buscaino, [Motion on “Nuisance Properties](#), L.A. City Council (Aug. 22, 2017).

Part 3

Real Estate and Capitalist Crisis

Below we share a set of vignettes and questions illustrating the links between capitalist crisis, real estate development, police data, and enforcement of both property and criminal law. When we uncovered these links, it became obvious that real estate developers had a cozy relationship with law enforcement, and we began to research how data-driven policing cements and expands these relationships.

Data-driven policing helps link enforcement of criminal and property laws, especially through programs where policing is used for evictions and land grabs. These links aren't new of course. Policing and property law have always been instrumental to conquest. Much like today's use of policing, prosecutions, and real estate development to displace people and continue conquest, "colonial conflict was driven by economic incentives, and was racially structured and entangled with civil laws."⁹³ Today those relations – inscribed into U.S. laws and established in legal powers granted to police, prosecutors, and landowners by colonizers centuries ago – continue to shape management, control, and theft of land. Indeed much of U.S. property law was originally written to help Europeans manage their conquest of land and ownership of people.⁹⁴

Capitalism, law, and conquest continue to act in combination today. After the 2008 financial crisis, Los Angeles became the site of aggressive land grabs by corporate landlords acquiring distressed residential properties.⁹⁵ As a result, a small class of investors and corporations now control a large part of the housing market through the financial system.⁹⁶ An examination of residential property ownership (specifically, parcels registered as "Residential" use type) in a LASER zone along the Crenshaw Corridor from Slauson Avenue to just south of Florence Avenue illustrates this corporate takeover. The LASER zone includes 1,061 residential parcels amounting to over 4,550 housing units. In that same area, a total of 194 parcels are owned by corporate entities, translating to over 2,135 units—nearly half of all housing in the neighborhood.⁹⁷ When we looked up the date of acquisition for these corporate-owned parcels, we found that 76% were bought after 2018.

⁹³ K-Sue Park, "[Who Are the Insurgents and Counterinsurgents?](#)" Jadaliyya (August 25, 2014).

⁹⁴ A growing body of recent historical scholarship "examines the ways that conquest and slavery shaped, for example, insurance systems, foreclosure, credit markets, investment banking, and accounting practices." K-Sue Park, "[This Land is Not Your Land](#)," University of Chicago Law Review 87.7 (2020).

⁹⁵ Terra Graziani et al., "[Who Profits from Crisis? Housing Grabs in Time of Recovery](#)," UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy (October 19, 2020).

⁹⁶ Alexander Ferrer, [Beyond Wall Street Landlords: How Private Equity in the Rental Market Makes Housing Unaffordable, Unstable, and Unhealthy](#), Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (March 2021).

⁹⁷ Map accessed from the real estate data visualizers [PropertyRadar](#) in November 2020.



The map above on the left above shows all residential housing units, colored in blue, in the 4-block section of Crenshaw corridor from West Slauson Avenue to 73rd Street as of November 2020. The map on the right is the same area with units owned by corporate entities in red. LAPD declared this area a LASER zone in 2015.⁹⁸

How cozy are these corporate landlords with LAPD?

One of the many new entities that emerged during the Great Recession is Haroni Investments, owned by Adir Haroni and Amir Ohebsion. Formed in February 2011, Haroni Investments is one of many investors driving gentrification in South Central, capitalizing on banishment of Black and brown people. Haroni Investments has been developing several new apartment buildings in South Central near the newly under construction SoFi stadium as well as around the new Crenshaw line – two mega-projects driving displacement in South Central Los Angeles.

Email communications that we obtained through PRA requests reveal a close level of familiarity and collaboration between Haroni's owner Amir Ohebsian and law enforcement officials.⁹⁹ In the emails, which are from late 2018, a city prosecutor wrote to LAPD saying he "is working on a property in 77th Division and the owner emailed me about trouble he is having at a different property in Rampart." An LAPD officer promptly responded, "give me the details of the issue so that I can and [sic] put them in our database." The prosecutor then shared Ohebsion's email and the building address and said, "I will give the owner your contact information and ask him to reach out to you."

⁹⁸ LAPD, [77th Street Division: Violent Crime Hot Spot 2012-2014 map, for Week 08/09/15 - 09/12/15](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

⁹⁹ LAPD, [Jan 2018 to Mar 2018 review](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

The owner referenced here is Haroni's Amir Ohebsion. And the prosecutor worked in the CNAP program. Research into every CNAP case filed by the City Attorney between 2013 and 2018 – some of the prime years of real estate speculation following the Great Recession – show that CNAP prosecutors “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.”¹⁰⁰

These links led to study data-driven policing's role in gentrification in South Central, a community that has long been subject to LAPD terror and experimentation. We share more on that topic in part 5 of this report.

How do LAPD and developers contribute to “nuisance abatement”?

The city claims that the purpose of the CNAP program is to target “the worst abandoned structures and nuisance properties plaguing Los Angeles.”¹⁰¹ But as the interaction between CNAP prosecutors and real estate investors reveal, this program is another instrument by which policing targets communities to make way for gentrification. The City Attorney accomplishes this through mechanisms of both property law and criminal law, which have long been combined as weapons of racial conquest and segregation.

The City Attorney's office, which introduced Haroni owner Amir Ohebsion to LAPD and its database, has also been linked to predictive policing from early on. For example, in March 2016 a “Neighborhood Prosecutor” for the Harbor Division emailed Craig Uchida, the LAPD consultant who built Operation LASER, that she was “looking for stats on how the three LASER zones were identified for the Harbor Division.”¹⁰² Uchida replied, sending her the data with a caveat: “Usually I don't send the data, but here they are.” Uchida also requested that she “not distribute the data,” explaining that the zones “are unvalidated.” The prosecutor responded that she was “working with LAPD to assist in any way we can with enforcement of the LASER zones,” and the unvalidated data “will be very helpful since I have been meeting with the three senior lead officers to formulate strategies regarding our enforcement efforts in their respective areas.” About Uchida's warnings not to share the data, she added: “It will only be used to strategize and will not be distributed.”

Two months after that exchange, a different City Attorney supervisor for the City Attorney's Harbor Branch emailed an LAPD Harbor Area officer to ask, “Please advise me how the police reports coming out of the Laser areas are being marked for review.” Four days later the LAPD Harbor Area officer responded, “The laser project has been initiated. When we receive an arrest in the laser zones the report will have a red L in the top right corner as requested.” The Supervising Attorney wrote back, “This is wonderful news!” With that, the strategy was in motion.

¹⁰⁰ Ananya Roy, Terra Graziani, & Pamela Stephens, “[Unhousing the Poor: Interlocking Regimes of Racialized Policing](#),” Square One Project (August 25, 2020).

¹⁰¹ Mary Clare Molitor, Sr. Assistant City Attorney, “[Citywide Nuisance Abatement Program \(CNAP\)](#),” Los Angeles Community Policing (2003).

¹⁰² LAPD, [LAPD to City Attorney LASER Anchor Redacted Redacted.pdf](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

CNAP prosecutors also appear to coordinate with local and federal law enforcement through fusion centers. A February 2018 email from Jonathan Cristall, Supervising Assistant City Attorney for CNAP, addressed “Hey Team,” announced that “we’ll be getting a tour” of the JRIC with an LAPD officer. Cristall’s email was sent to an email list named “ATT TOUGH,” referring to T.O.U.G.H (Taking Out Urban Gang Headquarters). This is a project that Cristall supervises and wrote about in a report from the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance advising prosecutors across the country to use property law to pressure landlords into evicting unwanted tenants. The report noted that “attorneys assigned to T.O.U.G.H. are criminal prosecutors” and in the next sentence boasted that one of “several benefits to this” approach is that “the defendants do not have a right to a jury trial or a court-appointed attorney.”

One of the T.O.U.G.H. prosecutors who Cristall invited on the JRIC spy center tour was Drew Robertson, a Deputy City Attorney. Court records show coordination between Robertson and real estate developer Shaul Kuba to use CNAP to coerce Abdul Sherif, the owner of a liquor store in rapidly gentrifying West Adams, to sell Kuba his business.¹⁰³ Kuba is the Israeli-American co-founder of CIM Group, a real estate firm worth over \$30 billion and described in 2009 as “Hollywood’s richest slumlord.”¹⁰⁴ CIM is known for taking over distressed properties in gentrifying areas and had been a leading contender to purchase the Crenshaw Mall, a move widely opposed by Black residents of South Central L.A. and eventually blocked.¹⁰⁵

In 2018, CIM Group was developing at least six sites within a few blocks of Sherif’s store. This case shows how CNAP is used to compel private-public “partnership” on LAPD surveillance. Depositions from the case show that the lawsuit was used to pressure the owner to install street-facing surveillance cameras that an undercover officer confirmed LAPD has access to.¹⁰⁶ The undercover officer – who was assigned to the West Adams area – also confirmed that this LAPD access to private cameras was “in keeping with [his] recommendation in other situations.”

Discovering examples like this made us eager to learn more about the exact collaboration between CNAP prosecutors and LAPD, as well as between law enforcement and landlords like Haroni and CIM.

How are these landlords transforming these neighborhoods?

Let’s return to Haroni and the foreclosure crisis. As the crisis slowed, Haroni began capitalizing on the gentrification arriving in South Central by buying foreclosed properties and developing market-rate housing promoted as luxury rentals. While corporate Wall Street landlords targeted primarily single-family homes during this

¹⁰³ Adrian Riskin, “[The Los Angeles City Attorney’s Nuisance Suit Against Holiday Liquor...](#),” MichaelKohlhaas.org (October 13th, 2020).

¹⁰⁴ Patrick Range McDonald, “[CIM Group: Hollywood’s Richest Slumlord](#),” L.A. Weekly (September 2, 2009).

¹⁰⁵ Roger Vincent, “[Developer drops plan to buy Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza and add offices, not housing](#),” Los Angeles Times (June 15, 2020).

¹⁰⁶ [Deposition of Jed Levin](#), *The People of the State of California v. Freetown Holdings Company* (2019), Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County BC 718207.

time, entities like Haroni preyed on the acquisition of three-to-six unit properties – what are typically understood to be owned by “mom-and-pop” landlords. Haroni’s first foreclosed acquisition in February 2011 was a triplex near Jefferson Park whose previous landlord, an individual person, had owned the property and been part of the neighborhood since 1994. In the two-year period from 2011 to 2012, Haroni acquired a total of 37 foreclosed properties amounting to over 155 units.

Haroni’s business in South Central reveals a neoliberal approach to housing access, along with distinctly colonialist dynamics: developers use market subsidy housing policies and nonprofit organizations to fund and launder their private land grab. For instance, Haroni’s first developments, completed in 2016 and 2018, are a three story 37-unit apartment complex on Figueroa and 83rd Street and a 50-plus apartment complex near the Crenshaw Corridor on Hyde Park Boulevard and Brynhurst Avenue. Both developments include the bare minimum required by California’s density bonus law. And in what amounts to a strategy of attrition, the partnerships between developers, nonprofits, and politicians upholding gentrification-friendly policies enact what Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor calls “predatory inclusion.”¹⁰⁷

Some of Haroni’s units are leased in collaboration with the nonprofit Brilliant Corners, which reported over \$225 million in assets in its last publicly available tax filings, a massive increase from \$128 million the previous year.¹⁰⁸ Brilliant Corners enters into contracts with developers to house people typically rejected by landlords, including community members who have survived incarceration and policing. These contracts pay top market dollar, underwritten by state subsidy programs that can include MediCal funding and extend for a five or ten year span after a new building is constructed, helping cover the development cost. Including low-income households in new developments allows investors to appear as if they are providing housing access. And even the roots of the problem these programs address – homelessness, housing insecurity, poverty – are of course the intentional result of the state’s political choices around policing and incarceration.

Instead of guaranteeing people permanent homes, this model ends up lining the pockets of landlords, stabilizing their real estate speculation. As Haroni’s Amir Ohebsion himself put it, “From our perspective as a for profit developer, Brilliant Corners has been a phenomenal partner. They provide a reliable income stream on their leased units which minimizes our vacancy rate and mitigates our collection risks and related overhead typically associated with collections.”¹⁰⁹ Finally, when subsidies inevitably expire, both low-income households and municipal agencies are held hostage in a potentially exploitative process that allows developers to temporarily ease into an area with the goal of fully transforming them for profit.

¹⁰⁷ Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership (2019); Nawal Arjini, “[Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor Says There Is No Housing Crisis: ‘It’s Just Housing Under Capitalism.’](#)” *The Nation* (September 24, 2019).

¹⁰⁸ Brilliant Corners, [Form 990 for period ending June 2019](#) (accessed through ProPublica’s Nonprofit Explorer on October 4, 2021).

¹⁰⁹ Housing for Health & Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, [Bringing Housing to Scale: Housing for Health Progress Report](#) (May 2017), p. 37.



A closer look at some of Haroni's properties in the area reveals this "predatory inclusion" at work. The materializing Metro Crenshaw Line has set in motion for speculators to use the Ellis Act to demolish existing housing stock and build exclusionary luxury properties in their place. In July 2016, Haroni acquired a fourplex on Crenshaw Boulevard, between 60th and 63rd, where the Metro line will run (Photo 1 at left). A year later, the developer filed to raze the building. What then arose is a 75-unit project that includes a bare minimum of low income units (Photo 2), with a Now Leasing banner promising "luxurious secure apartments" (Photo 3).

While the word "luxurious" is commonly used by housing developers to advertise units in gentrifying neighborhoods, perhaps more revealing is the word "secure." Haroni's business behavior and direct line of communication with the City Attorney's office to request LAPD intervention suggests that they are in the business of selling a "new" South Central that comes with "security," enforced through police banishment

of undesirable Black and brown bodies. Although the median rent in the area is \$1,072,¹¹⁰ the asking price for a one-bedroom unit at the property was nearly double, at \$1,900 as of late 2020.¹¹¹ As always, this land is only "secure" for some.

How does LAPD collaborate with Business Improvement Districts?

In December 2018, Tia Strozier sent an email to George Yu: "So nice to meet you this morning! I look forward to working with you soon. Let's plan on doing a walk-along in Chinatown sometime during the week of January 7th if that works for you. Have a great day!" Strozier is the City Attorney's "Neighborhood Prosecutor" for LAPD's Central Division, and Yu is a real estate developer who runs the Chinatown Business Improvement District (BID), which over the past few years has spent millions of dollars on a private security force to patrol Chinatown. A couple months

¹¹⁰ [Median gross rent \(5-year estimates, 2015-2019\) for Census Tract 2349.02](#), United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (last accessed October 4, 2021).

¹¹¹ We retrieved these prices from the View Rental Properties page at www.haroni.com on December 23, 2020.

after that email, Strozier wrote to Yu again, saying she would “like to attend your next BID board meeting” and asking for a calendar of future events.¹¹²

As Strozier and Yu got to know each other, their communications took on more specific targets. In May 2019, the two strategized on how to harass unsheltered Chinatown resident and activist Theo Henderson. Strozier offered her office’s powers to remove Henderson from the neighborhood, and Yu arranged for Elizabeth Ortega, LAPD’s Senior Lead Officer for the Chinatown area, to tell Henderson that she would be “pursuing stay away orders” to banish him from a public park. A few months later, Yu emailed Strozier and Ortega photographs of another unhoused Black man, referring to him as “male transient EDWARD.” The next day, Ortega responded: “We did facial recognition and found out his info.” She also noted that “he appears gravely disabled,” to which Yu responded: “I fully understand the current rules of engagement and will remind all when Edward is either struck by a vehicle or something catches on fire.”

These examples illustrate how BIDs make use of LAPD relationships to localize and narrow the focus of policing against individuals. BIDs have been present in Los Angeles since 1994, currently numbering around 40. While BIDs appear to be public entities, they are in fact privately run. Funded through 501(c)(3) organizations that depend on tax-deductible donations from real estate developers, BIDs form direct communication links between police, prosecutors, and real estate developers. Many BIDs hire private security that double as a personal police force for local property owners as well as an auxiliary police force for LAPD. As the example of George Yu and facial recognition above shows, BIDs help expand the reach of LAPD’s architecture of surveillance, and they embed policing even deeper in the property interests of developers, businesses, and landlords.

The majority of BIDs in Los Angeles are “property” BIDs, meaning their membership is property owners rather than the merchants of the area. These members pay assessments to the BID, and they sometimes pass the costs to their tenants. This structure is deliberate: concentrating the BID’s power within those who own the property rather than those who own the businesses within means that developers are the ones policing the street. BIDs are a way for these developers to use both public and private police forces to remake Los Angeles in their image.

George Yu and other members of the Chinatown BID are predatory developers who do not represent the interests of Chinatown’s longtime residents. Yu himself is a vice president of Macco Investment Corporation, which manages Far East Plaza, promoted as a “Hipster Food Heaven.”¹¹³ These restaurants and new businesses are not intended to cater to the community, instead fueling the displacement of existing working class, multiracial, immigrant communities who are gentrified out of the community. Development like this “raises the price of living and operating for the neighborhood’s original working-class tenants and businesses who are eventually

¹¹² For all quotes from this correspondence, see Adrian Riskin, “[How Downtown neighborhood prosecutor Tia Strozier – and LAPD officer Elizabeth Ortega…….](#),” MichaelKohlhaas.org (July 24, 2019).

¹¹³ Eddie Kim, “[How An Aging Chinatown Mall Became a Hipster Food Haven.](#),” LA Downtown News (March 28, 2016).

priced out, displaced, and forced to live and work elsewhere.”¹¹⁴ Other members of the Chinatown BID include Jennifer Kim, a representative of the developer that built Blossom Plaza, a massive 237 luxury apartment complex in Chinatown; Jenni Harris, a representative from Atlas Capital Group, which is in the process of developing a massive 700-unit luxury building with no affordable housing right outside of the Metro’s Chinatown station; and Thomas Majich, a representative from Red Car, which has bought and flipped multiple plots of land in Chinatown.¹¹⁵

The deep relationships between the Chinatown BID, developers, and LAPD has allowed these entities to work in tandem to displace Chinatown’s working class, immigrant communities. BIDs also exchange surveillance, including by hiring the same private security firms (such as Allied Universal) and through LAPD networks. For example, in 2018, LAPD monitored the social media accounts of Code Pink activists and forwarded that information to two downtown BIDs and Allied Universal Security.¹¹⁶ In addition, BIDs received regular lists of hot spots from PredPol,¹¹⁷ and, as discussed in part 4, a set of LASER’s anchor points around Skid Row were marked by LAPD as “BID Anchor Points.”¹¹⁸

BIDs also fight back efforts at community empowerment. When Skid Row residents organized to create a Neighborhood Council separate from the two existing downtown Councils, two BIDs mounted an aggressive opposition campaign,¹¹⁹ which included an unprecedented move to take voting online. The efforts of BIDs in harassing unsheltered people extends beyond what goes on in the streets, directly into the systems through which state power is distributed. In the next part of the report, we examine these fights in Skid Row, where the community has long been fighting back coordination between police, developers, and BIDs to displace them from their homes.

¹¹⁴ Cathay Chaplin, “[In LA’s Chinatown, New Restaurants Face Sharp Opposition on Social Media From Community Advocates](#),” Eater (June 30, 2011).

¹¹⁵ Chinatown Community for Equitable Development - Los Angeles, [Chinatown Doesn’t Need the Business Improvement District BID](#) (2021).

¹¹⁶ Adrian Riskin, “[Annals of LAPD Spying](#),” MichaelKohlhaas.org (June 1, 2018).

¹¹⁷ See [Fashion District BID Emails With City of LA From July 1, 2016 Through January 31, 2017](#), obtained via California Public Records Act.

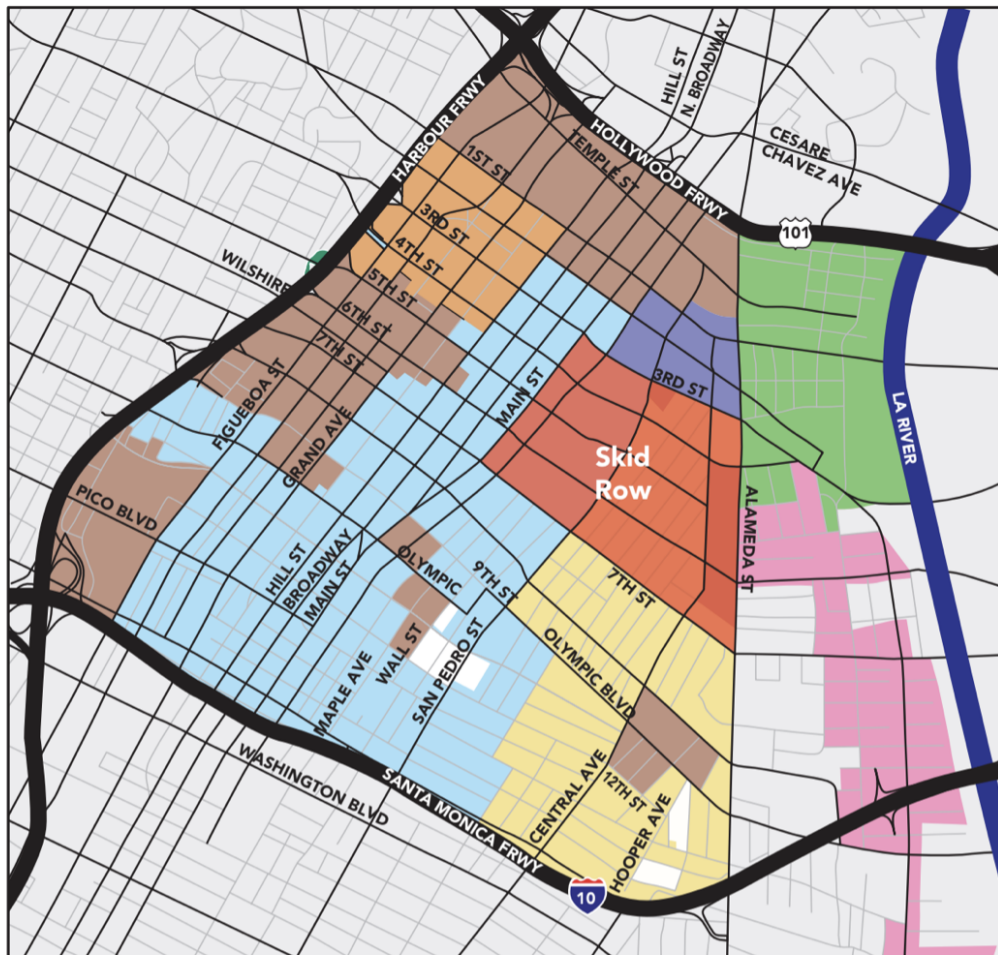
¹¹⁸ LAPD, “[Top 10 BID Anchor Point Analysis For Historic Core, Fashion District, & Downtown Core: YTD VIOLENT CRIME - 01/07/07 to 01/16/18](#)” (CPRA 18-3148)

¹¹⁹ Jason McGahan, “[Who Killed the Skid Row Neighborhood Council?](#)” LA Weekly (June 21, 2017).

Part 4

Containment, Development, and the Fight for Freedom in Skid Row

This part is a deep dive into the history of containment and neglect that have long characterized policing and governance of Skid Row. Today's data-driven policing programs help automate, coordinate, and obscure this violence.



Source: Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles

Skid Row is a vibrant community of poor and predominantly Black, migrant, Indigenous, and disabled people helping each other survive. It's also where the city tests new forms of policing, surveillance, criminalization, neglect, and abandonment. This makes the empowerment and liberation of Skid Row residents crucial in the broader fight to abolish these systems everywhere.

This part proceeds by examining the role of surveillance and criminalization in different efforts to contain as well as transform downtown L.A. over the years, with

a focus on policing's relationship to three efforts to transform Skid Row through land use and "redevelopment" plans: the Bunker Hill Redevelopment Plan of 1956; the Central Business Redevelopment District Project of 1970; and the New Downtown 2040 rezoning plan. When viewed alongside prior plans, the currently unfolding 2040 plan looks like yet another run at the same strategy of rezoning downtown to make space for market-rate housing instead of creating housing for the thousands of people living in self-made homes. But this time around, police, city officials, and real estate developers have new tools for coordinating this conquest: these entities are now highly organized through data-driven policing tactics honed over the years, including "broken windows" policing, "community" policing, the Citywide Nuisance Abatement Program, Compstat, and "predictive" policing. All these tactics are woven together in LAPD's new Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing framework.

This part's first half, titled **The Skid Row Compromise: "Preservation" and Blight**, looks at how city officials through the years leading to the late 1990s accepted arrangements to allow a population of poor people to remain in the city center while also working to contain and criminalize this community. Although some of downtown's residential hotel buildings were nominally "preserved" in this period, the city also spent the same time refining both the operation and inputs of a nuisance abatement program that, when officially launched in 1997, targeted 11 central city residential hotels in the name of community policing. As Bill Bratton took over LAPD in 2002, policing of Skid Row expanded from violent sweeps backed by brute force to similar brutality submerged in multi-agency coordinated attacks to criminalize residents through "broken windows" policing and to dismantle the city's last vestige of affordable housing. The second half of this part, titled **Automation of Banishment: New Technologies, Old Patterns**, looks at how data systems and notions of "community policing" expanded coordination between police, city agencies, developers, and businesses invested in displacement and banishment of Skid Row residents. A close look at these tactics and technologies of data-driven policing reveals a system of enhanced coordination to share information about the community in order to map and enact banishment block by block.

Together, these two periods are linked by the logics of extraction that have always guided conquest, colonization, and racial capitalism. It might be difficult at first to see how "extraction" operates for a community as materially deprived as Skid Row: what can you extract from people who appear to possess so little? The answer is land. And in order for that extraction to be profitable, the people present on that land first needed to be intentionally harmed and neglected by the state, via what we can call "organized abandonment" from analysis of urbanization as well as today's prison-industrial complex¹²⁰ and "dependent underdevelopment" from analysis of European colonization.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Ruth Wilson Gilmore & Clément Petitjean, "[Prisons and Class Warfare: An Interview with Ruth Wilson Gilmore](#)," *Période/Verso Blog* (August 2, 2018).

¹²¹ Walter Rodney, [How Europe Underdeveloped Africa](#) (1972).

Through neglect and criminalization of Skid Row's residents, the city created conditions where real estate investors and speculators now stand to extract massive profits from "redeveloping" Skid Row, an area that investors have long eyed as an extremely valuable as well as an "undervalued" frontier for gentrification. This "undervaluing" required decades of containing, criminalizing, and neglecting Skid Row's residents. And the area could not be targeted for the kind of coordinated, data-driven state violence it now faces without years of surveillance and policing. Throughout all this history is a continuous effort by the city to secure conditions of chaos and instability for residents of Skid Row in order to banish and displace them.

This is a story seen throughout the history of colonization and conquest. As always, white wealth and power grows via extraction from the communities that have always received the least from the white supremacist state while also suffering its worst violence, policing, and surveillance.

The Skid Row Compromise: "Preservation" and Blight

Skid Row sits in the middle of downtown Los Angeles, a vibrant community that has long been a refuge for people deemed disposable by the city, particularly poor Black people and other people of color. The community grew over the years due to various economic booms and busts within the agriculture, petroleum, and automobile industries, and through the decades the area was deliberately configured to contain and restrict the city's most banished people.

At the same time that Skid Row served as a refuge for the city's poorest residents, it has been a target of developers who have continually coordinated with city officials and police to remove this community from the profitable city center. "Blight" has been a key concept in this approach, used by the city and developers to condemn areas where poor people lived in order to redevelop them for profitable commercial and housing markets. The term "blight" is rarely defined with any precision, and courts have granted municipal officials wide latitude to come up with definitions, including to qualify for federal funds or local tax breaks for redevelopment projects. For example, as a Philadelphia planner proposed in 1918, a blighted area "is a district which is not what it should be."¹²²

"Redevelopment" and Containment

By the 1940s, the Bunker Hill area of downtown had the highest population density of anywhere in Los Angeles, and the majority of dwelling units were tenant-occupied single rooms with no utilities, facilities, or running water. Police, health department, and fire department statistics classified the area as criminal, disease-ridden, and a fire hazard.¹²³ To address areas like this, in 1945 the California Legislature enacted the Community Redevelopment Act, which empowered local governments to target "blight" through development, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of residential,

¹²² Colin Gordon, "[Blighting the Way: Urban Renewal, Economic Development, and the Elusive Definition of Blight](#)," *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 31.2 (2004), pp. 305-337.

¹²³ Mara A. Marks, "Shifting Ground: The Rise and Fall of the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency," *Southern California Quarterly* 86.3 (2004), pp. 241-290.

commercial, industrial, and retail districts.¹²⁴ The Bunker Hill Redevelopment Plan (BHRP) of 1956 was the first intensive urban renewal project pursued by the city's new Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).¹²⁵ The effort was initially shaped and influenced by business leaders who hoped it would expand commerce and industry. But these supporters balked when the projects looked to redevelop blighted locations into improved housing for the inhabitants, replacing informal and dangerous living conditions with new public infrastructure.¹²⁶

Through the years CRA would evolve to preserve the supply of housing for very low, low, and moderate income households. Throughout the 1960s, however, many of the contested single room occupancies (SRO) fell into disrepair. The city continued to increase enforcement of building and safety codes for the remaining SROs, and many owners found it cheaper to demolish the buildings rather than comply with work orders to improve conditions.¹²⁷ As a result, the affordable housing provided through SRO buildings were reduced by half during this period.¹²⁸ In 1965, the BHRP had about 6,000 people who needed to be relocated, and a total of 2,424 relocation payments were made in the amount of \$24 each. The adjacent communities of Skid Row and Westlake subsequently saw an influx of impoverished elderly individuals, while many of those "relocated" ended up homeless.¹²⁹

In the late 1960s, City Council moved to "clean up" Skid Row with new laws that made it impossible to be poor and unhoused in the city. In 1967 the city enacted what remains its most vicious ordinance criminalizing homelessness, Municipal Code 41.18. This law states that "no person shall sit, lie or sleep in or upon any street, sidewalk or other public way." On top of that, police also increased arrests for petty crimes like public inebriation—which, in 1975, became the single most common "crime" for arrest in Los Angeles.¹³⁰

Decades later, draconian enforcement of crimes of poverty would be theorized as "Broken Windows policing," introduced in part 2 of this report as a component of data-driven policing. But the practice went as far back as the 1900s, for example, when the city's jail population rose sharply due to mostly white males being jailed for public order offenses like "vagrancy." Concentrated in the downtown area that later became known as Skid Row, "Los Angeles's systematic jailing of transient laborers incited the first significant expansion of the city's carceral infrastructure, with overcrowding leading to two new city jails, a new county jail, and a stockade at Lincoln Heights."¹³¹

¹²⁴ ["Redevelopment Agency History,"](#) Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller (last accessed September 30, 2021).

¹²⁵ Kirsten Moore-Sheeley, et al., [The Making of a Crisis: A History of Homelessness in Los Angeles](#), UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy (January 2021), p. 26.

¹²⁶ Marks, "Shifting Ground," p. 252.

¹²⁷ Moore-Sheeley et al., [The Making of a Crisis](#), pp. 21, 26.

¹²⁸ [History of Skid Row and the Trust](#), Skid Row Housing Trust (last accessed October 5, 2021).

¹²⁹ Deshonay Dozier, [Contested Development: A Poor People's Movement for a Better Los Angeles, 1960-2018](#), PhD dissertation, Graduate Center of the City University of New York (2018), p. 49; Moore-Sheeley et al., [The Making of a Crisis](#), p. 26.

¹³⁰ Dozier, [Contested Development](#), p. 50.

¹³¹ Moore-Sheeley et al., [The Making of a Crisis](#), p. 8.

The assault on Skid Row expanded with the Central Business Redevelopment District Project, which was based on a report released by the Community Redevelopment Agency in 1972 that had become known as the “Silver Book.” Produced as a glossy coffee-table book by a team of urban planners and architects, the “Silver Book” plan proposed a complete restructuring of the district by 1990,¹³² with Skid Row to be eliminated and replaced with a one-block area providing information regarding social services.¹³³ After that plan met opposition, in 1976 the newly elected mayor Tom Bradley, together with a “large tent” coalition including the Los Angeles Catholic Worker and Legal Aid Foundation¹³⁴ as well as residents of other neighborhoods who didn’t want Skid Row expanding into their areas, offered what they called the “Blue Book” plan as an alternative.¹³⁵ This plan’s formalization of Skid Row as the home of the poor and unhoused community became a part of the city layout.¹³⁶ The CRA also worked to rehabilitate buildings and secure affordable housing through the establishment of the SRO Housing Corporation in the 1980s.¹³⁷

Baked into the Blue Book plan to “save” Skid Row was also targeted criminalization in what would become known as the neighborhood’s “buffer” zones. The Blue Book plan expressly outlined this goal of containment:

“With public restrooms, benches, and pleasant open spaces within the contained area of Skid Row, the residents might be inclined to confine their activities to the immediate area. That section would serve as a magnet to hold undesirable population elements in Skid Row, not against their will but of their own accord. Strong edges will act as buffers between Skid Row and the rest of the central city. When the Skid Row resident enters the buffer, the psychological comfort of the familiar Skid Row environment will be lost; he will feel foreign and will not be inclined to travel far from the area of containment.”¹³⁸

The Blue Book plan also aimed to stabilize the provision of low-income housing, particularly SRO hotels and social services in Skid Row. This was a compromise between, on the one hand, downtown investors and public officials seeking to displace impoverished people away from profitable downtown redevelopment projects and, on the other hand, advocates who sought to protect the unhoused community and increase access to shelter space and services.¹³⁹ This plan would

¹³² Natalie Haddad, “A ‘People’s History’ of Los Angeles’s Skid Row,” *Hyperallergic* (August 24, 2020); Moore-Sheeley et al., *The Making of a Crisis*, p. 26.

¹³³ Dozier, *Contested Development*, p. 55.

¹³⁴ Los Angeles Poverty Department, “*The ‘Blue Book’ - the containment plan that saved the housing on Skid Row*,” Vimeo (June 3, 2021).

¹³⁵ Gilda Haas & Allan David Heskin, “*Community struggles in Los Angeles*,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 5.4 (1981), pp. 546-564.

¹³⁶ Nic John Ramos, “Poor Influences and Criminal Locations: Los Angeles’s Skid Row, Multicultural Identities, and Normal Homosexuality,” *American Quarterly* 71.2 (2019), pp. 541-567.

¹³⁷ “*Our Mission, Our Vision, Our History*,” SRO Housing Corporation (last accessed October 5, 2021).

¹³⁸ “*The Containment Plan*,” *99% Invisible*, episode 279 (10 Oct., 2017).

¹³⁹ Ellen Reese, Geoffrey DeVerteuil, & Leanne Thach, “‘Weak-Center’ Gentrification and the Contradictions of Containment: Deconcentrating Poverty in Downtown Los Angeles,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34.2 (2010), pp. 310-327.

allow unhoused people to “live freely as they choose” within boundaries also serving to “contain” disruption outside the developing and gentrifying areas of downtown.

Sweeps and Criminalization to “Sanitize the Area”

The Blue Book containment plan never fooled Skid Row residents into believing that city officials, developers, and police would end the assault on their community. Under the containment strategy, Skid Row became a zone for targeted policing as well as neglect and exploitation. In the compromise brokered to “preserve” Skid Row, policing and social services served as tools of deliberate underdevelopment and dependency to strip people of autonomy and community control over land.

While containment helped to shore up resources for unhoused and poor residents, it also facilitated carceral policies and demonization of the community, along with millions of dollars 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 now “contribute to carceral strategies that widen the revolving door of poverty from the shelter bed to the jail cell.”¹⁴⁰

The coming of the 1984 Olympics accelerated these harms. By this time L.A. was already dubbed “the homeless capital of the United States” and rents were skyrocketing. “We’re trying to sanitize the area,” an LAPD captain announced a week before the Olympics began.¹⁴¹ Unhoused residents of neighborhoods where tourists were expected were arrested, expelled to faraway detox centers, or forced to move while their belongings were destroyed. And just as draconian arrests of unhoused people had required the construction of new jails in the early 1900s, 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 sidewalk encampments “intolerable” and announced that hundreds of unhoused residents had a week to get off the streets or face arrest. Gates had been police chief since 1978 and would remain in power until 1992. A notoriously racist police official, he had once claimed that Black people died more frequently from police chokeholds because they were physiologically different from “normal people.”¹⁴² Under his tenure LAPD also spied on community groups, activists, and public officials through the Public Disorder Intelligence Division (PDID) and created the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) unit, which used battering rams on residential neighborhoods.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Deshonay Dozier, “Contested Development: Homeless Property, Police Reform, and Resistance in Skid Row,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (Jan. 20, 2019) at 195; L.A. Community Action Network, [Community-Based Human Rights Assessment: Skid Row’s Safer Cities Initiative](#) (December 2010).

¹⁴¹ Leon Daniel, [“Cleaning up mean streets for Olympics,”](#) UPI (July 23, 1984).

¹⁴² Elaine Woo & Eric Malnic, [“Daryl F. Gates dies at 83; innovative but controversial chief of the LAPD,”](#) Los Angeles Times (March 8, 2014).

¹⁴³ PZS, [“The Secret Police of Los Angeles: Daryl Gates’ Paranoid Legacy,”](#) Truthdig (April 20, 2010).

Like LAPD chiefs before and after him, Gates was keen to use demonization of unhoused people to expand his powers. Gates made it clear that the city's objective was to eradicate poor people rather than address their poverty. Though civil rights attorneys attempted to address the human rights violations Gates was carrying out, a state Superior Court judge ordered that the city only needed to give a 12-hour notice before conducting sweeps. The sweeps commenced in June 1987.¹⁴⁴ While very few people were arrested, many people left Skid Row due to the threat of police violence and arrest.¹⁴⁵ These attacks only intensified over the years.

Blight and Targeting of Skid Row's SRO Hotels

Along with unhoused residents, Skid Row is also home to several single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels that offer some of downtown's most enduring housing options for extremely poor tenants. These residential hotels typically feature small rooms with minimal furniture and often a shared bathroom. Historically SROs were built to shelter people who moved to the inner cities from rural areas in search of work. Because SROs continue to house the very poor, they are often demonized by developers and investors who characterize residents as a public nuisance. Over the years, these buildings were deliberately neglected and blighted, empowering the city to target them as nuisances using criminal and property law.

Over the years the reduction of SROs has fueled homelessness in the city. According to a former high-ranking HUD official who was made administrator for the city CRA in 1986, the reduction of federal funding support for SROs during the 1980s is what drove many people to the streets.¹⁴⁶ Meanwhile, repeated attempts by the City Council to preserve SROs had been ineffective and even incentivized property owners to let the buildings deteriorate or fall victim to fires.¹⁴⁷ By July 1987, a month after the Daryl Gates assault on Skid Row, Mayor Bradley proposed a moratorium on demolition of SROs and created a special committee to formulate a lasting shelter policy for unhoused people.¹⁴⁸ Othering of unhoused residents continued within the committee, with the group's chairman Harold S. Jensen asserting that there was "a distinct difference between the SRO community and the homeless community" in that "the SRO community that has existed there historically is relatively stable, very poor and with very limited resources, but it is not a threat to neighboring uses." Jensens' distinction was that "the invasion of the homeless threatens both the stable SRO population and the businesses in the immediate area." In turn, the committee recommended tighter police security on Skid Row.

¹⁴⁴ Craig Quintana, "[Sweep of Squatters Is Given Credit for Making Skid Row Safer, Quieter and Cleaner](#)," Los Angeles Times (July 19, 1987).

¹⁴⁵ "[Homeless Ousted from a Skid Row: Los Angeles Police Expel Many From Makeshift Shelters](#)," New York Times (June 6, 1987).

¹⁴⁶ Gwen Ifill, "[Some Cities Reviving SRO Hotels In Effort Against Homelessness](#)," Washington Post (April 21, 1990).

¹⁴⁷ Frederick M. Muir, "[Bradley Proposes Skid Row Hotel Demolition Ban](#)," Los Angeles Times (March 10, 1989).

¹⁴⁸ Victor Merina, "[Panel Urges Saving Skid Row Hotels for Residents, Relocating Homeless](#)," Los Angeles Times (July 25, 1987).

In late 1989, City Council voted to extend a moratorium against the demolition of the hotels for five years on Skid Row and three years citywide. The attack on SROs was far from over though, and the city soon turned to another approach for targeting these homes rather than demolishing them outright: CNAP, introduced above in part 2. As CNAP launched in 1997, the forces transforming downtown ramped up again with the 1999 passage of the Adaptive Reuse law, which permitted the conversion of vacant commercial structures into new residential buildings. In turn, investors – including the county’s Economic Development Corporation, a nonprofit public-private partnership – funded the creation of thousands of units of high-income housing, predominantly lofts, condominiums, and luxury apartments in areas that were previously a refuge for poorer communities.

Around the same time, city zoning officials identified 11 downtown residential hotels in Skid Row as public nuisances. The hotel owners were ordered to renovate the buildings and to install security cameras.¹⁴⁹ While some of the complaints leveled against residential hotel buildings reflected efforts by tenants to improve their living conditions, the pressures on hotels to undergo costly renovations also served the interests of businesses and city officials who wanted these hotels closed altogether. The Los Angeles Community Action Network and others successfully lobbied city officials to institute a moratorium on the conversion of SRO housing units into condominiums or luxury apartments. In 2008, this moratorium expanded and became permanent, protecting close to 19,000 units across the city, an important victory for low-income residents.¹⁵⁰

More recently CNAP has become part of data-driven policing programs like Operation LASER, as we introduced in part 2 above. LAPD also targeted some of Skid Row’s most vulnerable SROs as Anchor Points under LASER, subjecting these locations to extreme policing and other displacement strategies.

Automation of Banishment: New Technologies, Old Patterns

Starting in the mid 2000s, LAPD launched a series of data-driven policing programs that over time integrated “broken windows” policing, community policing, and predictive policing programs. These programs built on the city’s past practices of containing Skid Row and enabled enhanced coordination of community partnerships by city officials, police, public sector agencies, and wealthy stakeholders while using military-grade surveillance technologies and counterinsurgency tactics to map banishment block by block. These policing tactics are serving to transform Skid Row as part of the buildup to the city’s latest downtown “redevelopment” scheme, the **Downtown 2040 Plan**.

In 2006, “broken windows” policing – introduced in part 2 above – ramped up in Skid Row as the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI), launched under Bill Bratton’s leadership. At an annual price tag of \$6 million, LAPD deployed an expansion of fifty patrol officers as well as thirty narcotics, mounted, and bicycle officers into the .85 square mile

¹⁴⁹ Reese, DeVerteuil, & Thach, “[‘Weak-Center Gentrification’...](#),” p. 317.

¹⁵⁰ Anna Scott, “[New Law Protects Residential Hotels](#),” L.A. Downtown News (May 12, 2008).

area of Skid Row. During the first two years of SCI, “LAPD conducted 19,000 arrests, issued 24,000 citations as well as incarcerated 2,000 residents, and dismantled 2,800 self-made housing units” in Skid Row, a community of around 12,000 to 15,000 residents at the time.¹⁵¹ A 2008 study by law professor Gary Blasi and sociologist Forrest Stuart compared the frequency of certain offenses occurring where SCI was deployed to other parts of Central Division that were not targeted in the same way.¹⁵² Their study concluded that there is no statistically significant relationship between SCI and reductions in overall rates of serious crime.¹⁵³

At the same time that SCI served little purpose besides oppression of Skid Row residents, LAPD Chief Bill Bratton realized the importance of organizing and strengthening the business communities to garner support for the program. Bratton lobbied city leaders to hire one of the main theorists of “broken windows” policing, George Kelling, who organized monthly meetings throughout 2002 and 2003. These meetings brought together city officials, downtown developers, and representatives from the mega-shelters of Skid Row to collaborate on policing of Skid Row.¹⁵⁴ Those meetings later evolved into “Skid Row Safety Walks” organized by local BIDs. As part of these walks, public officials, law enforcement (including sometimes Bratton himself), judges, students, academics, local business owners, social service providers, and the media walked through the streets of Skid Row to gaze at the community and discuss the problems they perceived.¹⁵⁵

This same period also saw an expansion of street policing by BIDs. As discussed in part 3 above, BIDs raise money from local businesses and developers to hire private security guards who can enforce municipal ordinances. In Skid Row, BID patrols funded by the Central City East Association (CCEA), used their “mostly white guards” to criminalize “homeless behavior in Skid Row through citizen arrests, detainment, assault and battery, destruction and confiscation of homeless property, harassment, and false grounds for imprisonment.”¹⁵⁶ In a lawsuit filed by Skid Row residents against CCEA along with the BID’s private security company, the BID hired George Kelling as an expert witness. Kelling’s testimony articulated the logic of broken windows policing and the prioritization of “real property” to defend the BID’s practices of confiscating the property of unhoused people in Skid Row:

“Disorder as a result of leaving personal property on public sidewalks in an area interferes with the uses of real property in the area, produces a hiding place for illegal behavior to be conducted, threatens the viability of the neighborhood, increases citizens’ fears

¹⁵¹ Dozier, [Contested Development](#), p. 115; Los Angeles Community Action Network, [Community-Based Human Rights Assessment: Skid Row’s Safer Cities Initiative](#) (December 2010).

¹⁵² Gary Blasi & Forrest Stuart, [Has the Safer Cities Initiative in Skid Row Reduced Serious Crime?](#), UCLA School of Law (September 15, 2008).

¹⁵³ L.A. Community Action Network, [Three Years of the Safer Cities Initiative](#) (Sept. 2009).

¹⁵⁴ Forrest Stuart, [Down, Out, and Under Arrest: Policing and Everyday Life in Skid Row](#) (University of Chicago Press, 2016).

¹⁵⁵ “[CCEA Earns Award for Skid Row Walk](#),” LA Downtown News (October 1, 2007).

¹⁵⁶ Dozier, [Contested Development](#), p. 113.

and lowers the social norms in the area thereby reducing the quality of life.”¹⁵⁷

BID patrols stored the property they confiscated on behalf of their real estate developer and business funders in a 20,000 square foot facility donated by a CCEA board member and downtown developer. LAPD also used this same private facility to store property they confiscated.¹⁵⁸

As noted in part 1 above, CCEA also paid for and built some of the Skid Row surveillance architecture that feeds data-driven policing, including a 2005 donation of \$200,000 worth of CCTV surveillance cameras that would be controlled by LAPD. In 2011, CCEA’s executive director described this system as “a network of cameras gifted to the LAPD.”¹⁵⁹ LAPD Commander Andrew Smith, who oversaw the Central Division for several years, once used the language of community policing to explain how BID patrols and surveillance-sharing act as a “force multiplier for our officers.” He added: “Those folks are terrific to work with.”¹⁶⁰

The Downtown 2040 Plan

In May 2017, journalist Adrian Riskin published records of communications between downtown BIDs and city officials. The records show Blair Besten, Executive Director of the Historic Core BID, emailing Bryan Eck, a policy planner at the city planning department in November 2016 with policy and rezoning suggestions that incentivize mixed income and mixed project development throughout the downtown area, including Skid Row.¹⁶¹ Though it is not clearly articulated within this email, it seems very likely that this is all in relation to the Downtown Los Angeles Community Plan, also described by the city as DTLA 2040.¹⁶²

DTLA 2040 is a proposal to update the zoning plans for Central City and Central City North, with drastic changes to Skid Row. The plan endeavors to add 70,000 housing units to make room for a projected 125,000 new residents downtown. This rezoning will enrich developers who have spent years plotting and closing in on Skid Row, empowering them to extract wealth generated based on decades of blight that kept Skid Row property values low. In other words, this is a windfall once again

¹⁵⁷ Deposition of George L. Kelling (January 9, 2004), Cervantes v International Services, Inc. (2002), Superior Court of California, No. BC220226, p. 24.

¹⁵⁸ Deposition of Charlie Beck (November 24, 2003), Cervantes v. International Services, Inc., Superior Court of California, No. BC220226, p. 17; Harcourt, “Policing L.A.’s Skid Row,” p. 16.

¹⁵⁹ Emma G. Gallegos, “Most of the LAPD Surveillance Cameras Downtown Are Useless,” LAist (December 23, 2011).

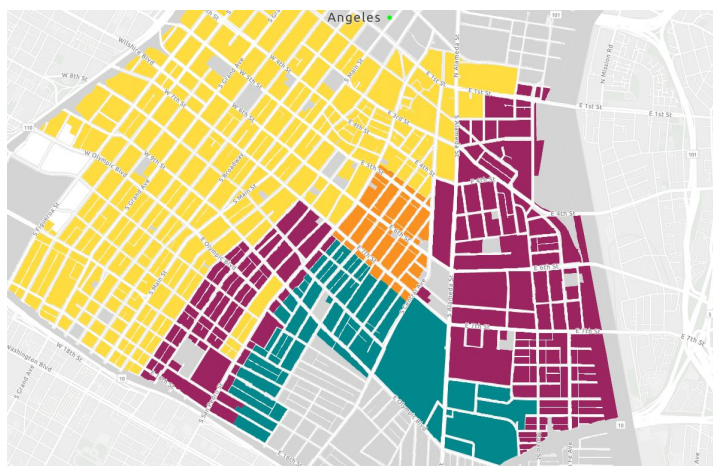
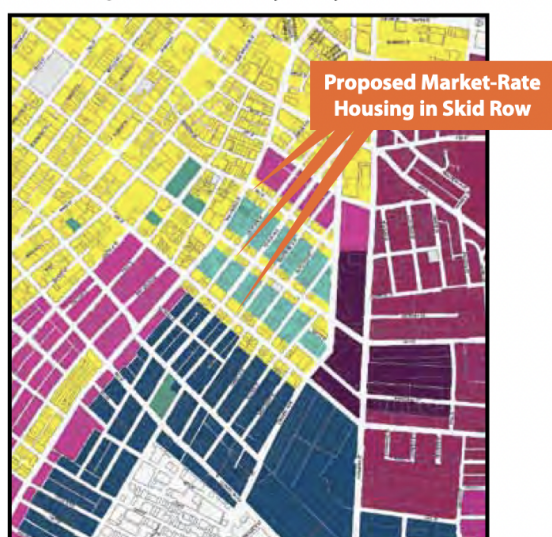
¹⁶⁰ Cara Mia Dimassa & Richard Winton, “L.A.’s business improvement districts help reduce crime,” Los Angeles Times (February 20, 2009).

¹⁶¹ Adrian Riskin, “On November 21, 2016 Blair Besten told the City of Los Angeles that her zillionaire developer bossers were ready to gentrify and built out Skid Row,” MichaelKohlhaas.org (May 29, 2017). Blair Besten more recently surfaced in our organizing as part of a work group convened by the city after the George Floyd uprising to secure more resources for LAPD trainings. Her work group produced “reform” recommendations for new trainings that would cost the city \$12.6 million yearly. See LAPD, After-Action Report Implementation Plan (September 27, 2021).

¹⁶² Los Angeles City Planning Commission, “Downtown Los Angeles Community Plan Update” (last accessed October 4, 2021).

allowing wealthy capitalists to enrich themselves off the historical neglect of Black and brown communities.

The plan formalizes and expands the displacement that has been encroaching on Skid Row. At present, the eastern half of Skid Row is zoned for light manufacturing, with non-residential structures used as warehouses, seafood wholesalers, storage facilities, and other industrial and logistical purposes. But gentrification has been pushing into that eastern edge, with old factories and structures becoming refurbished lofts and artist-in-residence studios because the area contains large parcels controlled by single owners who can “swiftly decide to change use of the land.”¹⁶³ Meanwhile, Skid Row’s western half is zoned as community commercial and a “medium to high” residential zone, which would allow a density of 56 to 109 family dwelling units per acre.¹⁶⁴



The initial version of the 2040 Plan proposed in 2018 (above on the left) would have rezoned

all of Skid Row to allow market-rate housing, including along Skid Row’s primary corridors of 5th, 6th, 7th streets, with the goal of “creating corridors that link the downtown skyline with a new fashion and arts district.”¹⁶⁵ After housing advocates protested this assault on Skid Row’s low-income housing stock, a new zone was carved out solely for affordable housing, labelled the iX1 section and bounded by 5th Street to the north, 7th Street to the south, Central Avenue to the east, and San Pedro Street to the west (above on the right).¹⁶⁶ While this new zone preserves some affordable housing compared to the initial proposal, the protected area is less than half the size of Skid Row today.¹⁶⁷

When considered in the history of past redevelopment plans, the 2040 plan appears to be another attempt at the same strategy of rezoning and redevelopment to make

¹⁶³ Roger Vincent, “[A \\$2-billion mega-project could reshape the Arts District](#),” Los Angeles Times (April 29, 2021).

¹⁶⁴ [Residential Land Use Planning - Los Angeles City Planning Department](#)

¹⁶⁵ Inner City Law Center, [Land Use Planning in Skid Row: Strategies to Prevent Displacement and Build Affordable Housing](#) (June 2018).

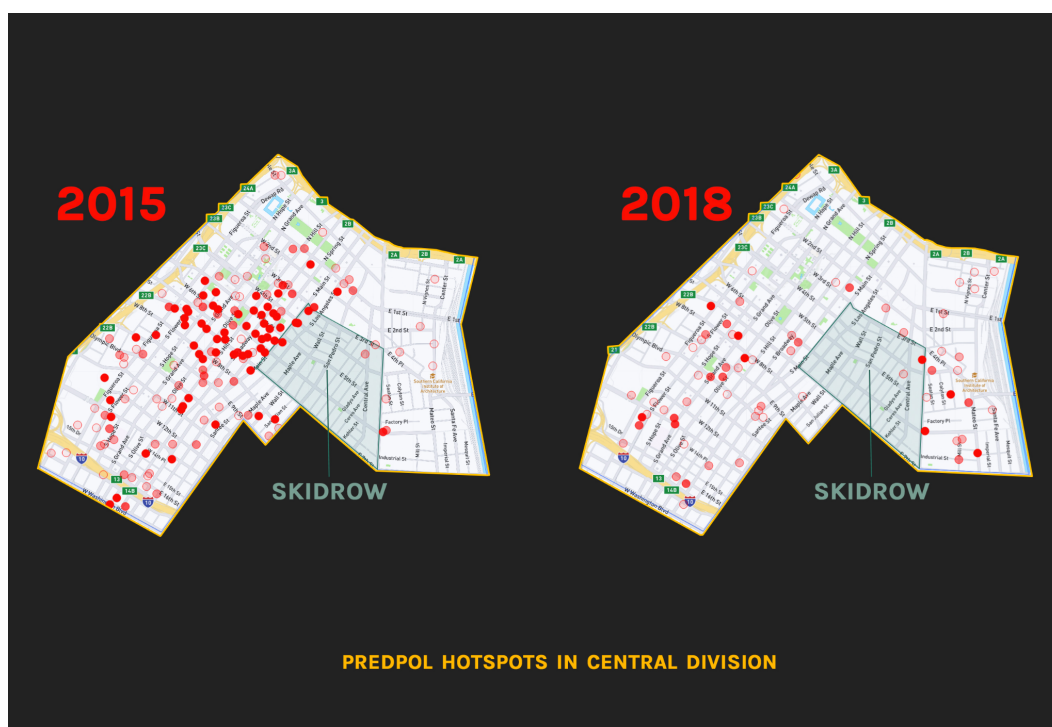
¹⁶⁶ City News Service, “[Planning Commission Begins Dissection of Proposed Downtown Community Plan](#),” KFI AM 640 (June 17, 2021).

¹⁶⁷ Los Angeles Poverty Department, “[Skid Row Now and 2040](#)” (April 10, 2021).

space for market-rate housing instead of prioritizing the creation of housing for the thousands of people who already live in self-made homes. But this time around, the state and its collaborators have new tools for coordinating their conquest: city officials, developers, and police are highly organized through data-driven policing tactics honed over the years, starting with the PredPol and LASER predictive policing programs. When we studied the locations these programs targeted, we found that the data-driven policing patterns closely matched the city's goals for transforming Skid Row, right down to the block level.

PredPol: Quarantine and Buffer

Examining the details of predictive policing's operation shows how these programs helped lay the groundwork for the city's latest assault on Skid Row community. PredPol was implemented downtown in summer 2015.¹⁶⁸ We created the maps of PredPol hotspots below based on records we obtained via the PRA.¹⁶⁹ The dominant argument against PredPol often centers the algorithms, citing bias in the algorithms as well as a feedback loop from recycling police data.¹⁷⁰ The assumption would be that more reports of crime would mean more hotspots in Skid Row, which has long been the target of the city's most aggressive policing as well as the area that mainstream media, LAPD, and city officials continually categorize as crime-infested.



¹⁶⁸ Records we received in [CPRA 18-1282](#) as well as LAPD's accounts of when PredPol was implemented indicates PredPol was first used in Central Division in 2015. See Kristine de Leon, "[Paging Sgt. Software: Can We Trust Computers to Detect Crime Without Violating Our Rights?](#)" USC StorySpace (2018).

¹⁶⁹ ([CPRA # 18-1282](#)).

¹⁷⁰ Renata M. O'Donnell, "[Challenging Racist Predictive Policing Algorithms Under the Equal Protection Clause](#)," New York University Law Review 94.3 (2019), pp. 544-580.

What these maps show is that the PredPol hot spots instead quarantine the community of Skid Row, forming a divide or a digital wall or border of hot spot clusters. PredPol in fact automates patrols at what had been traditionally called the “buffer zones” of the containment strategy long used to contain Skid Row.¹⁷¹ The overall impact is restriction, enclosure, and punishment.

Operation LASER: Policing a “Bastion of Difference”

Records obtained through a PRA request we filed in November 2018 revealed that some of the locations designated as Anchor Points in Operation LASER included churches, hospitals, high schools, universities, housing shelters, metro stations, entire 500 feet by 500 feet areas, as well as shopping centers, malls, and apartment complexes. The records included an LAPD document of Anchor Points from the Central Division labeled “BID anchor points.” While the precise role of BIDs in LAPD’s targeting of these locations is unknown, this appears to be yet another way BIDs were integrated into policing.

The targeting of these locations cannot be divorced from the long history of dismantling residential hotels and other architecture that Skid Row residents depended on. As explained earlier, LAPD intervention at Anchor Points included abatements and evictions, changes to licensing and conditional use permits, and changes in environmental design. Many of the locations marked “BID anchor points”



ANCHOR POINTS IN SKID ROW



by LAPD are where residential hotels either exist or existed and where new luxury development is now occurring. They are also all in areas where market-rate housing will be allowed under the 2040 Plan. These Anchor Points are shown on the map.

All these locations have been sites of extreme contestation over the years. For example, the Anchor Point at Spring and 5th Street is the site of the **Alexandria Hotel**. Built in 1906, the Alexandria was regarded as the city’s “most elegant hotel before the

¹⁷¹ Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, “[The Algorithmic Ecology](#)” (March 2, 2020).

construction of the Biltmore in 1923.”¹⁷² In 2006, the hotel was purchased by developer Robert Islas, who created uninhabitable conditions in order to evict low-income and disabled residents, including no hot water for weeks at a time, and facilitate renovations funded in part by the Community Redevelopment Agency, which we introduced earlier in this section. Around 100 residents of the Alexandria were evicted without relocation assistance before tenant organizing efforts led by the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) helped hold the CRA and other city agencies responsible for enabling Islas’s abuse.¹⁷³ A lawsuit filed by LA CAN settled with city officials and the developers agreeing to pay almost \$1 million to house and compensate residents who had been evicted, as well as putting in place new tenant protections for all CRA-renovated buildings.¹⁷⁴

Another Anchor Point that has been a significant site of contestation and struggle is 112 West 5th Street, which is the **Rosslyn Hotel**. This mixed-use hotel continues to supply affordable housing and takes section 8 vouchers. The Rosslyn Hotel stands across the street from 451 South Main Street, another Anchor Point and the site of an older hotel built in 1914 that originally had the same name. Together these two buildings, connected by an underground tunnel, were at one time the largest hotel in the entire Pacific Coast, with 1,100 rooms and 800 baths.¹⁷⁵ In the 1970s, the Frontiera family purchased the buildings and renamed 451 South Main Street as the Frontier Hotel. At the time, both hotels served low-income residents as SROs. In 2009, the Frontier was renamed the Rosslyn Lofts and the units are “split between low-income “micro loft” apartments and market rate luxury lofts.”¹⁷⁶

According to our conversations with LA CAN organizer General Dogon, who was born in Skid Row and has lived here all his life, the streets around these hotels began to transform starting around 2002. Dogon told us that nearby street lighting suddenly changed, now artfully done unlike the lamps in front of the SROs, which resembled the prison floodlights of San Quentin. Next came street signs marking the area as “Gallery Row,” a name that arrived as news to longtime residents. Then, in a show of just how stark the gentrification and discrimination was, an “Art Walk” began to take place at the same time the city also created a Drinking in Public (DIP) task force that would cite Black and brown residents in the afternoons, especially on Art Walk days, then almost always disappeared in the evening when gentrifiers at the Art Walk were drinking and walking around.

The Frontiera family that owned the Frontier and Rosslyn has been described as “instrumental in fostering the art gallery scene that is now a staple of the area.”¹⁷⁷ Today the owner of the hotels Rob Frontiera also has a reputation for racist and predatory landlord practices, in particular harassing, intimidating, and exploiting low-income residents in order to extract wealth through market-rate tenancy. General

¹⁷² Los Angeles Conservancy, [Alexandria Hotel](#) (last visited October 9, 2021).

¹⁷³ Ari Bloomekatz, “[Suit alleges illegal evictions at hotel](#),” L.A. Times (December 21, 2007).

¹⁷⁴ Carol Williams, “[Developers, L.A. must pay \\$1 million to hotel residents](#),” L.A. Times (February 13, 2009).

¹⁷⁵ Los Angeles Conservancy, [Rosslyn Hotel](#) (last accessed October 9, 2021).

¹⁷⁶ Eric Zessenhaus, “[Downtown LA’s historic Rosslyn Hotel Apartments set to become permanent housing for homeless](#),” KPCC (June 26, 2014).

¹⁷⁷ Id.

Dogon along with another LA CAN organizer Steve Diaz, who for years lived in the Frontier Hotel, told us that residents often referred to it as the Jim Crow Building. Now called the Rosslyn Lofts, the building had two entrances, one on the side of the building for low-income tenants that resembled the lobby of a jail and featured large notices about what tenants could and couldn't do, and another far more luxurious one at the front of the building for new market-rate tenants. Market rate units were located on the top floors, with everything below the ninth floor used for affordable housing. Hot water was often reserved solely for wealthy tenants.

Another predatory and illegal practice that Frontiera used was the “28-day shuffle.” This refers to SRO landlords moving residents in order to prevent them from establishing tenant rights (including rent stabilization), which generally set in after 28 days of residency. Residents would have to pick up all their belongings and check out and then check back in, usually without explanation of what was going on or why. In response, LA CAN and other groups “waged a campaign to educate hotel residents about the practice and to force officials to take action against it,” helping residents send about 300 complaints to the city housing department.¹⁷⁸ When confronted about the practice, Frontiera stated in 2006: “We ran it all past the Housing Department and the city attorney’s office.”¹⁷⁹ But the tenant organizing succeeded in forcing the city to sue Frontiera, who settled the case for a \$1 million fine. The bulk of that money was used to pay for “relocation restitution to more than 200 former occupants of the Frontier Hotel who were moved out to make room for the conversion of the building to upscale lofts.”¹⁸⁰

Policing and CNAP played a crucial role in this assault on low-income housing at the Rosslyn and Frontier. According to former residents we spoke to, the fact of people “hanging out” near the hotels was used to trigger CNAP enforcement or at least referenced as the basis for it. The Frontier’s CNAP-related restrictions included strict rules on entry, and CNAP conditions apparently featured a mysterious list never disclosed to tenants but constantly referenced by the landlord to convince tenants to move down from the top three floors in order to vacate in exchange for market rate rooms. Businesses including a diner on the ground floor left the building, and in the block surrounding the hotel many essential and affordable shops and restaurants never came back, replaced with more expensive retail for new residents.

While tenant organizing has helped secure some measure of protection for longtime residents, criminalization has continued through data-driven policing. When asked about “crime” in the area during the time when these locations were marked Anchor Points, both General Dogon and Steve Diaz explained how these were not places where crime was happening. Instead, as Dogon put it, “Poverty was happening. Survival was happening here.” And as Steve explained, “This was not the bastion of crime. This was a bastion of differences – a bastion of lack of resources.” Data-driven policing automates enforcement of these differences, applying the longtime

¹⁷⁸ Jocelyn Stewart, “[City Warns Hotels to Halt the ‘28-Day Shuffle.’](#)” L.A. Times (January 25, 2004).

¹⁷⁹ Richard Winton and Cara Mia Dimassa, “[City Targets ‘the Shuffle’ on Skid Row.](#)” L.A. Times (March 23, 2006).

¹⁸⁰ News Brief, “[Residential Hotel Owner Fined for ‘28-Day Shuffle.’](#)” L.A. Downtown News (March 17, 2008).

Skid Row policing strategies of containment and banishment at the corner-by-corner and person-by-person level.

Steve also characterized the Anchor Points as “terror” zones, and Dogon narrated the displacing effect of this violence, including how brutal “broken windows” policing around these locations forced people to “scatter” from Skid Row. Other Anchor Points in Skid Row are also significant locations for the neighborhood’s containment, displacement, and criminalization. For example, the Anchor Points at South Main and 7th and at 6th and Los Angeles are two of the main corridors leading into Skid Row, both situated in the historic buffer zones. Another Anchor Point at 6th and San Julian is where the Midnight Mission – one of the area’s oldest shelters, founded in 1914 – is located, and the Anchor Point at San Pedro and East 5th Street is surrounded by the Brownstone Apartments SRO, the Downtown Women’s Center, the Gateway Apartments SRO, and the Skid Row’s People Market.

Our PRA requests also asked for LAPD procedures for designating Anchor Points. The documents we received revealed extreme inconsistencies. Only some points were even recorded in LAPD’s database, leaving out points that show up in other police documents.¹⁸¹ As for selection criteria, while some divisions defined Anchor Points as places that generate or attract violent crime, others looked only at thefts, and while some divisions relied solely on calls for service, others solely used crime data.¹⁸² The application of criteria also varied wildly. One location was deemed an Anchor Point based on having four calls for service and no crime reports or arrests over an entire year.¹⁸³ Meanwhile other divisions simply listed notes like “transient encampments, narco” as the basis for marking an Anchor Point.¹⁸⁴ Some divisions even modified the data to make selections,¹⁸⁵ and some used conflicting criteria within the same divisions.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, some locations were marked an Anchor Point for as little as two months while others were marked for over two years.¹⁸⁷

Overall, while the selection of these “data-driven” policing locations was by no means impartial, they also were not random. Rather, they help automate the city’s longstanding approaches to policing. Skid Row is the clearest example of that, with Anchor Points clustered around residential hotels and social service agencies. Our PRA requests also revealed a manual of proposed LASER zones for 2018, showing LASER zones running along the 5th, 6th, and 7th Street corridors, stretching from just west of San Julian Street to just east of San Pedro Street. This area is the heart of Skid Row, where social services are dispensed, where many SRO hotels still stand, and where shelters are located, as well as large areas where people have made their homes on the street.

¹⁸¹ LAPD, “[LASER AP 082018](#)”; LAPD, “[Figueroa and Florence.pdf](#)”; LAPD, “[77TH AP 2016 – 2017 Pt 1 Crimes.pdf](#)” (PRA # 18-3148).

¹⁸² LAPD, “[SST AP RobbAgg YTD122716.pdf](#)”; LAPD, “[METRO 052918.pdf](#)”; LAPD, “[FTHL AP B.pdf](#)” (PRA # 18-3148).

¹⁸³ LAPD, “[FTHL AP B.pdf](#)” (PRA # 18-3148).

¹⁸⁴ LAPD, “[anchor points 2018 red.pdf](#)” (PRA # 18-3148).

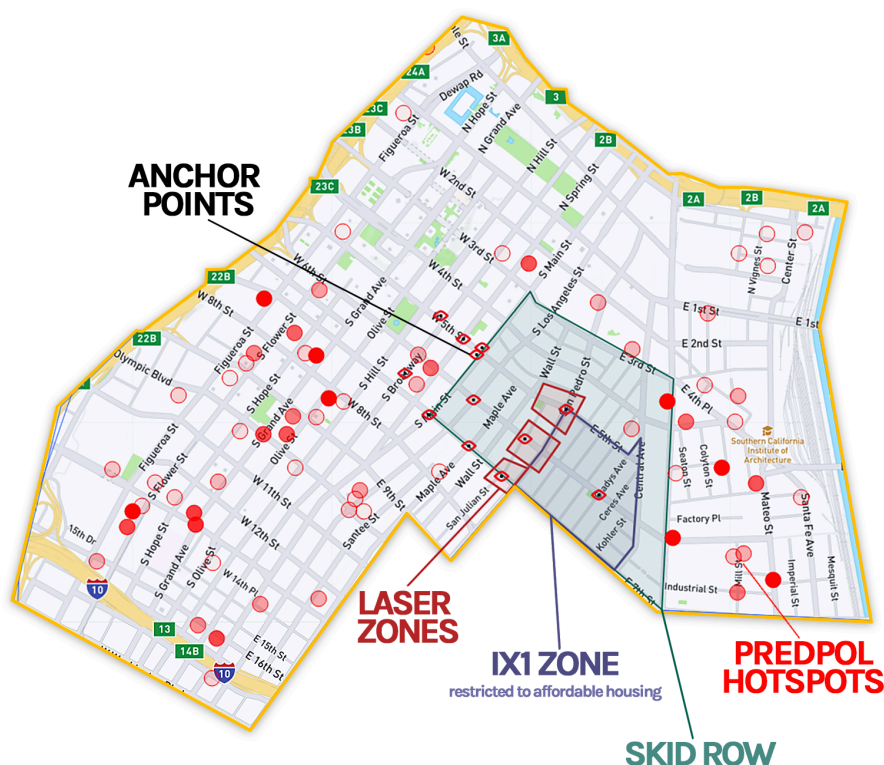
¹⁸⁵ LAPD, “[FTHL - AP - Crm Arst CFS YTD 113018 \(B\).pdf](#)”; LAPD, “[FTHL AP B.pdf](#)”.

¹⁸⁶ LAPD, “[SST AP RobbAgg YTD122716.pdf](#)”; LAPD, “[77TH AnchorPoints.pdf](#)”; LAPD, “[METRO 052918.pdf](#)” (PRA # 18-3148).

¹⁸⁷ LAPD, “[METRO MAP priority revised 05-31-17.pdf](#)”; LAPD, “[LASER Weekly Hot Spot Map June 05 -June 11.pdf](#)”; LAPD, “[METRO MAP 08-07-17.pdf](#)” (PRA # 18-3148).

Automated Banishment and Skid Row's Fight for Freedom

The map below shows Skid Row's "predictive policing" locations combined with the IX1 zone in the current 2040 rezoning plan. **When the PredPol hotspots, Anchor Points, and LASER zones are all combined, what emerges is a coordinated assault on Skid Row.** Together the Skid Row containment strategy and PredPol operated to quarantine residents in heavily policed borders as luxury development pushed in. Inside that containment zone, Anchor Points and LASER zones were how police worked to brutalize and banish people at locations targeted for gentrification. At the same time period when these "predictive policing" strategies were deployed in Skid Row, city planners began meeting to rezone the area in summer 2018.¹⁸⁸ This rezoning plan, which in its current form drastically shrinks Skid Row, proposes market-rate housing in the exact stretches of 5th, 6th, and 7th streets that LAPD earlier in 2018 had marked LASER zones and Anchor Points.



Even as the 2040 plan's rezoning details remain subject to contestation and negotiation, the data-driven policing apparatus has already been in motion to extract and eradicate the community. But as this latest displacement plan unfolds, Skid Row residents are organized to fight back, long familiar with moves like this from the city, developers, and police. The Skid Row Neighborhood Council Formation Committee (an entity continuing the fight to form local democratic representation in Skid Row despite the oppositional efforts from developers and local BIDs) sent over 600 pages of public comment to the planning department condemning the rezoning

¹⁸⁸ Gale Holland, "[L.A. plan to 'gentrify' skid row will oust poor residents, advocates say](#)," Los Angeles Times (June 15, 2018).

plan,¹⁸⁹ and the Skid Row Now and 2040 Coalition (comprised of the Los Angeles Community Action Network, Los Angeles Poverty Action Department, and the Inner City Law Center) announced the following policy demands:¹⁹⁰

- **No Net Loss** – All existing units must be protected with a No Net Loss policy to ensure baselines of affordable housing units remain downtown.
- **Inclusionary Zoning** – While the No Net Loss would preserve the current baseline of housing, more investment is needed to build housing for residents who currently lack homes, through an inclusionary zone requirement of 25% set aside to generate 7,000 new units of Affordable (Low Income) Housing.
- **New funding sources for affordable housing in downtown** – Developer fees, impact bonds, and an annual vacancy tax will be necessary to fund rental subsidies to keep impoverished residents of Skid Row housed. In particular, developer fees and a new 1% impact bond for rental subsidies.
- **Anti-Displacement Protections** – Tenants will need legal representation to fight evictions, combat discrimination by landlords against housing voucher recipients, and pursue anti-harassment penalties for landlords.

In September 2021, broad mobilization of Black, brown, poor, and unhoused residents of downtown has already helped secure some of those demands, with the City Planning Commission agreeing to many of the community's recommendations, including some of the ones mentioned above.¹⁹¹ Yet again though, the onslaught of criminalization grows in tandem with these wins. Earlier the same month, the City Council launched another broad attack on Skid Row. On top of the proposed rezoning of Skid Row, the city revamped the notorious Municipal Code 41.18, setting in motion another campaign to criminalize and banish unhoused people.

The displacement launched through revisions of 41.18 will depend on data-driven policing and surveillance too. This law expands criminalization of poverty, and some of its harshest aspects will be activated through zone by zone resolutions passed by the City Council.¹⁹² This framework gives each member of City Council 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, person by person and then use ticketing, sweeps, and destruction of personal property to attack unhoused residents.

Skid Row will be particularly vulnerable to these attacks, but the fight continues. This is not only a fight to remain in the community but a fight to be free.

¹⁸⁹ Skid Row Neighborhood Council, "[Our 'DTLA 2040' Response](#)" (March 25, 2020).

¹⁹⁰ L.A. Community Action Network, "[Skid Row 2040 – And Today](#)" (April 1, 2019).

¹⁹¹ Central City United, "[Big Wins for Community!](#)" (September 27, 2021).

¹⁹² Pete White, "[41.18 Amendment: A Wolf in Wolf's Clothing](#)," L.A. Community Action Network (July 13, 2021).

Part 5

Racial Terror and White Wealth in South Central

This section is a deep dive into data-driven policing's deployment of South Central. This report first looked at South Central in part 3, connecting the role of capitalist crisis and real estate development to policing in these communities. Here we look closer at the impacts and operational details of that policing.

South of downtown and Skid Row, the historically Black neighborhoods of South Central have long been targets of police abuse. This is another place that LAPD has always honed new forms of racial violence, surveillance, and brutality. Operation LASER first launched in 2011 at LAPD's Newton Division, headquartered on South Central Avenue, before spreading to four additional divisions including Southwest Division by December 2013.¹⁹³

LASER helped automate the forms of violent policing that have 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. Data-driven policing builds on this violent policing as well linking it to the displacement, banishment, and gentrification of the community's Black residents. Racialized policing of South Central cannot be separated from the gentrification the community is experiencing today, pushing out the traditionally working class Black and brown communities to make room for real estate speculation, corporate mega-projects, and predominantly white displacers.

This section examines data-driven policing's role in both banishing Black residents of South Central while empowering white capitalists, developers, and gentrifiers who are seeking to transform the area for profit. The first half of this section, titled **Operation LASER's Racial Terror**, shares what we've uncovered about the impact of LAPD's “predictive policing” programs in the Crenshaw Corridor. The second half, **Black Self-Determination, White Wealth, and Data-Driven Policing**, explores police-developer collaboration in those same areas.

¹⁹³ U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, “[GMS Report Smart Policing Initiative \(SPI\) 2009-DG-BX-0118 Reporting Period July 1st - September 30, 2013](#)” (2013).

Operation LASER's Racial Terror

"It is easier to sell a person to a cop first than it is to sell a location to a cop."

Dennis Kato, Commanding Officer of LAPD South Bureau

Operation LASER launched in 77th Division (which covers Crenshaw, Athens Park, Chesterfield Square, Gramercy Park, Hyde Park, South Park at 51st and Menlo, Vermont Knolls, Vermont Park, and View Heights) in March 2015 with six LASER zones, whose general role we introduced above in part 2 of this report.¹⁹⁴ In 2016, Anchor Points (also introduced in part 2 above) were added to the plan, with at least five locations in 77th Division designated Anchor Points.¹⁹⁵ Meanwhile, records from Southwest Division reveal the location of five LASER zones¹⁹⁶ and at least eleven Anchor Points,¹⁹⁷ starting in 2015. In addition, local high schools are also outlined on Southwest Division maps, suggesting a strategy of monitoring and criminalizing young people through these programs as well.

LASER's demographic targeting was hardly accidental. LASER's architects specifically studied the community's demographic and racial characteristics and then used crime data to assign criminality to those characteristics. An internal report dated June 2016 from Justice and Security Strategies (JSS), the consulting firm that built Operation LASER, matched the locations of incidents that LAPD recorded as violent or gun-related and then used census data to link race, age, and additional characteristics to these locations.¹⁹⁸ JSS thereby concluded that this 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.

LAPD's LASER zones and Anchor Points for the Crenshaw corridor are shown on the map below, along with the names of people who LAPD shot or killed inside those LASER zones. Also outlined is the location of LAPD's Community Safety Partnership (CSP, described in more detail in part 6 of this report) site at Harvard Park,

¹⁹⁴ For the location of all 6 LASER zones in 77th Division in 2015, see LAPD, [77th Street Division: Violent Crime Hot Spot 2012-2014 map](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

¹⁹⁵ For the location of Anchor Points in 77th Division in 2016, see LAPD, [77th Area Anchor Points heat map for 01/01/2016-12/31/2016](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

¹⁹⁶ For the location of LASER Zones in Southwest Division in 2018, see LAPD, [Southwest Division Crime Missions and Essential Info, 3/15/18](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

¹⁹⁷ For the location of Anchor Points in Southwest Division in 2016, see LAPD, [Southwest Anchor Points YTD 08/19/2016](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

¹⁹⁸ Alese Wooditch & Craig Uchida, "[Street-level Trends in Violent and Gun-Related Crime South Los Angeles, 2006 to 2015](#)," Justice and Security Strategies, Inc. (June 2016); Craig D. Uchida and Alese Wooditch, "[Perceptions of Safety and Police in Los Angeles: Results of a Survey of Los Angeles Residents](#)," Justice and Security Strategies and Hart Research Associates (August 2016).

established in 2017. The residential housing area facing takeover by corporate landlords discussed in section 3 of this report is indicated with a teal dashed line.



As we began to examine the detail of Operation LASER’s violence in the Crenshaw Corridor, we began uncovering stories of multiple people who LAPD shot or killed in the area’s LASER zones and Anchor Points:

- **Jamar Nicholson**, a 15-year-old Black youth, had stopped with friends in an alley on the way to school. He had been rapping and dancing with his friends, which they later explained was part of their routine before school. Police shot into the group and hit Jamar in the shoulder.¹⁹⁹
- **Redel Jones**, a 29-year-old Black disabled woman, was killed by police following a reported robbery at a store across from the Crenshaw Mall.²⁰⁰
- **Keith Bursey Jr.**, a 31-year-old Black man, was killed by police after GED

¹⁹⁹ LAPD Force Investigation Division, [Investigation F012-15 into Officer-Involved Shooting of an Unnamed Minor](#) (October 1, 2015); Luke Money, “[L.A. to pay nearly \\$1 million settlement against officer who shot Black teen in back](#),” L.A. Times (June 26, 2020).

²⁰⁰ LAPD Force Investigation Division, [Investigation F067-15 into Officer-Involved Shooting of Redel Jones](#) (March 28, 2016).

profiled the car and people he was with as being “gang” related.²⁰¹

- **Gilbert Henry**, a Black man, was shot by Metro Division officers who were “assigned to crime suppression in 77th Area” and “attempted to detain [him] for drinking in public.”²⁰²
- **Grechario Mack**, a 30-year-old Black man recently released from incarceration, was having a mental health crisis when shot to death by police inside the Crenshaw Mall.²⁰³

This violence demonstrates the deadly toll of the LASER program, its Anchor Points, and more broadly the larger rationalization of “location-based” policing through data-driven surveillance. As we examined the details of LASER, we began to recognize how these shootings and killings were some of the most tragic excesses of a broad and relentless campaign of data-driven racial terror.



Operation LASER was implemented differently in each LAPD division but the overall purpose was the same: declaring specific areas “high-crime” and saturating them with police to contain, surveil, criminalize, harass, extract, and banish people. Police deployed in these areas were also armed with Palantir-generated “mission” sheets offering vague profiles of potential “criminal” suspects, along with Palantir Mobile notifications that put so-called “Chronic Offenders” notices and other data at police fingertips.²⁰⁴ This technology galvanized officers, who felt primed by “data” and “intelligence” to violently target specific people, profiles, and zones.²⁰⁵ Internal LAPD announcements and information about also revealed a zeal for dehumanizing the people and neighborhoods being targeted. For example, the first slide of Mission Division’s internal PowerPoint presentation about LASER in March 2017 (shown left)

appears to show a laser burning through local neighborhoods.

²⁰¹ LAPD Force Investigation Division, [Investigation F035-16 into Officer-Involved Shooting of Keith Bursey](#) (February 4, 2017).

²⁰² LAPD Media Relations, [“Officer-Involved-Shooting in 77th Division Metro Officers”](#) (May 22, 2017).

²⁰³ Carlos Granda, [“Family of man who was shot and killed by police in 2018 protested at LAPD commission hearing,”](#) ABC 7 Eyewitness News (September 10, 2019).

²⁰⁴ LAPD first tested Palantir Mobile in 2012 and extended it across South Bureau in 2017.

²⁰⁵ Talking about Operation LASER in 2017 at the annual International Association of Chiefs of Police Conference, then Deputy Chief Dennis Kato stated, “Officer morale skyrocketed. Those motor cops now felt that instead of just writing tickets for traffic violations, they were actually doing something to combat crime by looking for these vehicles.” See Nancy Perry, [“IACP Quick Take: How data-driven policing reduces violent crime,”](#) Police1 (October 24, 2017). The next year, Kato appeared at an “Executive Session” on Policing, where he noted that “once LAPD analysis identified the presence of chronic offenders in these areas, officer buy-in was easily obtained” and stated “it is easier to sell a person to a cop first than it is to sell a location to a cop.” See Samantha Rhinerson, [“CNA Executive Session on Policing,”](#) CNA (April 2018), p. 4.

Along the Crenshaw Corridor, LAPD tactics in LASER zones and Anchor Points could be grouped into four categories: “Crime Suppression,” Surveillance, Infiltration and Community Policing, and Person-Based Policing:

Crime Suppression - The “crime suppression” tactics used by LAPD during Operation LASER included increased “high-visibility” patrols and footbeats and even LAPD decoy cars, sometimes parked at local businesses, to boost the impression of police presence. Multiple units were assigned to patrol LASER zones and Anchor Points with the overarching purpose of “crime suppression.” The time spent by cops in each area was referred to as “dosage,” and units logged their citations, arrests, field interviews, traffic warnings, pedestrian and traffic stops, guns taken, and hours spent in the area as weekly “results.” The broader violence of LAPD’s data-driven “crime suppression” missions is examined in closer detail later in this section.

Surveillance - Over the years LAPD has tested and expanded its surveillance infrastructure in South Central, including with the help of business partners like Target Corporation, which purchased Palantir for LAPD in 2007,²⁰⁶ funded LAPD’s regional crime centers in 2008,²⁰⁷ and donated police technology and cameras at Baldwin Hills and the Crenshaw District in 2009.²⁰⁸ In 2010, 300 patrol cars in South Bureau were fitted with in-car video at the cost of \$5.5M.²⁰⁹ License plate readers were also used to track people’s locations through the Palantir system, with LAPD conducting more than 60,000 searches for 10,000 cases in 2016.²¹⁰ That year, LAPD Commander Dennis Kato (who oversaw the 77th, Southeast, Southwest, and Harbor Divisions)²¹¹ explained how LAPD used this system for dragnet searches, for example setting it up around a home where police expected a “big gang party” to identify everyone there.²¹² LAPD also deployed “Business Cars” to meet with business owners and suggest “harden the target” strategies, including recommendations to owners regarding adding lights and CCTVs, and giving LAPD access to cameras.²¹³

Infiltration and Community Policing - Community policing strategies under Operation LASER included the assignment of two Senior Lead Officers (SLO)²¹⁴ for each Anchor Point, tasked with conducting activities like Coffee With A Cop, walking

²⁰⁶ Ali Winston & Darwin BondGraham, “[Private Donors Supply Spy Gear to Cops](#),” ProPublica (October 13, 2014).

²⁰⁷ LAPD Media Relations, “[Target and LAPD Partner to Launch New Crime Fighting Capabilities](#)” (July 6, 2008).

²⁰⁸ LAPD Media Relations, “[Baldwin Village-Crenshaw Crime Reduction Efforts](#),” (January 9, 2009).

²⁰⁹ Frank Stoltze, “[LAPD installing cameras in patrol cars - racial profiling a target](#),” 89.3 KPCC (July 14, 2008).

²¹⁰ [LAPD Palantir Usage Metrics](#), Palantir Technologies Inc. (2017).

²¹¹ South Bureau CSOC managed surveillance and policing for 77th, Southeast, Southwest, and Harbor Divisions.

²¹² Press Play with Madeleine Brand, “[Poverty rates are down, median income is up](#),” (September 13, 2016), at timestamp 14:10.

²¹³ LAPD, [77th Street Anchor Point Write Ups for 01/01/2015-09/30/2016 \(CPRA 18-3148\)](#).

²¹⁴ SLOs are LAPD officers in charge of specific basic car units (areas) within a geographical division. LAPD says these senior lead officers “provide a link that helps unite LAPD with the communities it serves.” LAPD, “[Quality of Life Issues](#)” (last accessed October 6, 2021).

“footbeats” and handing out flyers, attending neighborhood council meetings and parent meetings at high schools, attending community resource fairs, and meeting with business owners.²¹⁵ LAPD’s Community Volunteer Program attempted to recruit residents to its “crime prevention” team, and LAPD’s Community Relationship Division (CRD) was established in 2016 to “place officers in key neighborhoods where distrust of police is highest.”²¹⁶

Person-Based Policing - In addition to the ongoing surveillance, monitoring, and harassment of “chronic offenders” within Operation LASER’s person-based policing, Metro Division officers also conducted “targeted parole compliance checks and high visibility policing.”²¹⁷ People in and around LASER zones were further targeted by LAPD’s Parole Compliance Units (PCU) that were directed to “focus on problem areas” including LASER zones,²¹⁸ and VICE Units, deployed in part to monitor “underground parties, street robberies, aggravated assaults.”²¹⁹ Entire communities were also targeted through undercover surveillance and gang raids, such as a raid and the arrest of 15 people including community elders in Baldwin Village in 2017.²²⁰

The Racist Brutality of LAPD’s Data-Driven “Missions”

LAPD’s data-driven “missions” within LASER zones targeted specific locations for relentless police stops, questioning, brutality, and arrests. These missions were plotted through Palantir’s “Mission Control” interface from the Community Safety Operation Center (CSOC) spy garrisons we introduced in part 2. Legions of police were dispatched to these locations and given profiles of who to stop (sometimes as vague as a “Black male” robbery suspect, as noted below), tasked with “transient suppression” or “gang suppression,” or just directed to the area to harass whoever they wanted. At the same time these missions were data driven, they also generated mass data on the community, gathering people’s personal information, mapping networks and relationships, and tracking locations and movements. Back at the CSOC, the missions were evaluated based on how many stops, arrests, and FI cards officers generated.

LAPD units terrorized the communities during these data-driven “missions.” One mission sheet from Metro Division for the Crenshaw Mall area in 2017 resulted in 110 stops over 4 days.²²¹ Another (shown below) produced 511 stops over 4 weeks, in addition to 34 FI cards and 38 arrests.²²² These tactics could even span months: a

²¹⁵ For a more detailed description of SLO activity in 77th Division, see: LAPD, [Senior Lead Officers Crime Activity Log, 1/22/2016 - 02/18/2017](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

²¹⁶ LAPD Media Relations, [“LAPD Chief Charlie Beck Honored as One of the Best in American Policing”](#) (October 17, 2016).

²¹⁷ LAPD, [Strategic Planning Unit General Manager Review 2015/2016](#), p. 5.

²¹⁸ LAPD and Justice and Security Strategies, [“Operation LASER: Reducing Gun-Related Crime in Los Angeles,”](#) Smart Policing Initiative” (2012).

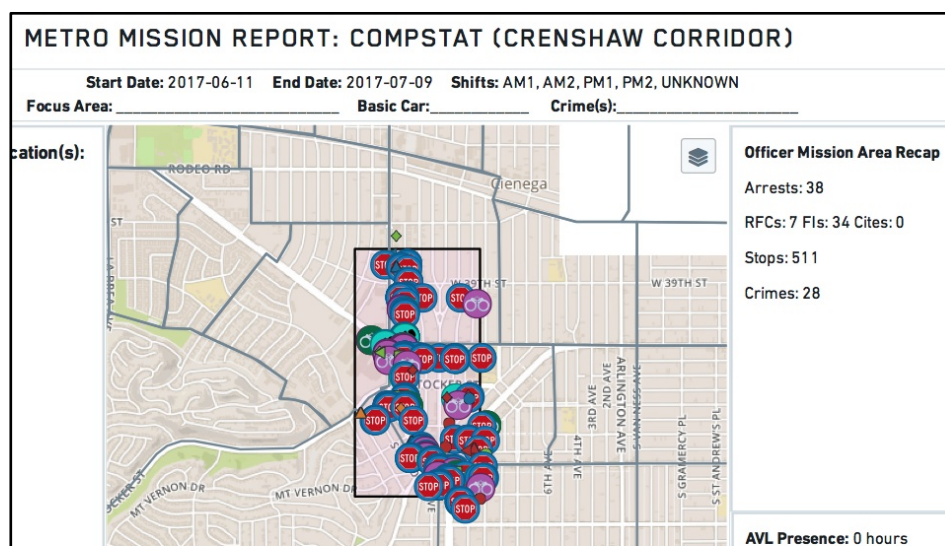
²¹⁹ LAPD, [Patrol Mission Report: Vice Mission Map, 6/16/2017 – 6/17/2017](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

²²⁰ Cindy Chang, [“Cash, weapons and armor seized in pre-dawn raid targeting drug trafficking ring,”](#) Los Angeles Times (March 2, 2017).

²²¹ LAPD, [Metro Mission Report: Watch - 3 Mission, 6/15/2017 - 6/19/2017](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

²²² LAPD, [Southwest Mission Sheet: Compstat \(Crenshaw Corridor\), 6/11/2017 - 7/9/2017](#) (CPRA 18-3148)

Southwest Division report for a 14-month mission to suppress “street robberies” in the Crenshaw Corridor from June 2017 to August 2018, listed 6299 stops and 908 Field Interviews, all supposedly conducted on “suspects involved in street robberies” between Coliseum Street and 48th Street, a 1.3 mile stretch.²²³ With the perpetual surveillance and patrols, more data was harvested on people who lived or worked in the area, including license plate, social media accounts, email address, social security number, identifying marks, and more, all for LAPD databases. All this data increased the future harm these individuals face from police.



LAPD “use of force” reports from 77th and Southwest Divisions indicate how everyday conduct by community members in their neighborhoods, such as talking with a friend on the sidewalk in the evening²²⁴ or sitting in one’s car waiting for the radiator to cool down²²⁵ have been viewed as “suspicious” by police and used to subject people to chokeholds, beatings, and deadly force. Police contact on the basis of routine suspicion could also lead to rape and sexual assault.²²⁶

The violence only escalates for people who police detain. Between 2007 and 2020 at least eight people have died while in LAPD custody at LAPD’s 77th Division. Logs from the 77th Street Regional Jail from 2012 to 2016 further list 23 suicide attempts, the second highest after Metro Detention Center.²²⁷ Jailing also extracts a

²²³ LAPD, [Southwest Patrol Mission Report: Z Car Mission, June 20, 2017](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

²²⁴ In 2018, Metro officers driving by two men having a conversation on the sidewalk in front of their homes escalated to the point where one man, Dayvon George, was tased on the sidewalk under a helicopter spotlight then arrested for “assault with a deadly weapon” due to a gun had quickly tossed into a yard once police pulled over. The officers had been “conducting crime suppression” in a LASER Zone. See: LAPD Media Relations, [“Metropolitan Officer-Involved-Shooting in 77th Division”](#) (December 6, 2018).

²²⁵ Los Angeles Police Commission, [Abridged Summary of Categorical Use of Force Incident and Findings by the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners: Carotid Restraint Control Hold – 033-18](#) (2018).

²²⁶ Matt Hamilton, [“Two LAPD officers plead no contest to sexually assaulting women while on duty, receive 25- year prison terms,”](#) L.A. Times (February 26, 2018).

²²⁷ Los Angeles Police Commission, Office of the Inspector General, [Review of the Los Angeles Police Department Jail and Holding Tank Structures and Procedures](#) (June 15, 2018).

massive financial toll, including through bail set by police (prior to arraignment in court) or by a judge based on police allegations: “Bail multiplies the ways in which people are vulnerable to the whims, lies, and racism of police,” since upon making an arrest, “police hand the baton to prosecutors and judges who use bail to coerce people to accept plea deals that will brand them criminals.”²²⁸ From 2012 to 2016, South Central was home to four of the top five L.A. zip codes that paid the most amount of money in both non-refundable bail and total bail.²²⁹

The racial disparities in LAPD’s data-driven terror 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.²³⁰ And while Black people are far more likely to be stopped, stops of white people were more likely to find contraband. LAPD also uses 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. These practices have since been exposed as being fueled by a “de facto quota system” that involved the falsification of information about people stopped in order to meet expected goals regarding stops, arrests, and citations.²³¹ From 2020 to 2021, ten Metro officers have been investigated by the District Attorney for falsifying information on FI cards, and six have been charged with crimes. Another 19 were suspected of observing the falsifications and saying nothing, though none of these officers have been charged with misconduct.

Data-driven policing shapes this racial terror not only through the targeting of specific locations but also the profiles that police data analysts group as crime “trends” and hand to patrol officers. LAPD records from Southwest Division show police looking for crime “clusters” on the map, then noting “trends” in this data that are as vague as “Male Black 15-30yoa,” “male Black suspects 20-32yoa,” “female Black suspects 20-30yoa,” “male Hispanic Suspects 20-26yoa.”²³² Sometimes the list of “trends” for a cluster of “suspects” was simply Black males:

Cluster 3 (MLK Corridor): (7) robberies.

Suspects: (2) male Black Suspects and (1) male Hispanic 20yoa.

By providing only vague descriptions, these mission sheets ensured any Black person could be stopped for “meeting the description.” In addition, Black youth were further subject to policing in and around schools, a number of which are also located in the area of Crenshaw Corridor. From 2011 to 2013, youth attending high schools and middle schools along the Crenshaw Corridor, including Audubon Middle School and Crenshaw Senior High, experienced some of the highest rates of ticketing and

²²⁸ FTP Fund, [List of Commitments](#) (June 2020).

²²⁹ Isaac Bryan, Terry Allen, Kelly Lytle Hernández, & Margaret Dooley-Sammuli, “[The Price for Freedom: Bail in the City of L.A.](#),” The Million Dollar Hoods Project (December 4, 2017).

²³⁰ Black Lives Matter LA, Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, Los Angeles Community Action Network, & White People 4 Black Lives, “[LAPD Confirms Continued Criminalization, Harassment of the Black Community](#)” (November 2020).

²³¹ Kevin Rector & Ben Poston, “[Officer alleges LAPD had quotas, silenced whistleblowers in gang-labeling scandal](#),” Los Angeles Times (August 27, 2020).

²³² LAPD, [MASTER Crime Reports, June 11, 2017 - July 7, 2017](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

arrests of all students in schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District.²³³ Unhoused people were also targeted in these missions. A 2016-2017 activity report from 77th Division includes entries like “Disposed of encampments and cleared alley,” “Addressed transient encampment to the rear of Home Depot,” and “Addressed homeless encampment complaint issue.”²³⁴ In Southwest Division, Anchor Points along Crenshaw Blvd were reported as “having a problem with transients loitering” and “being a problem location for several years” for “drinking in public, illegal vending, loitering, and panhandling.”²³⁵ Though LAPD’s documents regarding strategies at these locations are heavily redacted, what was published acknowledges that LAPD units will “continue to put pressure on the location.”

Black Self-Determination, White Wealth, and Data-Driven Policing

With that backdrop of the function and toll of data-driven policing of South Central LA, we now turn to the role of real estate development. As noted in part 3 of this report, the financial crisis and Great Recession of 2008 led to a foreclosure crisis in South Central. Corporate landlords and wealthy investors from outside LA’s historically Black and brown neighborhoods exploited this capitalist crisis to expand their hold on the community.

That encroachment and real estate speculation grew with the Opportunity Zone Program created in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, which created major tax breaks for banks investing in historically underdeveloped communities. Yet when Nipsey Hussle and other Black residents tried to orient those same investment opportunities to prevent displacement, secure Black wealth, and protect the community, they were targeted and harassed by police.

Today that comparison between assertions of Black self-determination and white investors looking to displace the community is especially resonant in the fight for Black-led community ownership of the Crenshaw Mall. A longtime gathering place and community hub for South Central’s Black residents, the mall has also long been a target of data-driving policing. LAPD built a substation inside the mall after the 1992 uprising,²³⁶ and the entire mall was marked as a LASER zone in 2015. Police then killed two men in the mall during Operation LASER: Samuel Lee Jones, killed by LAPD on June 25, 2014²³⁷ after a mall security guard accused him of shoplifting, and Grechario Mack, killed by LAPD on April 10, 2018 while having a mental health

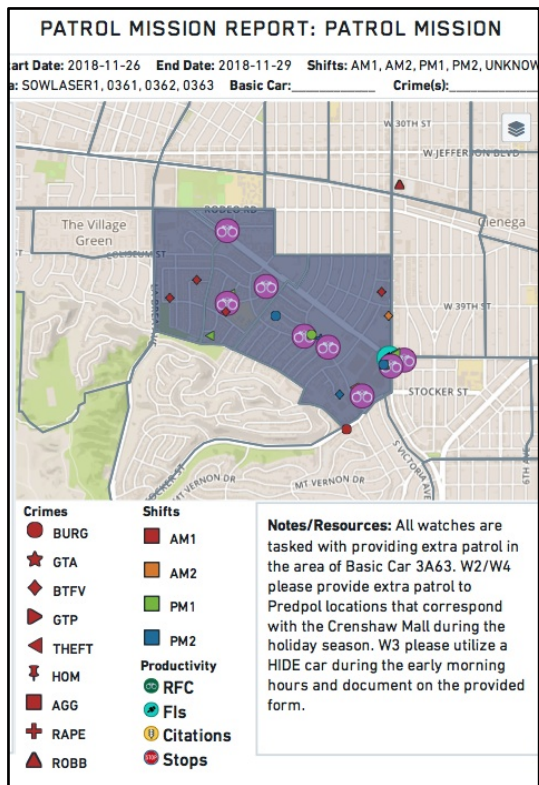
²³³ Community Rights Campaign of the Labor/Community Strategy Center, [Black, Brown, and Over-Policed in L.A. Schools: Structural Proposals to End the School-to-Prison Pipeline in the Los Angeles Unified School District and to Build a National Movement to Stop the Mass Incarceration of Black and Latino Communities](#) (October 2013).

²³⁴ LAPD, [Senior Lead Officer Crime Activity Log 1/22/16-2/18/17](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

²³⁵ LAPD, [Badge Note on Southwest Anchor Point Analysis, September 21, 2017](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

²³⁶ See entry on Councilwoman Ruth Galanter in [“The Women of the Los Angeles City Council: Part Three,”](#) Los Angeles Public Library Blog (March 22, 2021).

²³⁷ LAPD Media Relations, [“Officer-Involved Shooting in Southwest Area”](#) (June 26, 2014).



crisis.²³⁸ In the days that followed, Community Relationship Division (CRD) officers “provided footbeat support and community outreach.”²³⁹ An LAPD mission sheet (pictured to the left) then shows that, just a few months later in late November 2018, a time when people typically would be shopping for the holidays, LAPD deployed a “HIDE car” (a parked car containing valuables within plain view, so police could entrap and arrest people who try to break into it). As seen in the mission sheet generated from Palantir to the left, police even noted that this was “the holiday season.”²⁴⁰

Later in this section we examine LAPD’s relationship to CIM Group, a mega-investor that tried to purchase the Crenshaw Mall in 2020, along with other deep-pocketed investors seeking to extract the community’s wealth. But first we begin by looking at how data-driven policing programs like Operation LASER targeted residents who were working toward Black self-determination and land ownership.

LAPD’s Targeting of Black Self-Determination

“The City Attorney’s office was trying to end us. Literally. They wanted to expel The Marathon Store from Slauson Plaza.”

David Gross

As outside investors looked to move in flanked by police, community members continued to maintain a fierce culture of resistance. Residents like artist and entrepreneur Nipsey Hussle, who grew up in the Crenshaw District expressed a vision for the area in a way that was inclusive of existing communities and considerate of what neighbors needed.²⁴¹ In 2017, Nipsey purchased the Marathon Clothing Store at 3420 West Slauson Plaza. About the store’s location, Nipsey explained: “It was an important intersection, there was a lot of commerce going on.

²³⁸ Los Angeles Police Commission, Office of the Inspector General, [Investigation into Officer-Involved Shooting of Grechario Mack on April 10, 2018](#) (February 28, 2019).

²³⁹ LAPD Chief of Police Charlie Beck, [Intradepartmental Correspondence Update on the Implementation of the National Best Practices](#) (May 16, 2018), p. 4.

²⁴⁰ For more about the LAPD’s HIDE or bait car, see: LAPD Media Relations, [Lock It, Hide It, Keep It](#) (August 3, 2010).

²⁴¹ Rodney Carmichael, [“Nipsey Hussle Tells The Epic Stories Behind ‘Victory Lap,’ Track By Track,”](#) NPR (February 16, 2018).

It made sense. We wanted to have our own space, and tell our own story.”²⁴² Key to that self-determination was owning the land: “This was always one of our dreams - in this parking lot we were always outside hustling in the actual lot, and we realized it made sense to be owners, or for us to have businesses in this parking lot.”²⁴³

Two years later, Nipsey partnered with longtime collaborator David Gross to purchase the entire strip mall where Marathon was located, with plans to build a six-story mixed-use plaza that included low-income residential units.²⁴⁴ The project was part of a plan to accumulate more properties and link them to a newly created investment fund called Our Opportunity that would take advantage of the new Opportunity Zone program enacted in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. This law created generous tax breaks for profits generated in certain economically distressed neighborhoods. By 2019, the Treasury Department had designated 8,700 zones nationwide as Opportunity Zones.

While the Trump administration and others promoted Opportunity Zones as a vehicle for capital investments in Black neighborhoods, Nipsey recognized that the program would enable displacement and extraction by outside investors.²⁴⁵ The idea behind the Our Opportunity fund was to allow smaller local investors to purchase homes in the community while receiving a tax break that otherwise would likely have gone to wealthy outside opportunists. Yet while Nipsey planned out and invested in ways to benefit the Crenshaw community he grew up in, LAPD continued its surveillance of residents. This is how Nipsey explained it in a 2013 interview:

We got police in our area called gang police that, like, they'd come through and get to know you, you know what I'm saying? 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.²⁴⁶

This aligns with what is known about how people were tracked using Field Interviews during LASER: the program's architect Craig Uchida has explained that he sought to increase police patrols in LASER zones, with police stopping people and collecting their data using FI cards because, even if the information “didn't lead to anything, it was data that went into the system, and that's what I wanted.”²⁴⁷

²⁴² Id.

²⁴³ Revolt TV, “[Nipsey Hussle x Karen Civil | Revolt Unlocked](#),” Destination Crenshaw (August 21, 2016).

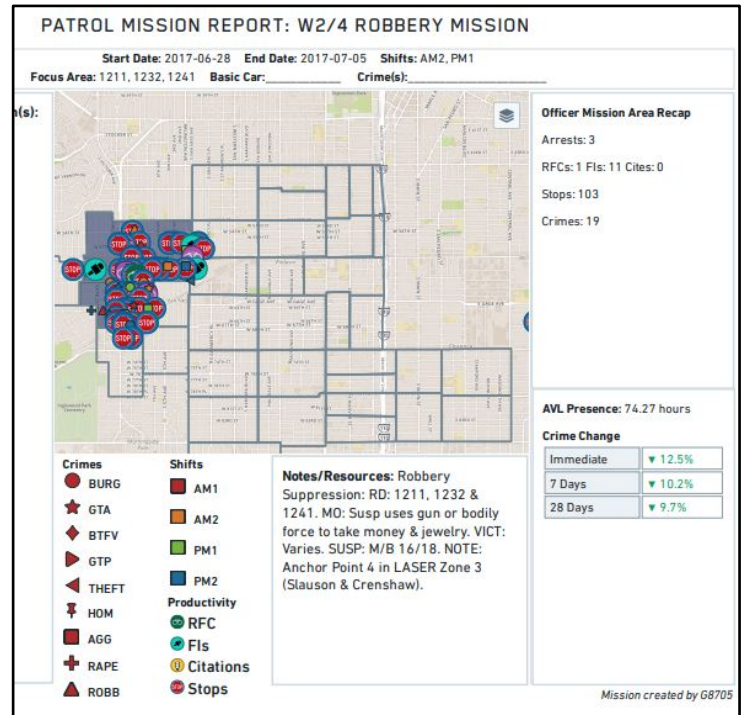
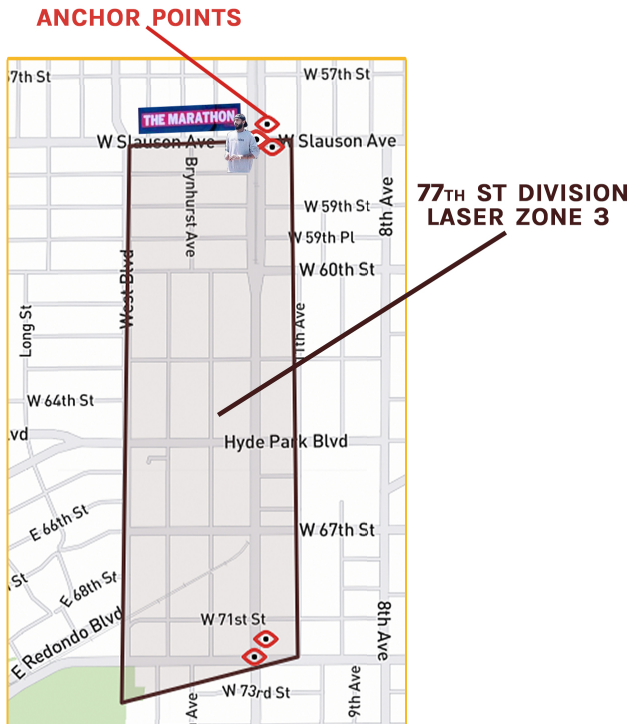
²⁴⁴ Zack O'Malley Greenburg, “[Inside Nipsey Hussle's Blueprint To Become A Real Estate Mogul](#),” Forbes (February 20, 2019).

²⁴⁵ Star Parker, “[Nipsey Hussle and the Opportunity Zone Dream](#),” Creators.com (May 15, 2019).

²⁴⁶ Louder Than a Riot, “[Captured by the Game: Nipsey Hussle](#),” NPR (Dec. 12, 2020).

²⁴⁷ Mark Harris, “[How Peter Thiel's Secretive Data Company Pushed Into Policing](#),” Wired (August 9, 2017).

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,”²⁴⁸ and City Attorney Mike Feuer was trying to remove the store from Slauson Plaza. David Gross reported that the City Attorney had harassed Nipsey and his businesses for years: “When I partnered with them to buy the lot, I got to experience the way these systems work together first hand. The City Attorney hated (with ALL their hearts) that their maniacal zeal to expel the Marathon Store from Slauson Plaza actually resulted in us buying it and planning to develop it.”



Unknown to the community then was that the intersection where Marathon was located had been marked by LAPD as an Operation LASER Anchor Point since at least 2016²⁴⁹ and was part of a larger LASER Zone since 2015.²⁵⁰ Palantir mission sheets for the intersection show systemic police stops, searches, and profiling. For example, a mission sheet for the intersection dated June 28, 2017 – less than two weeks after the grand opening of Nipsey’s Marathon Store – appears to indicate that a single patrol car made 103 stops and 3 arrests in a 7-day timespan.²⁵¹ The apparent robbery “suspect” was only indicated to be a Black male between 16 and 18 years old – 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.”²⁵²

²⁴⁸ Brittany Martin, “Nipsey Hussle Was Under Investigation By the LAPD When He Was Shot,” Los Angeles Magazine (July 15, 2019).

²⁴⁹ LAPD, [77th Division Anchor Points, 1/1/2015–9/30/2016](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

²⁵⁰ LAPD, [77th Division 2015: LASER Map with Stats](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

²⁵¹ LAPD, [77th Division Mission Sheet, July 28th, 2017](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

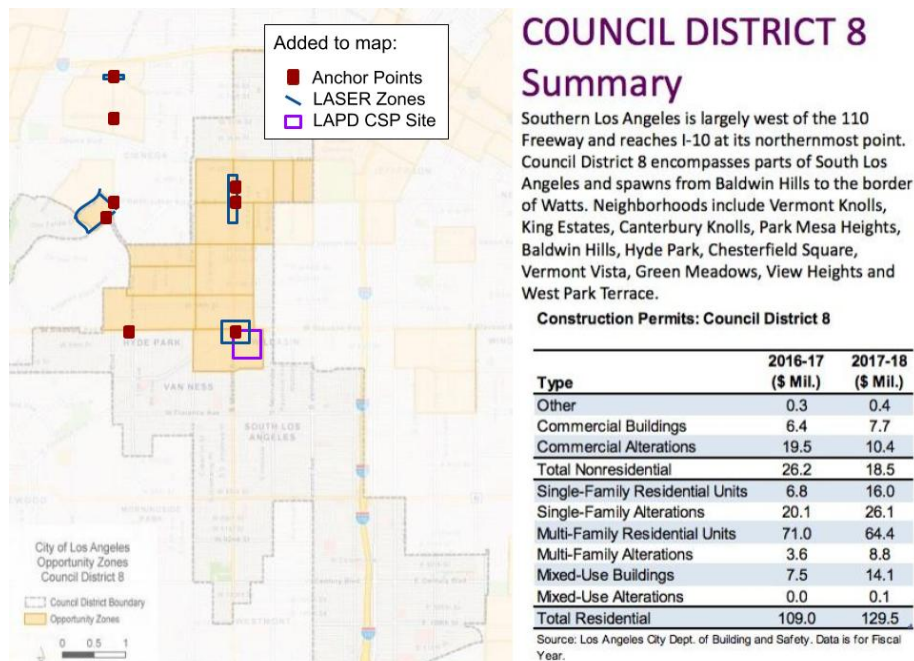
²⁵² LAPD, [77th Division Mission Sheet, July 21st, 2017](#) (CPRA 18-3148).

Police stops at this intersection during this time period even ended in death. On June 10, 2016, GED Officer Kumlander stopped a car in the area of Slauson and Crenshaw on the basis that – according to the official account – a person in the car was wearing a black White Sox baseball cap.²⁵³ During the stop, Kumlander killed 31-year old Keith Bursey Jr., shooting him twice in the back. This was one of six LAPD killings of Black and Latino men in or around LASER zones during a short six month period in 2016. Bursey was a beloved brother, son, and father. He is remembered for his athletic ability, his love of dance, and his disarming humor.²⁵⁴

Opportunity Zones and White Wealth

While Black residents of South Central endured constant police terror and surveillance, along with targeting of their businesses and neighborhoods the City Attorney, wealthy outside developers eyed the same area for exploitation. As noted in part 3 above, the 2008 housing and foreclosure crisis enabled large corporate investors to sweep up properties previously owned by South Central residents. More recently, developers, banks, and speculators have been further drawn in by the Opportunity Zones introduced in 2017. Many of these investors have close connections to LAPD, as do their investment patterns.

The city’s Opportunity Zones are mapped out in a prospectus generated by the Mayor’s Office to attract investors.²⁵⁵ Here the map of those zones for Council District 8 has been modified to include the location of Anchor Points, LASER zones, and a Community Safety Partnerships site:



²⁵³ [Memorandum on Officer Involved Shooting of Keith Bursey](#), Justice System Integrity Division of the L.A. County District Attorney’s Office (February 22, 2018).

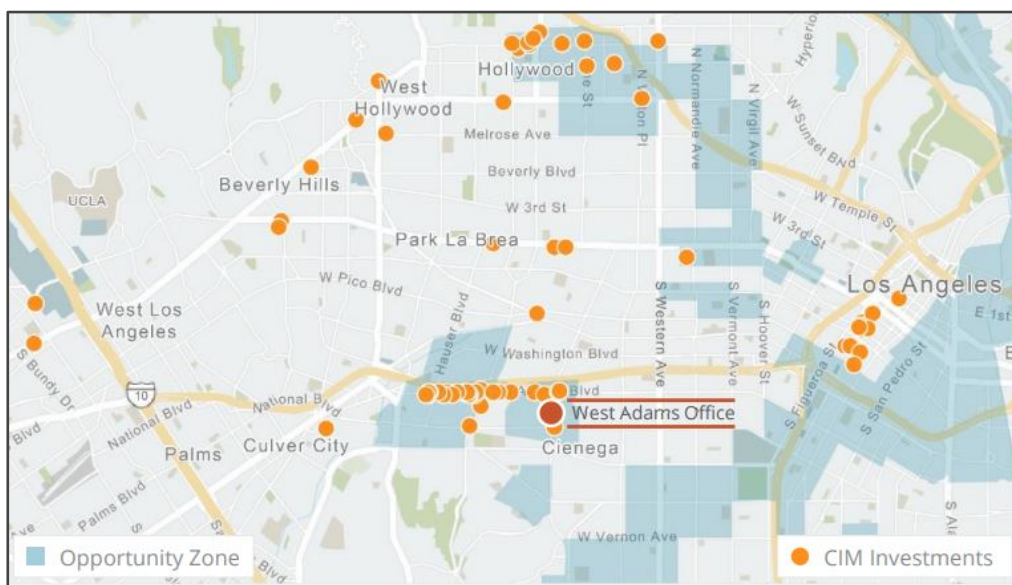
²⁵⁴ Black Lives Matter - Los Angeles, “[Keith Bursey Jr.](#)” Facebook (October 16, 2020).

²⁵⁵ City of Los Angeles, [Opportunity Zone Prospectus](#) (June 2019).

While the Opportunity Zones bill was not signed into law until December 2017,²⁵⁶ there is a clear overlap between historically under-funded neighborhoods (the neighborhoods the city was trying to entice investors towards), and neighborhoods that have been relentlessly bombarded, harassed, and occupied by police. Competing against Nipsey Hussle and other local Black investors for ownership of land and business along Crenshaw Corridor are several mega-developers and real estate speculators. Two of these actors are profiled below, with emphasis on their relationship to LAPD.

CIM Group

CIM Group is a global commercial real estate firm based in L.A. In January 2019 the firm capitalized on the Opportunity Zones law by creating the CIM Opportunity Zone Fund with a goal of \$5 billion.²⁵⁷ According to a May 2020 presentation titled “Opportunity Zone Fund” and marked “Confidential Information” and “Trade Secret” (excerpt below), the firm owns dozens of properties in Opportunity Zones along West Adams Boulevard, along Crenshaw Boulevard (between Obama Blvd and West Adams Blvd), along South La Brea, and in Hollywood.²⁵⁸



CIM Group’s co-founder Shaul Kuba came up in section 3 above, in our exploration of how the City Attorney uses threats of CNAP cases to coerce business owners out of neighborhoods in collaboration with corporate investors. Emails obtained by journalist Adrian Riskin, who had exposed that West Adams episode, also exposed the relationship between Kuba and LAPD’s Peter Zarcone.²⁵⁹ The emails are from January 2015, and Monica Yamada, a CIM Group principal invites Zarcone (at the

²⁵⁶ Gbenga Ajilore, “[How a Tax Break Meant for Low-Income Communities Became a Mini Tax Haven for the Rich](#),” Talk Poverty (December 13, 2018).

²⁵⁷ Alexander Ferrer & Joe Donlin, [Displacement Zones: How Opportunity Zones Turn Communities into Tax Shelters for the Rich](#), Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (2019).

²⁵⁸ [Opportunity Zone Fund](#), CIM Group (May 2020).

²⁵⁹ [Email from Monica Yamada](#) (August 18, 2016), obtained via California PRA.

time a Hollywood Station commanding officer and today a Deputy Chief), to lunch “at my new office.” After the two have lunch, Yamada emails, “I know Shaul was happy to meet with all of you.” LAPD’s Zarcone replies that “it was great meeting Shaul, and I’m glad to learn of your plans around Sycamore and Romaine.”

In addition to working for CIM Group, Yamada also served as president of the Hollywood Property Owners’ Alliance (HPOA), which manages two BIDs. Since November 2014, when Yamada became HPOA president, the group has paid for a network of wireless surveillance cameras monitored from LAPD’s Hollywood Station.²⁶⁰ HPOA also paid CIM Group for use of mapping software to “track and monitor security and graffiti incidents.”²⁶¹ Meanwhile CIM charged LAPD yearly rent of \$1 from 2008 to 2018 to host a substation and “logistical base” at 6801 Hollywood Blvd, a shopping center owned by CIM Group.²⁶² In other words CIM literally funded real estate for a local LAPD garrison.

The two BIDs managed by HPOA aggressively targeted unhoused people. The BIDs sometimes arrested unhoused people at rates higher than LAPD and in 2013 were “responsible for more than 1% of all arrests made in the entire City of Los Angeles that year even while working only 0.13% of the hours that the LAPD did.”²⁶³ In 2016 the BIDs used Municipal Code 41.18d to arrest people sitting or lying on the sidewalk, handcuffing them and taking them to the LAPD substation paid for by CIM Group.²⁶⁴ CIM has since expanded its ownership of properties in Hollywood with new buildings at 926 and 953 Sycamore Avenue, which are both near the same intersection where Monica Yamada, the HPOA president and CIM Principal met with LAPD’s Zarcone to share her “plan.”²⁶⁵

In addition to Hollywood, CIM Group also has multiple developments along Crenshaw Boulevard, including at the Jefferson and West Adams intersections. Both those intersections were Anchor Points within LASER Zone 5 of Southwest Division.²⁶⁶ Documents from LAPD are heavily redacted, but they indicate that unhoused folks

²⁶⁰ Kerry Morrison, [Hollywood Entertainment District Fourth Quarter Report to the City, October 1, 2014 through December 1, 2014](#), Hollywood Property Owners Alliance (January 30, 2015); Mitch O’Farrell, [Motion to accept HPOA donation of a digital surveillance camera](#), Los Angeles City Council (March 18, 2016).

²⁶¹ [2016 Planning Report for Hollywood Entertainment District Business Improvement District](#), Hollywood Property Owners Alliance (November 23, 2015).

²⁶² Interim General Manager & City Purchasing Agent Tony M. Royster, [Request for Approval of a Lease Agreement for a Los Angeles Police Department Substation at 6801 Hollywood Boulevard](#), City of Los Angeles, Department of General Services (April 24, 2008); [2018 Planning Report for Hollywood Entertainment District Business Improvement District](#), Hollywood Property Owners Alliance (November 2017).

²⁶³ Adrian Riskin, [“In 2013 the Andrews International BID...”](#), MichaelKohlhaas.org (March 30, 2016).

²⁶⁴ Adrian Riskin, [“Somebody’s Lying to Somebody About Something.”](#), MichaelKohlhaas.org (September 2, 2016).

²⁶⁵ [“CIM Group Signs Lease with SiriusXM at New Office Building Located in Hollywood’s Media District,”](#) BusinessWire (May 7, 2018); [“CIM Group is building a new office project on Sycamore Avenue,”](#) The Real Deal (July 3, 2018).

²⁶⁶ LAPD, [Southwest Anchor Point Part-1 Crime YTD 09/30/2016 \(CPRA # 18-3148\)](#).

were frequently targeted as part of the surveillance and policing of these areas.²⁶⁷ In April 2020, CIM Group attempted to expand further south along Crenshaw Boulevard, announcing its intention to purchase the Crenshaw Mall. The plan was to convert some former department stores into offices, in anticipation of the migration of office tenants from Culver City.²⁶⁸

CIM withdrew its offer to buy the mall just two months later, following the opposition and quick action of local residents protesting CIM's plans, including through the submission of more than 10,000 petitions gathered by the community group Downtown Crenshaw Rising (DCR).²⁶⁹ After CIM withdrew, DCR engaged in a fundraising campaign to buy the mall, submitting a bid in August 2020, followed by a larger bid in March 2021 after the mall owner demanded a higher offer. As noted by DCR on March 4, 2021: "We are competing against major outside developers who specialize in gentrification mega-projects."²⁷⁰ Despite a detailed plan, experienced development team, the support of over 300 community groups, and the highest bid, DCR's offer was passed over in favor of Harridge Development Group, an LA-based developer headed by CEO David Schwartzman.²⁷¹

Harridge Development also owns an 18-acre lot in Inglewood near SoFi Stadium, where they plan to build a gated community of 228 condos for "highly educated tech workers" from "Google, Facebook, Snapchat, and Uber among the many tech-oriented companies nearby."²⁷² In 2017, Schwartzman described how expansion of the Crenshaw Metro line fit with his plans for profit in the area: "Grace Park is in a central location served by mass transit near what will be the world's most expensive stadium complex. We looked at it as the perfect storm. A lot is changing in Inglewood, and we're in on the ground floor."²⁷³

Goldman Sachs

Within days of the Opportunity Zone announcement by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who began his career at Goldman Sachs, the investment firm moved fast to pursue these tax breaks. In August 2018, Bloomberg reported that Goldman Sachs had quickly determined that "more than \$5 billion" of "the roughly \$7 billion the firm has deployed since its inception . . . went to projects in areas eligible to become opportunity zones" and thus potentially eligible for massive tax breaks."²⁷⁴

²⁶⁷ LAPD, [Badge Note on Southwest Anchor Point Analysis, September 21, 2017](#); LAPD, [Southwest Division Anchor Point 07/23/2017 - 08/19/2017 Statistics](#) (CPRA # 18-3148).

²⁶⁸ Roger Vincent, "[Sale of Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza may bring offices, not housing, to the mall](#)," Los Angeles Times (April 29, 2020).

²⁶⁹ Sahra Sulaiman, "[CIM Group Abandons Effort to Buy Crenshaw Mall; Community Members Take Victory Lap, Plan Next Steps](#)," StreetsBlog LA (June 18, 2020).

²⁷⁰ Downtown Crenshaw Team, "[Breaking: Downtown Crenshaw Bid Submitted to Buy the Crenshaw Mall](#)" (March 4, 2021).

²⁷¹ Downtown Crenshaw, "[Crenshaw Mall Quietly Sold to Failed Developer, not Black Community](#)," Change-Links (September 3, 2021).

²⁷² Jenna Chandler, "[Builder buys 18 acres near Rams stadium, announces plan for 228 homes](#)," Curbed Los Angeles (May 10, 2017).

²⁷³ "[Harridge Buys Infill Site Near Inglewood NFL Stadium](#)," Builder (May 11, 2017).

²⁷⁴ Noah Buhayar, "[For Goldman, a Tax Break Makes Helping Poor More Lucrative](#)," Bloomberg (August 29, 2018).

The same article noted that the Opportunity Zones law contains no protections to ensure that investors don't replace affordable units with higher-priced rentals. In lieu of those protections, Goldman Sachs claimed it would "voluntarily measure the outcomes of its projects" to "align their goals with community priorities." So not only would the mega-bank exercise massive power to gentrify neighborhoods, it would also assume the role of measuring and translating the community's priorities.

Goldman Sachs is also deeply connected to the Los Angeles Police Foundation (LAPF), where Mnuchin served on the Board of Directors before joining the Trump administration.²⁷⁵ LAPF is a nonprofit organization established to provide LAPD resources without the scrutiny that direct funding and donations face. In 2019, Goldman Sachs anonymously donated \$250,000 through LAPF to fund the Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) program in Harvard Park. (While the donation was presented to LAPD as an anonymous gift, tax documents as well as audit records from LAPD's Office of Inspector General confirm that this money came from Goldman Sachs.²⁷⁶)

Harvard Park is also in an Opportunity Zone, and one nearby intersection (Slauson and Western) has been an Anchor Point since 2015. 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.²⁷⁷ These cameras sites tell officers where youth may be gathering, and in the case of Richard Risher, an 18-year-old Black youth killed by GED officers in the Nickerson Gardens CSP (also a LASER Zone), the cameras filmed Richard's murder by police.²⁷⁸

The relationship between all these actors and police is something we must continue to research and organize against. What is starkly clear is that while Black residents of South Central were forced to navigate threats of police violence and banishment, real estate developers collaborated with LAPD on displacement, even donating salaries, weapons, surveillance equipment, and real estate for police officers deployed in the communities. In part 6 below, we analyze how these developers have subsidized "community policing" programs that are integral to policing's role in gentrification as well as funded "research" sanitizing this harm. Now integrated into data-driven policing, "community policing" and police reform are part of how the city secures white wealth while expanding Black subordination and even death.

²⁷⁵ Gin Armstrong & Kevin Connor, "[Trump Treasury pick cultivated close ties to police while running 'foreclosure machine'](#)," *Eyes on the Ties* (December 22, 2016).

²⁷⁶ Goldman Sachs, "[Form 990, Schedule I for Fiscal Year Ending Dec. 2018](#)," published on ProPublica's Nonprofit Explorer (last accessed October 5, 2021).

²⁷⁷ Aundrea Cameron, et al., [Measuring the Effects of Video Surveillance on Crime in Los Angeles: Prepared for the California Research Bureau \(CRB-08-007\)](#), USC School of Policy, Planning, & Development (May 5, 2008).

²⁷⁸ LAPD, [Force Investigation Division Report F043-16 Officer Involved Shooting](#) (May 4, 2017).

Part 6

“Reform” of Data-Driven Policing and “Predictive Policing 2.0”

“Have you guys thought about spinning out a new product (not predictive policing) but branded solely for police accountability? A city could choose which version they wanted (and really they would have the same backbone and data capabilities).”

Andrew Ferguson

The final part of this report looks at three reformist strategies for obscuring, accepting, and broadening the violence of data-driven policing: (1) reframing “predictive policing” systems as “using data for police accountability,” (2) standardizing the use of these systems using surveillance bureaucracy, and (3) combining data-driven policing with “community policing” programs that draw from counterinsurgency tactics to contain and control people.

In April 2019, LAPD announced it would end Operation LASER, with LAPD chief Michel Moore admitting that the program was an “experiment.”²⁷⁹ A year later, in April 2020, LAPD discontinued use of PredPol. That same month, Chief Moore announced **Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing**, a new data-driven policing framework that combines mass data collection and algorithms with “community policing” “procedural justice” and “data-informed” police “accountability.”²⁸⁰ The LAPD document introducing Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing proclaimed: “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.”

Those reformist notions of “accountability” “efficiency” and “community policing” are not what the communities who worked to end predictive policing fought for. We demanded abolition. But policing exists within an ecology where institutions devoted to “reforming” police marginalize community voices. To abolish data-driven policing, we need to examine the work of these institutions. Indeed, just as LAPD is currently drawing from the police reform industry’s work to “reform” data-driven policing, LAPD’s first-generation predictive policing technologies were once promoted by that industry as reform as well.

²⁷⁹ Los Angeles Police Commission, [Regular Meeting](#) (April 9, 2019).

²⁸⁰ LAPD, [Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing in the Los Angeles Police Department](#) (April 2020) pp. 6, 27.

When LASER and PredPol first launched, “predictive” policing was seen by police reformers as an exciting new trend, with advocacy nonprofits like the New York-based Vera Institute for Justice using that term to promote LAPD’s work. Vera – which opened an office in L.A. in 2011 that is now very active in bail and pretrial justice reform – has long been a pioneer of developing pretrial risk assessment tools, which operate similarly to predictive policing technologies to arm judges and lawyers with numerical scores to determine who to cage and how to set bail.²⁸¹

In 2014, Vera and the Bureau of Justice Assistance – the same federal agency that Los Angeles CNAP prosecutors worked with in 2009 published their report promoting novel uses of nuisance abatement lawsuits – collaborated on a report titled “Putting a Value on Crime Analysts: Considerations for Law Enforcement Executives.” The report urged police across the country to adopt “data driven” policing tactics, describing “predictive policing” as an important new “paradigm” and highlighting Operation LASER as “an example” of this trend.²⁸² The report called on police departments to adopt “data-driven strategies such as hot-spot policing, problem-oriented policing, and intelligence-led policing,” even advertising the role of Palantir and Craig Uchida’s JSS firm in persuading LAPD to expand LASER:

LASER illustrates the relationship between operational and strategic crime analysis, and highlights the possibilities for collaboration in crime analysis. CID created hot-spots and offender bulletins with the aid of a private firm’s software (Palantir), while a consulting firm (Justice & Security Strategies) provided the impact analysis, which persuaded the Los Angeles Police Department to expand the program to four other divisions.

As the community worked to organize against LASER’s violence, LAPD pointed to Vera’s report as evidence that the program should be preserved. Eventually we won the day, forcing an end to both LASER and PredPol. But the evolution of those programs into today’s Data-Informed Community-Focused policing shows the need to organize not only against police tactics and programs but also against the nonprofit, academic, and industrial ecosystems that have always helped policing build and rebuild in response to community criticism.

The rest of this section focuses on three reformist strategies being used to build the next generation of data-driven policing: (1) reframing “predictive policing” systems as “using data for police accountability,” a notion that has been promoted by police reformers as “**Predictive Policing 2.0**” (2) standardizing the use of these systems using legal criteria and transparency requirements, an approach we call **surveillance**

²⁸¹ Los Angeles Community Action Network & Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, “[Vera Institute Has a Long History of Serving the Carceral State](#)” (December 2, 2019).

²⁸² Carl Matthies and Tina Chiu, [Putting a Value on Crime Analysts: Considerations for Law Enforcement Executives](#), Vera Institute of Justice and U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance (March 2014).

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”

Once the community toppled LAPD’s racist notion of “predictive policing,” police grabbed for new reformist concepts to regain their footing. LAPD’s new spin on data-driven policing is the language of making policing more transparent, efficient, and “accountable.” In other words, now the police pretense for gathering and manipulating mass data harvested through LAPD’s systems – including the Palantir infrastructure that continues to manage LAPD’s data even without the LASER and PredPol “predictive” layers – will be “transparency” and the need to measure “fairness,” “accuracy,” and “effectiveness.”

Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing even repackages and expands on Operation LASER, literally even renaming some LASER’s components. For example, according to LAPD’s internal “Daily Operations Guide” for the program that we obtained through a recent PRA, the “Crime Analysis Detail” that generated Operation LASER’s Chronic Offender Bulletin hit lists “has been renamed to the new titled Area Crime & Community Intelligence Centers (ACCIC).”²⁸³ And the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Response) model at the core of Operation LASER was renamed as CAPRA (Clients, Acquiring and Analyzing Information, Partnerships, Response, and Assessment), a rebranding that had been recommended years earlier by the RAND Corporation.²⁸⁴

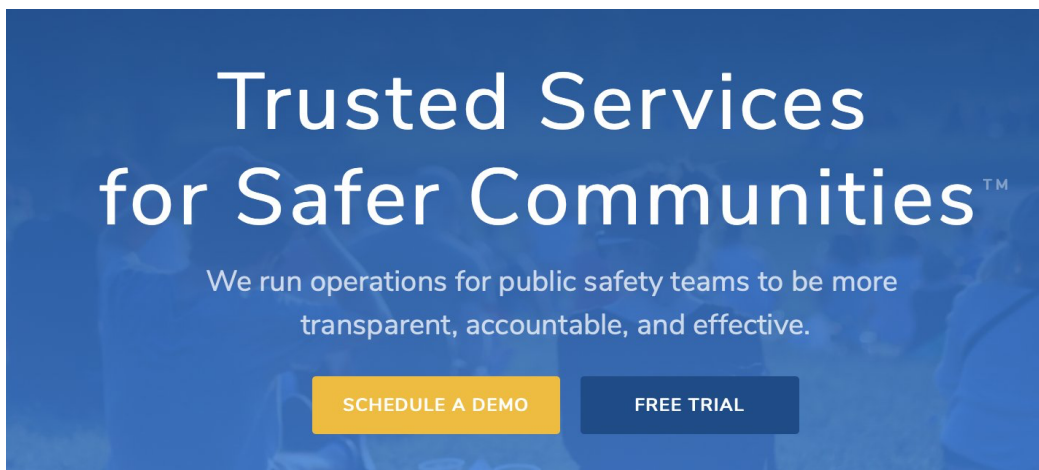
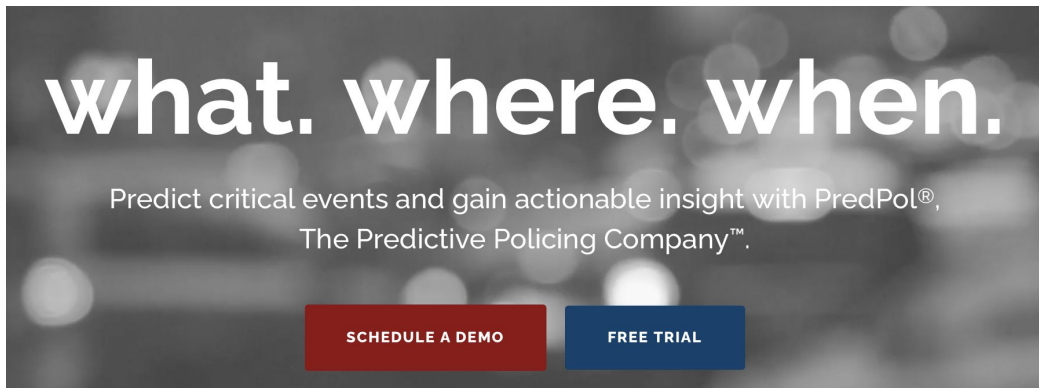
Soon after LAPD replaced LASER and PredPol of Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing, the PredPol company undertook a nearly identical rebranding. In March 2021 the company announced that it was changing its name to Geolitica. The headline on their website changed to: “We run operations for public safety teams to

be more transparent, accountable, and effective.” Their twitter bio appended #CommunityPolicing to the end of that same sentence. And echoing LAPD’s April 2020 substitution of PredPol with “Data-Driven Community Informed Policing,” the background banner on Geolitica’s twitter page was changed from “The Predictive Policing Company™” to “Data-Driven Community Policing.”



²⁸³ LAPD, “[Data-Informed, Community-Focused Policing Daily Operations Guide](#)” (April 2021), p. 2 (PRA # [19-4995](#)).

²⁸⁴ Russell Glenn et al., [Training the 21st Century Police Officer: Redefining Police Professionalism for the Los Angeles Police Department](#), RAND Corporation (2003) p. 104.



The homepage banner on predpol.com (above) and geolitica.com (below)

These rebranding maneuvers – turning “predictive policing” into using data to make police “transparent, accountable, and effective” – are strategies to make policing more durable. Whether via the original endeavor of “predicting” crime or today’s new framing, LAPD will continue to collect data to control and harm our people. The surveillance inputs, Palantir data processing systems, and policing outputs remain the same. In fact, replacing the discredited notion of “predictive policing” with the reformist footing of “police accountability” and “community” makes these systems more difficult to dismantle.

These rebrandings didn’t come out of nowhere. Police reform professionals had been advocating for a new phase of “predictive policing” for years. In summer 2020, we filed PRA requests with LAPD seeking their communications with academics who seemed complicit in efforts to expand data-driven policing. One of these academics was Andrew Ferguson, a law professor who wrote a book on data-driven policing.²⁸⁵ In one of the emails we obtained, Ferguson writes the following to LAPD Deputy Chief Sean Malinowski in May 2019, just after Malinowski announced he would be leaving LAPD to work in the private and academic sectors: “When you leave LAPD

²⁸⁵ Andrew G. Ferguson, The Rise of Big Data Policing: Surveillance, Race, and the Future of Law Enforcement (2017).

can we chat for a bit? I have a suggestion about how I think you should approach predictive policing 2.0 in the private sector.”²⁸⁶ Malinowski has been described as the “architect” of LAPD’s data-driven policing systems.²⁸⁷ Ferguson went on to warn him about the criticism PredPol’s founder Jeff Brantingham (the UCLA professor) had faced, noting it “is bad for business and consulting.” He explained that, “I think PredPol misread the sentiment about how to think about predictive policing and didn’t pivot to a more police accountability focus in time.”

Ferguson even offered this same rebranding advice to the companies that sell predictive policing technologies. Public records show Ferguson emailing the product manager of HunchLab – a Philadelphia-based “predictive policing” business – in January 2018 with the “hypothetical question” of what they would do if “a city came to you and said, we are interested in using HunchLab technology primarily to improve police accountability.”²⁸⁸ After the HunchLab product manager replied, Ferguson shared that he recently “found myself in the odd position of promoting HunchLab’s capabilities and insights” and noted “the potential bad press of predictive policing.” He reiterated his rebranding proposal, asking: “Have you guys thought about spinning out a new product (not predictive policing) but branded solely for police accountability?”

The HunchLab manager agreed that “[p]redictive policing has been increasingly vilified,” but he didn’t “think that a tool that incorporates produced harms to better manage patrols” – i.e., the “data for police accountability” branding that Ferguson proposed – “can exist without the crime prediction.” Ferguson quickly responded that the solution could be selling two products: “what if you said, look we have our patrol management system, but we also have another product for those departments that are concerned with police accountability over crime reduction.” But, he added, the two products don’t need to be any different functionally, only marketed in different ways: “both systems would have both crime prediction and patrol management, but it would be just pitched differently.” This would, Ferguson explained, benefit a police chief who fears “if I buy a predictive policing patrol management system I am going to get grief by everyone from the ACLU to the community (because the bloom is off the rose of predictive analytics).” But if the system is simply marketed differently, then that police chief “will get credit from the community of caring about police accountability and won’t have to deal with the predictive policing backlash.”

Our PRA requests to UCLA seeking Jeff Brantingham’s communications later revealed Ferguson advising the PredPol founder too. An April 2019 email from Ferguson to Brantingham begins: “Just wanted you to know that I am sorry that all of this negativity is being directed at you personally,” and “I really don’t think it is fair to target you, or your academic affiliation, or anything but your ideas.”²⁸⁹ Of

²⁸⁶ LAPD, [205033 Resp Records Emails rfs.pdf](#) (PRA 20-5033, pending publication).

²⁸⁷ Mark Puente, “[LAPD official behind controversial data programs to retire after winning lucrative contract](#),” Los Angeles Times (May 8, 2019).

²⁸⁸ LAPD, [205033 pgs-84-87 unredacted-3.pdf](#) (PRA 20-5033, pending publication).

²⁸⁹ UCLA, [Batch 1 Responsive Documents Redacted \(21-8832\).pdf](#), (UCLA PRA 21-8832)

course, Brantingham's name, face, and academic affiliation were constantly used by both LAPD and PredPol to promote the technology. Next in the email comes Ferguson's advice: "you should promote your papers showing that you can balance race or other factors as a technical matter and it is all about how the police (not the companies) choose to calibrate the algorithm." Ferguson's point seems to be: companies like PredPol shouldn't be blamed for the racial terror that police use their products for, since those stem from how police "choose to calibrate the algorithm." But as we've seen in Skid Row, this is precisely the problem: police calibrate these algorithms however they please, while citing the academic affiliation and origins of the systems to claim their violence is scientific.

Ferguson later published an academic article on his idea of rebranding "predictive policing" as an "accountability" platform, asking "whether the same big data policing technologies built to track movements, actions, and patterns of criminal activity could be redesigned to foster data-driven police accountability."²⁹⁰ He also forwarded his emails with HunchLab to Chief Malinowski, which is why we were able to obtain them through PRA requests. In October 2018, a few months after those emails, HunchLab was bought by ShotSpotter, a company selling "gunshot detection" systems that consist of microphone networks that dispatch police to locations where a gun was supposedly fired.²⁹¹ These systems are deployed to enforce racial segregation and gentrification, concentrated in Black and brown neighborhoods.

This past year, ShotSpotter was linked to the police killing of 13-year-old Adam Toledo.²⁹² The company's products were also shown in a peer-reviewed 7-year study of 68 cities to have no positive benefits,²⁹³ and news reports exposed that ShotSpotter staff manually alter the locations "detections" to fabricate evidence.²⁹⁴ ShotSpotter's incorrect detections have even caused false prosecutions.²⁹⁵ 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."²⁹⁶ 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.

²⁹⁰ Andrew G. Ferguson, "[The Exclusionary Rule in the Age of Blue Data](#)," *Vanderbilt Law Review* 72.2 (2019), pp. 561-645.

²⁹¹ ShotSpotter, Press Release, "[ShotSpotter Announces Acquisition of HunchLab to Springboard Into AI-Driven Analysis and Predictive Policing](#)" (October 3, 2018).

²⁹² Chris Mills Rodrigo, "[Activists demand Chicago end ShotSpotter contract](#)," *The Hill* (July 29, 2021).

²⁹³ Mitchell L. Doucette, et al., "[Impact of ShotSpotter Technology on Firearm Homicides and Arrests Among Large Metropolitan Counties: a Longitudinal Analysis, 1999-2016](#)," *Journal of Urban Health* (2021) [online ahead of print].

²⁹⁴ Todd Feathers, "[Police Are Telling ShotSpotter to Alter Evidence From Gunshot-Detecting AI](#)," *VICE* (July 26, 2021).

²⁹⁵ Garance Burke, et al., "[How AI-powered tech landed man in jail with scant evidence](#)," *Associated Press* (August 19, 2021).

²⁹⁶ "[Patrol Management](#)," ShotSpotter (last accessed October 5, 2021).

Surveillance Bureaucracy

In addition to the evolution into Predictive Policing 2.0, another way predictive policing has been “reformed” is through what we call **surveillance bureaucracy**. In 2020, we published a pamphlet titled Fuck the Police, Trust the People: Surveillance Bureaucracy Expands the Stalker State.²⁹⁷ These surveillance bureaucracy efforts are the other side of the coin of reform. While some police reformers work to promote new policing innovations, as discussed in the prior section, others create the legal framework for acceptance, approval, and normalization of these technologies over time.

Even when framed as critical of these technologies, these reformist approaches accept that the technology is necessary or inevitable, just used excessively, incorrectly, or in a concerning manner. For example, in 2016, a collection of advocacy nonprofits led by the ACLU addressed “predictive policing” with a “Statement of Concern” calling for “continuous assessment,” proposed “tracking” the “demographics of the people involved,” and encouraged governing these harms through legal notions like “due process.”²⁹⁸ This statement was issued during a crucial time for the development of predictive policing programs, as well as our efforts to dismantle this violence.

Advocacy like this can be harmful to abolitionist movement-building. No matter the intent, academics and nonprofits who limit their criticisms of data-driven policing to the details and call for the reform of these practices buy into the racist premise that there are people whose policing can be scientifically or objectively justified. Regulations governing transparency, oversight, and auditing of predictive policing also allow police to claim official approval for their violence, so long as they followed the procedural steps. Even when reformers say predictive policing should be outright eliminated, there comes the question: what are they seeking instead? If they aren't committed to police abolition, then do they just want police to use old-fashioned subjective racism?

These fights are not theoretical. The stakes are everyday banishment, brutalization, and killing of our people. And we are surrounded by well-funded efforts to institutionalize use of the same predictive policing we have been fighting to dismantle. For example, last year the ACLU of Northern California led a campaign to “ban” predictive policing in Santa Cruz, which was one of the first cities to experiment with predictive policing and is also where PredPol is headquartered.²⁹⁹ Santa Cruz police had ended their predictive policing program in 2017, but last year the ACLU gathered a coalition of groups to enact an ordinance that they celebrated as a “ban” on the program. This is how ACLU lawyers as well as news headlines

²⁹⁷ Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, “[FUCK THE POLICE, TRUST THE PEOPLE: Surveillance Bureaucracy Expands the Stalker State](#)” (June 2020).

²⁹⁸ ACLU, “[Statement of Concern About Predictive Policing by ACLU and 16 Civil Rights Privacy, Racial Justice, and Technology Organizations](#),” (August 31, 2016).

²⁹⁹ ACLU, “[Petition: Santa Cruz Should Listen to the Community, Not Surveillance Corporations](#),” (last accessed October 5, 2021).

referred to the ordinance. But a quick look at the ordinance's text reveals that police are authorized to use these tools upon "the city council's finding that the data that informs the technology meets scientifically validated and peer reviewed research."³⁰⁰

As we know from our work to dismantle predictive policing in Los Angeles, finding "peer reviewed" support for oppressive policing tools is very easy, and in fact PredPol was developed by UCLA academics who tested the harm in LAPD's Foothill Division and published their "scientific" findings in a peer-reviewed journal. So, sure enough, an L.A. Times article titled "Santa Cruz becomes the first U.S. city to ban predictive policing" notes that both PredPol and the local police chief had backed the ACLU's rules.³⁰¹ In fact, the article makes that observation right after reporting that ACLU lawyer Matt Cagle "said he didn't hear a single speaker oppose the initiative." If the reason no one objects to your predictive policing ordinance is that police and PredPol both support it, then the harm of that ordinance ought to be clear as day.

This Santa Cruz example illustrates how reform, industrial, and academic forces can combine to make harmful policing more durable, as well as helping it spread. Put simply, the ACLU, PredPol, and local police collaboratively used legal tools and "democratic process" to get the community behind an ordinance that codified predictive policing. As soon as the law was enacted, PredPol declared that their tool will meet the approval criteria. HunchLab/ShotSpotter (another predictive policing company) have also said they expect to meet the criteria, and Palantir is reportedly working on the same. If those companies win this approval from Santa Cruz's City Council, they can go around the country saying their harmful tools were approved under rules the ACLU championed.

That experience of Santa Cruz also hints at the legacy of colonization and colonial governance. The ACLU ordinance lists criteria for approval of predictive policing to be voted on by the local City Council, which has become Republican-controlled as part of the city's recent demographic shift into a wealthy white enclave not far from Silicon Valley. Those constituents will no doubt need to use policing to maintain their control of the land, to clear more properties for their benefit, and to enforce the "security" their rule has always required. This is what the process of conquest has always been about.

The role of reformers in this evolution is to supply police with concepts and structures that they can use to sanitize or defend their violence. In this way, reform is a process not just of expanding police but also suppressing resistance. This too is part of the long history of occupation and domination. When violent force and removal are considered unsavory, occupying forces employ counterinsurgency tactics, which can range from "intelligence" gathering to "winning hearts and minds." Ideological and technical exchange between the military and police agencies are not only evident in the military-grade equipment used by police departments obtained

³⁰⁰ City of Santa Cruz, [Municipal Code 9.85.030](#), Ord. 2020-17 § 1 (2020).

³⁰¹ Kristi Sturgill, "[Santa Cruz Becomes the First U.S. City to Ban Predictive Policing](#)," Los Angeles Times (June 26, 2020).

through program 1033 to repress mass dissent³⁰²; it also shows up in “soft” forms through what some military strategists have called “armed social work.”³⁰³

The Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing framework that LAPD launched the same month it ended PredPol expressly blends data-driven policing with the notion of “community policing.” We next turn to that notion.

Community Policing = Policing of Community

“Racial and ethnic minorities may perceive the police as lacking lawfulness and legitimacy, based in part on their interactions with the police or other influences (social media, news stories, etc.). This can lead to distrust of the police, which has serious consequences for law enforcement. Lack of trust equates to illegitimacy of police authority, which in turn leads to an inability for the police to function effectively.”

LAPD, Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing (April 2020)

“Legitimacy determines the transaction costs of political and governmental power. Low legitimacy may breed contempt on the part of the population and may require extensive prodding and incentives by the government to secure compliance of the population; high legitimacy generally invites compliance by the population and therefore requires less effort by the government to ensure compliance. An illegitimate government’s only method of controlling its population is coercion, which can be resource intensive.”

U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual (2014)

LAPD’s marriage of “community” and “data-driven” policing in the Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing program today is part of a strategy of counter-insurgency. Both “community” and “data-driven” policing are the current era’s prevailing police reform trends, and they help complement and secure assent for

³⁰² Brian Barrett, [“The Pentagon's Hand-Me-Downs Helped Militarize Police. Here's How,”](#) Wired (June 2, 2020).

³⁰³ Nathan Hodge, [“Danger Room in Afghanistan: The Perils of Armed Social Work,”](#) Wired (August 14, 2009).

police violence. As noted in a profile about Bill Bratton's views on predictive policing and the impact on policing practices nationally, "Predictive policing relies crucially on community engagement—it can work only when the police are seen as part of the neighborhood, rather than as an occupying presence."³⁰⁴ In that vein, "community policing" helps map the community for purposes of the racist police exercise of "predicting" crime, as well as helping police pacify resistance to that violence.

Proposals for "community policing" are typically loudest after mass mobilization against police violence, moments when people are trying to take power away from police. As the quotes at the top of this section show, these strategies all but literally take a page out of the Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual, which was written to instruct U.S. forces on how to ensure "peaceful" imperial rule over the distant lands they occupy.³⁰⁵ Much like the U.S. military that LAPD funnels tactics, weaponry, and personnel from, LAPD also enacts colonial violence in our communities, ethnically cleansing land and enforcing exploitation and resource extraction, while also attempting to maintain the veneer of legitimacy in order to subdue resistance.

While the tactics are as old as policing itself, the term "community policing" began to be used in the 1970s to address the police's "public relations problem" after violent repression of the anti-war and civil rights movements. Using the U.S. DOJ's definition of community policing, PredPol – which in March 2021 rebranded as a "#CommunityPolicing" company – says the term refers to a "proactive style of policing" focused on preventing crime before it happens.³⁰⁶ A significant source of funding for community policing has been the Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant program, created by the 1994 crime bill written by then Senator Joe Biden. Rejecting mass demands to defund the police, President Biden's FY 2022 budget "more than doubles grant funding for the COPS Hiring Program" compared to even the highest yearly amount allocated by the Trump administration.³⁰⁷

The overall objective of "community policing" is embedding police deep into communities, where they recruit ambassadors and informants, collect data on neighborhood relationships, spread propaganda about their work, and offer resources that people have otherwise been denied. The basic premise of community policing is that embedding police in neighborhood relationships as well as using them to deliver vital social services will help people perceive police as part of the community rather than a violent force. The ultimate goal is to pacify criticism of police and secure assent for police terror, a parallel to how the U.S. military's counterinsurgency tactics serve to provide political cover for violent imperialism and occupation.

³⁰⁴ David Black, "[Big Data on the Beat](#)," City Journal (Winter 2016).

³⁰⁵ U.S. Army, [FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5 Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies](#), p. 10-6.

³⁰⁶ PredPol, "[PredPol and Community Policing](#)" (March 3, 2020).

³⁰⁷ Stephen Semler, "[Biden doubles funding for police hiring program](#)," Speaking Security (June 18, 2021).

LAPD's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Program

LAPD's predominant community policing program today is called Community Safety Partnerships (CSP), which first formed in 2011 as a police force within public housing residences managed by the city's public housing agency, HACLA. Today the program continues to sap vital HACLA funding, which is slated to "reimburse" LAPD around \$8.75 million for the five-year period running from January 2021 through December 2025. Residents of the HACLA complexes where CSP was first deployed describe it as yet another campaign of racial terror by police, turning public housing buildings into penal colonies. Jaime Zeledon, who lived in the Jordan Downs HACLA development, recalls:

"We were told there was going to be a new security program that would involve LAPD. The experience I had with this program is negative. This is a discriminatory and racist program that targets people of color in housing developments. We've seen how the police take photos of them nude and put their names in their database. It's labeling them as gang members and criminals. And if you're Latino it's worse. If you don't have documentation, the LAPD turns them over to ICE."³⁰⁸

Another resident, Daisy Vega, describes CSP's purpose as banishment in service of gentrification, which can occur through the Rental Assistance Demonstration program that displaces public-housing tenants and introduces market-rate housing into HACLA complexes:

"They need to reinforce these areas with police force so if people that are removed they happen to come back and find they would no longer qualify, the police would be there to further oppress them."³⁰⁹

These views are not isolated, and police know that. According to a 2016 study conducted by Craig Uchida, the academic consultant hired to build LASER, a majority of L.A. agree (and over a quarter "strongly agree") that LAPD does not "treat people of all races and ethnicities fairly," a perception that is "consistent across the city, but most pronounced in South and Central Bureaus."³¹⁰ For LAPD, this widespread distrust and aversion to violent, racist policing is simply a false "perception." This is the mentality of the abuser, telling people hunted by police that they misunderstand what they're experiencing. If you speak to people actually experiencing this abuse, they know exactly what it is. A letter written by Margaret Totty, who managed a portion of the redevelopment of the Jordan Downs HACLA complex and through that work became "familiar with several officers within the Community Safety Partnership group of LAPD" narrates this point perfectly:

³⁰⁸ Madison Parsley, "[In the Conversation About Community Safety Partnerships and Public Housing, Where are the Residents?](#)" KnockLA (February 27, 2021).

³⁰⁹ Id.

³¹⁰ Constance Rice & Susan K. Lee, [Relationship-Based Policing](#), Advancement Project (February 27, 2015).

“CSP officers told me how they tried to organize a trip to a marine aquarium for the Jordan Downs children, but the parents wouldn’t let their children attend. They disparaged the parents as bad or neglectful for not allowing their children to attend. I responded that it made sense, considering the long history of police brutality and terrorism within the Jordan Downs community at the hands of LAPD. I asked how they expected parents to allow their children to go with the people that had kicked in their doors, set up, locked up, killed and targeted their sons, brothers, fathers, cousins and uncles. How could they expect people to feel safe with their children in the hands of perceived predators?”³¹¹

She concluded by explaining that her “point in sharing this is that [because of] the investment of resources” in violent policing, the effort “to change the face of the police is just not worthwhile.” She added that she “support[s] a reduction in LAPD funding, and CSP resources being diverted” to “groups parents can feel safe sending their children to for enrichment and activities.”

To LAPD and Craig Uchida, communities who do not “feel safe with their children in the hands of perceived predators” must be made to accept the police terror their communities have always experienced. The solution was not ending police terror but “changing that perception,” and according to Uchida, two “programs” with “demonstrated success” on that front were “Community Safety Partnership program and Collective Efficacy.” This term “collective efficacy” is one that LAPD and its partners frequently use to describe partnerships between police and “stakeholders” invested in policing. As Uchida has described, collective efficacy entails “watching out for other people and their property” and “monitoring people hanging out.”³¹² In other words, this approach deputizes widespread punitive surveillance and helps recruit people into policing’s ideologies.

Of course, these programs never fool the communities who actually experience police violence. Instead, the goal is securing political cover, helping win more resources for police and build ties to those who depend on violent policing to thrive. To that end, LAPD’s community policing is a strategy of relationship-building with local businesses, non-profits, and community collaborators who help extend the reach and power of policing. LAPD developed the CSP program in collaboration with two local nonprofits who proudly trained the officers deployed into the community, the Advancement Project and Urban Peace Institute.³¹³ These functionaries of the state extend policing’s grip on our communities.

³¹¹ [Letter from Margaret Totty](#), Former Project Manager at Jordan Downs Redevelopment Phase 1A (July 30, 2020).

³¹² Craig D. Uchida and Alese Wooditch, “[Perceptions of Safety and Police in Los Angeles: Results of a Survey of Los Angeles Residents](#),” Justice and Security Strategies and Hart Research Associates (August 2016), p. viii.

³¹³ LAPD, “[LAPD’s Community Safety Partnership Program](#)” (January 22, 2015); Urban Peace Institute, “[Our Work](#)” (last accessed October 5, 2021).

Community Policing in LAPD's Cycle of Increasing Violence

Just a month after the George Floyd uprising last summer, Mayor Garcetti and LAPD announced that the CSP program would be expanded into a full LAPD bureau. Joining Garcetti at the press conference to make this announcement was Advancement Project co-founder Connie Rice, who proclaimed: "The CSP Bureau is a serious commitment to the vision of guardian partners as the future mindset of American policing. Guardian policing is the path to ending the warrior culture of impunity that millions are marching to end." In reality of course, the slogans on the street were predominantly "fuck the police" and "defund the police," not "guardian policing." But Rice is an example of community "leaders" propped up by police to promote an institution that has always been used for racial terror, usually at the moments the communities are most loudly naming the violent reality of policing.

In 2016, Connie Rice and LAPD chief Charlie Beck – under whose tenure LAPD killed more people than any police force in the country – wrote an op-ed titled "How Community Policing Can Work."³¹⁴ The op-ed was framed as a response to the latest spectacular police killings of Black people, referencing in its first sentence "the shooting deaths of black men like Alton B. Sterling and Philando Castile" (note how "shooting deaths" is phrased as though the men simply died, not that they were killed, unlike the op-ed's reference to "recent *murders* of police officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge"). From there the authors went on to promote "guardian policing."

Nonsense proposals like "guardian policing" are the common ground that police leaders and police reformers always rush to during rebellions. A week after the George Floyd rebellion, Rice took to the L.A. Times with another op-ed pushing this very same point.³¹⁵ A year later, she joined with Beck again to repeat the proposal in U.S.A Today, now with the headline, "We made policing safe and fair."³¹⁶ Rice and Beck joke in one of their op-eds that "the Hatfields and the McCoys shared more affection than we did." In reality, Rice – who LAPD gave her own designated parking spot at police headquarters – had previously described Chief Beck as a "prince of the realm."³¹⁷ This dynamic of professional police reformers and police performing disagreement but locking hands to undermine abolitionist movement-building is now a familiar ritual. This is what we mean when we say "community policing" is a strategy of counterinsurgency.

Rice and Beck have even admitted that "guardian policing" is the "same remedy" police reformers have trotted out in response to Black rebellion for over half a century, going back to "the urban unrest of the 1960s."³¹⁸ As we wrote in response to LAPD's efforts to use the 2020 rebellion to win more resources, this cycle of

³¹⁴ Charlie Beck & Connie Rice, Op-Ed, "[How Community Policing Can Work](#)," New York Times (August 12, 2016).

³¹⁵ Connie Rice, Op-Ed, "[The LAPD won't stop traumatizing black Angelenos until it abandons its 'warrior culture'](#)," L.A. Times (June 8, 2020)

³¹⁶ Charlie Beck & Connie Rice, Op-Ed, "[We made policing safe and fair: Ex-LAPD chief and civil rights lawyer](#)," USA Today (July 16, 2021).

³¹⁷ Frank Stoltze, "[Bye Bye, Beck: LAPD Chief Retires](#)," LAist (June 27, 2018).

³¹⁸ Beck & Rice, "[How Community Policing Can Work](#)."

using police violence to secure new funding and powers has time and again ensured further brutality: “Throughout history, city officials have responded to LAPD mass violence at protests by rewarding police with new resources instead of addressing the roots of the community’s outrage. Time and again, this cycle has served to expand LAPD violence, leading to further protests and police crackdowns.”³¹⁹

Police reformers like to say that abolitionists are utopian. But it’s the reformist notion of policing free from racial terror, domination, and violence that has never existed in reality. Whether as a deliberate scam or naive fantasy, police reform keeps helping secure more resources, power, and assent for violent policing. When announcing the CSP bureau, Mayor Garcetti described a “major step forward in our work to reimagine policing in Los Angeles.” Along with that step would be major funding for this new initiative. Defying popular demands to defund policing (a study commissioned by LAPD showed that 62.4% of Angelenos support proposals to “redirect some money currently going to the police budget to local programs” and 36.7% support proposals to “completely dismantle police departments and give more financial support to local programs”³²⁰) the current LAPD budget claims that “CSP’s success will serve as a blueprint for the future of law enforcement.”³²¹

CSP, Military Counterinsurgency, and Real Estate Development

Although the CSP program is now a growing line item in LAPD’s budget, it was originally funded through philanthropy from real estate developers and other wealthy elite, alongside federal funding directly linked to U.S. military counterinsurgency operations. In 2012 the federal COPS program gave LAPD \$6.43 million to pay three years of salary for officers who were required by COPS to have spent at least “180 consecutive days of active military duty post September 11, 2001.” LAPD deployed these former troops – many of them fresh from occupying Iraq and Afghanistan – solely to CSP programs in public housing developments. Adopting the language of foreign deployments, LAPD said these troops were the “primary LAPD ambassadors to the residents and are intimately involved in all community activities and concerns, as well as monitor [sic] and control criminal activities.”³²²

In addition, Goldman Sachs made an anonymous donation of \$250,000 to fund one CSP site, as mentioned above in part 5. Three of the first CSP sites were also funded with \$750,000 from the Ballmer Group, run by the billionaire owner of the L.A. Clippers as well as a massive new sports complex near SoFi stadium. Ballmer’s grants paid for three years of funding for officers to join the CSP program. According to LAPD’s 2020 budget, “the Ballmer Foundation stipulated that any site it supported in its infancy would need to be fully integrated into the Department’s

³¹⁹ Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, et al., [Letter regarding LAPD’s After-Action Report Implementation Plan](#) (September 27, 2021).

³²⁰ Fernando Guerra, Brianne Gilbert, Mariya Vizireanu, & Max Dunsker, [Police Data Brief: 2020 Police and Community Relations Survey](#), Loyola Marymount University, Leavey Center for the Study of Los Angeles (Fall 2020), p. 8.

³²¹ LAPD, [Fiscal Year 2020-21 Proposed Budget](#) (November 19, 2020), p. 151.

³²² LAPD, [Transmittal of the Extension for the 2012 Community Oriented Policing Services \(COPS\) Hiring Program](#) (April 10, 2015).

operating budget by the conclusion of the agreement.”³²³ In other words, Ballmer mandated that the city match his funding with permanent tax dollars after his donation expired.

Along with developer, investor, and military support, the expansion of the CSP program has also depended on academics who have a history of working closely with police. When the CSP program was converted into a full-fledged LAPD bureau, the mayor’s announcement celebrated a report released a few months earlier by the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs.³²⁴ The report’s “lead researchers” included Jorja Leap, a UCLA adjunct professor whose husband Mark Leap was LAPD Deputy Chief of Counterterrorism under Bill Bratton, as well as Jeff Brantingham, the UCLA anthropologist who founded PredPol. And serving on the “Advisory Committee” were Joe Buscaino, a cop-turned-City Councilman who quickly used the report to argue against popular demands for LAPD budget cuts,³²⁵ and Gerald Chaleff, a police insider with “a long history of using LAPD violence to propose useless reforms and increased police resources.”³²⁶

The study was also funded by donors who paid for the expansion of the CSP program itself, including the Ballmer Group, as well as the Weingart Foundation (whose board includes Steve Soboroff, a real estate developer who sits on the Board of Police Commissioners), Caruso (one of the country’s largest privately held real estate companies), Cindy Miscikowski (Managing Partner of the real estate firm Ring Group, which owns several thousand apartments units across the city), and an anonymous private donor. A letter from hundreds of UCLA students and faculty along with several community groups condemned the study’s funding analysis, methodologies, and funding sources, naming the trend of real estate 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.”³²⁷

Another function of community policing is to hold communities hostage, offering otherwise-denied resources through the hands of police, with a gun in their other hand. Since the Christopher Commission formed following LAPD’s beating of Rodney King, the LAPD has presented itself as a “service provider” serving a “client.” Today this notion is formalized in the CAPRA (Clients, Analyzing and Acquiring Information, Partnerships, Response, and Assessment) model that is part of LAPD’s Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing framework.³²⁸ Naming both “direct” and “indirect” clients, the CAPRA model raises the question: who is actually

³²³ LAPD, [Fiscal Year 2020-21 Proposed Budget](#).

³²⁴ Jorja Leap, P. Jeffrey Brantingham, Todd Franke, & Susana Boris, [Evaluation of the LAPD Community Safety Partnership](#), UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs (March 2020).

³²⁵ Joe Buscaino, [“Better Policing Requires Smart Investments, Deliberate Planning,”](#) L.A. Daily News (June 29, 2020).

³²⁶ Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, [“Yet Another Police Reform Proposal Designed to Expand the Stalker State,”](#) Knock LA (March 16, 2021).

³²⁷ [“Open Letter to UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs”](#) (2020).

³²⁸ LAPD, [Data-Informed Community-Focused Policing in the Los Angeles Police Department](#) (April 2020) p. 8.

being served by LAPD practices, programs, and policies? LAPD's "indirect client" collaborations with real estate developers summarized throughout this report demonstrate whose interests police protect and serve.

More broadly, community policing is the other side of the coin to the deliberate underdevelopment, organized abandonment, and racial capitalism that we see in communities like Skid Row and South Central. Time and again, the state ignores and exacerbates the structural issues that create what it governs as "crime" – including 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 land and either banishing or exploiting the people who live on that land. Instead of ever undoing or ending that violence, community policing secures more violence as the "solution," responding to structural violence only through the police budget and violent force.

This cycle of violence is not an accident. It is the fundamental purpose of policing, part of the logic of conquest that spans the settler state's entire history. The myth of benevolent community policing is a way to cloak that reality and undermine organized resistance to it.

Our Demands

“The big boss and his overseers build walls, borders, and sieges to try to contain these people who they claim are bad examples. But they never achieve their goal because dignity, courage, rage, and rebellion can’t be held back or incarcerated.

Even if they hide behind their walls, borders, sieges, armies, police forces, laws, and executive orders, sooner or later that rebellion will come asking for its due.”

**Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine
Committee, Zapatista Army (August 2019)**

This report has reviewed the relationship of LAPD’s data-driven policing programs to displacement, gentrification, and real estate development along with police reform, counterinsurgency, imperialism, and settler colonialism. Our demands regarding the violence of these programs are the same ones we’ve long advanced:³²⁹

1. Ban LAPD’s use of 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 all LAPD siphoning of funds and data from other city departments.
8. Abolish the Community Safety Partnerships surveillance program.
9. Abolish LAPD’s fraudulent “oversight” body, the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners.

The abolitionist response to the policing of land has nothing to do with reforming these practices by “cleaning up” the data or creating new laws and policies for “safer” use. As abolitionists, we recognize the harms of policing are not just due to

³²⁹ Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, [Before the Bullet Hits the Body: Dismantling Predictive Policing in Los Angeles](#) (May 8, 2018), pp. 48-49; Stop LAPD Spying Coalition & Free Radicals, [Abolish Carceral Technologies: The People’s Response](#) (Oct. 2019); Stop LAPD Spying Coalition & Free Radicals, [Our Demands](#), Defund Surveillance (Feb. 2021).

biases or discretion but due to the intent and purpose of policing, which has always been committed to protecting property, stealing land, enforcing exploitation, and caging, deporting, and murdering the people who the state wishes to banish.

Abolitionist analysis teaches us how police reform has always been integral to making the police state more durable and difficult to dismantle. Along those lines, reformist objections to data-driven policing either question the costs and effectiveness or warn about racism from “dirty data” or “feedback loops” that encode the biases of law enforcement. These criticisms object to the *execution* of predictive policing, treating racism as an unfortunate side effect of these programs rather than the foundational ideology and framework. Both proponents of data-driven policing and its mainstream opponents ignore the fundamental role and purpose of policing.

Our fight to abolish predictive policing must organize against the full ecology of actors who serve to strengthen policing. Abolition requires building a culture of resistance against that ecosystem, a culture of “fuck the police.” As the George Floyd rebellion laid bare, our people know what they want: police off their backs, an end to policing. Even when people don’t say abolition, the vision is there. The resistance has always been there. You just need to be present for it.

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.

Join the fight!

STOP LAPD SPYING!



JOIN THE FIGHT!

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