

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

March 3, 2011

1.11

BPC No. 11-0103

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK'S REPORT ON THE SKID ROW SAFER CITIES INITIATIVE

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. That the Board REVIEW and ACCEPT this report.

DISCUSSION

This correspondence is in response to a report prepared by the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) titled, *Community-Based Human Rights Assessment: Skid Row's Safer Cities Initiative*, dated December 2010. The purpose of this response is to provide a general overview of the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) and its impact on the affected area.

The Safer Cities Initiative began in September 2006, and focused on the Skid Row area. It was designed to be a partnership between the Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, and the community.

As a result of the Safer Cities Initiative, the community has reclaimed their public spaces, while allowing social service providers, and church-based programs to operate without the fear of crime and violence. There are approximately 50 officers assigned to Safer Cities Initiative and responsibilities include enforcement, outreach, referral, and community policing efforts in the Skid Row community. The SCI's positive impact on the overall reduction of Part I crime is evidenced by the improved quality of life with the Skid Row Community.

If you have any questions, please contact Assistant Chief, Earl Paysinger, at (213) 486-0100.



CHARLIE BECK
Chief of Police

Attachment

FACT SHEET

CENTRAL AREA SAFER CITIES INITIATIVE

February 15, 2011

Background. On January 31, 2011, Central Area received correspondence from Operations-Central Bureau regarding a request to review and compile an appropriate response to a report by the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) titled, "Community-Based Human Rights Assessment: Skid Row's Safer Cities Initiative." This fact sheet was prepared by Lieutenant Shannon Paulson, Serial No. 30253, Officer in Charge, Central Area Safer Cities Initiative.

The Formation of the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI)

To fully understand the Skid Row of today and the impact the officers assigned to the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) Task Force have had, requires an understanding of Skid Row prior to the institution of SCI.

In 2005, the crime rate in the concentrated 50-square block area of Skid Row surpassed almost any other similarly sized region of the City. Almost 1,000 crimes of violence occurred in the streets of Skid Row that year, with the vast majority of victims of violence in Skid Row being the homeless themselves, and an additional 1,500 additional people becoming the victims of serious property crimes. Many of the homeless were ill and incapable of helping themselves, while many others were unwilling or hesitant to enter programs or accept assistance. Kristi Morales, a 49-year-old woman with a mental illness, was one of these "shelter resistant" people who had repeatedly turned down offers of assistance from local service providers. During the night of May 5, 2006, she was stomped to death by a homeless parolee on 5th Street, just feet from the front steps of the Los Angeles Mission. That same night, over 80 beds were available amongst the various shelters in Skid Row and went unused.

Many of the low income facilities in Skid Row housed senior citizens, non-drug abusing mentally ill persons and recovering addicts making an honest attempt to turn their lives around. The community members found themselves confronted by crime and temptation every time they stepped out of their homes. People were often fearful to walk the streets immediately surrounding their residences and members of the local workforce were afraid to walk from their vehicles to their places of employment. Mail carriers for the United States Postal Service began refusing delivery to Skid Row addresses due to the perceived dangers and the unhealthy environment. A multiple segment CNN Special Report, which aired the first week of December 2005, referred to Skid Row as "a human wasteland" that "looks and feels like a third world country."

Small business owners and employees of larger warehouse businesses removed excrement, used condoms and hypodermic needles from their entryways every morning when they arrived for work. The vast majority of businesses in Skid Row's eastern warehouse district were engaged in food processing and packing. The urine, feces, drugs and disease which coated the sidewalks of Skid Row necessitated that employees spray the soles of their shoes with alcohol as they entered their places of employment. Additionally, the unsanitary conditions were exasperated by the

approximately six tons of garbage the Los Angeles Department of Public Works and Bureau of Sanitation estimated were illegally dumped on the streets of Skid Row each day. It was this environment that permitted the spread of tuberculosis as well as the growth and persistence of drug-resistant *Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus* infections.

A general attitude of lawlessness was pervasive throughout the area. Along with the high crime rate, nuisance and quality of life issues were prevalent. There was an overall perception by residents and business owners alike of abandonment by government and public services as conditions continued to deteriorate. It was this environment into which the SCI was introduced in the fall of 2006. It was tasked with the development and implementation of a system of enforcement, enhancement and outreach. The focus would be centered on the overall reduction of crime, while eliminating urban blight and decay.

The SCI Task Force of today still operates under two basic guiding principles:

- An understanding of the nature and shape of the crime problem – data, both quantitative and qualitative, defines police strategy and crime prevention tactics; and
- Criminal justice agencies and community partners work together to develop an approach that both reduces and prevents crime and, in the long-term, changes the way criminal justice agencies conduct business.

The success and sustainability of the Initiative today still depends on three primary factors: (1) Changing the behavior of individuals who commit crimes in the Skid Row area; (2) removing, regulating or modifying identified crime locations or focal points; and (3) changing the way criminal justice business is conducted in the area (non-traditional policing). This has permitted the community to reclaim their public spaces, while allowing anchoring institutions, such as social service providers and church-based programs, to operate without fear of crime and violence.

The SCI efforts began in earnest in September 2006 and concentrated in the Skid Row area.¹ The Initiative was designed as a partnership between the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office and the various principle service providers in the area, with additional imperative input, engagement and assistance from smaller public service providers as well as the business community and other public and private stakeholders.

Initially, the LAPD dedicated a task force of over 80 personnel to SCI. Due to the subsequent reduction of crime, this task force has been reduced to the roughly 50 personnel currently assigned. These personnel are naturally at the forefront of the enforcement, outreach, referral and community policing efforts in the Skid Row area.

¹ The Skid Row Area has been defined as 3rd Street to the north, 9th Street to the south, Hill Street to the west and Alameda Street to the east.

Investigation. The LA CAN “Community-Based Human Rights Assessment” (referred to as the “Assessment” from this point forward) quotes previous academic studies² on the SCI Task Force and references a recently conducted internal LA CAN study as the basis for their findings. The statistical results and public perceptions quoted in both these reports are contradictory in many respects to public SCI statistics, internal audits, overall community feedback and experiences of personnel assigned to the unit.

The LA CAN Assessment includes a review of “almost 600 tickets handled by LA CAN’s legal clinic in 2009.” Of these 600 tickets presented to their free clinic, the Assessment purports 90 percent were issued for crosswalk violations or jaywalking. From this they deduce the same percentage likely factors out to all citations issued by SCI officers. On the contrary, an unannounced audit conducted by SCI management between November 22, 2009 and January 2, 2010, revealed that of the 452 citations issued by SCI officers during that period, just over 10 percent of the citations were issued for pedestrian violations.³ An overwhelming majority, over 72 percent of those citations issued by SCI personnel, were for the drivers of vehicles who commit moving violations which put the safety of Skid Row residents and pedestrians in jeopardy.⁴

The LA CAN Assessment goes on to address additional issues brought to the LA CAN legal clinic by Skid Row residents which were related to SCI, “including criminal cases, police misconduct and other issues beyond [LA CAN’s] current capacity.” They also reference “incidents documented on video tape” which made it clear that the SCI “impacts went beyond the police-reported statistics.” It is important to note that members of LA CAN are frequently patrolling the Skid Row area in small groups, videotaping police contacts with the community and taking written documentation and statements from residents and visitors. They have been on scene on occasions where police contacts with criminals resulted in the application of force by the involved officers and those altercations were clearly caught on film by LA CAN members. In those instances, LAPD supervisors have approached LA CAN members and requested to view the videotape for the sole purpose of determining the indisputable facts of the incident. Despite such requests, LA CAN has never permitted a LAPD official to view the tape, much less permitted a copy to be made in order to assist with any internal investigation. Similarly, despite what is likely hundreds of hours of videotape recordings of SCI officers and other police contacts over the past several years, at no time has any accusation of misconduct by LA CAN been supported by videotape evidence.

² Gary Blasi, “Policing Our Way Out of Homelessness?” Los Angeles, Inter-University Consortium Against Homelessness. September 24, 2007.

³ Pedestrian citations included violations of 21456(B) VC-Pedestrian crossing against Don’t Walk signal (19 citations/4.2 percent); 21955 VC-Jaywalking (13 citations/2.88 percent); 21106 VC-Pedestrian crossing against red phased light (7 citations/1.55 percent); 21956 VC-Pedestrian walking on roadway (3 citations/0.66 percent); 21453 VC-Pedestrian red light violation 2 citations/0.44 percent); 21954 VC- Pedestrian in roadway (1 citation/0.22 percent); 21950 VC-Pedestrian running in front of vehicle (1 citation/0.22 percent)

⁴ 72.58 percent of citations were issued specifically to operators of motor vehicles; the remaining 17.25 percent of citations were issued for miscellaneous violations such as littering and bicycle violations.

The primary focus of the LA CAN Assessment is the results of a survey taken of 203 individuals living on Skid Row. No information is provided on the exact methodology utilized in the survey or the manner in which the survey respondents were gathered. These 203 responses were gathered from among what the Assessment itself estimates are a population of 15,000 residents within the community. The officers assigned to SCI spend every day among those same residents, as well as the additional 11,000 estimated visitors, business owners and employees of Skid Row. Members of the SCI supervisory and management team spend many hours a week in similar contacts on the street as well as in various meetings with public organizations, community representatives and public and private stakeholders. These contacts prove overwhelmingly positive on a daily basis, a stark contradiction to the negative responses provided within the 203 surveys.

It is significant to note that throughout the existence of the Central Area SCI, the LA CAN has argued that officers assigned to SCI are acting solely on behalf of the business owners to promote the gentrification of the Downtown area and enforcement efforts concentrate on "criminalizing homelessness." Unfortunately, they often overlook the fact of the unprecedented drop in crime within Skid Row. Most notably is the reduction in violent crime, which specifically addresses the reduction of the victimization of the homeless, mentally ill and other residents of this community.

Findings: In contrast to the assertions by LA CAN, the officers and supervisors assigned to the SCI Task Force engage each day in activities which contribute to a mission of positive change within the Skid Row community, highlighted by collaborative, and non-traditional policing methods. Some of the activities and accomplishments of SCI over the past four years are as follows:

Community Meetings

In further support of the SCI mission, members of the SCI management team attend regular meetings to review the impact and effectiveness of the efforts, tactics employed, as well as to coordinate the efforts of other government service agencies (sanitation, street maintenance, street lighting, etc.). These meetings include representatives of government agencies, service providers and members of community organizations. These serve as a monthly forum for open communication and provide a method of community accountability for public services. This regular assessment and feedback, coupled with the appropriate crime analysis, allows SCI to provide an ongoing and always improving level of public safety and service to the Skid Row community.

Streets or Services Program

Personnel assigned to SCI have historically focused a portion of their daily efforts on providing assistance and a safe environment specifically to the various residents of the Skid Row community. At the forefront of these efforts is the Streets or Services (SOS) Program, a

post-arrest and pre-trial program designed in cooperation with the City Attorney's Office and facilitated by the Mayor's Criminal Justice Planning Office. The SOS system permits officers to offer appropriate homeless candidates the opportunity to enter structured housing and service programs in lieu of physical booking and prosecution. This referral is made at the time of detention, with immediate placement with a service provider.

The successful completion of a 21-day program results in the arrest being expunged from the individual's record and the opportunity to enter a six-month program frequently involving housing outside the Skid Row area. Absconding from the program without successful completion results in prosecution for the original offense. In the four years this program has existed, SCI officers have diverted over 2,500 persons from arrest and referred them into various structured assistance programs (26 percent of all misdemeanor arrests made by SCI officers over the life of the program). The program is currently suspended due to a lack of grant funding for the beds and services. However, a funding source has been tentatively identified and it is possible the program will re-commence in the near future.

In addition, the Department recently signed a Statement of Cooperation in support of a grant application for a program very similar to SOS but focusing exclusively on the needs of military veterans. This program, called Operation VALOR (Veterans' Alternative Legal Options & Resources), will be a collaborative effort between the LAPD, the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office and New Directions, Inc., a non-profit veteran support service agency serving as a treatment and service facilitator.

HALO (Homeless Alternative to Living On the Streets) Citation Clinics

Similar to the collaborative nature of the SOS Program, the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office enacted the HALO Citation Clinics specifically to address citations issued to the homeless and those individuals in emergency or transitional housing who were likely unable to pay the requisite monetary fines. Acknowledging that the cited individuals in some cases may also be physically incapable of fulfilling traditional community service assignments, the HALO Citation Clinic gives credit, for purposes of "working off" citation penalties, to individuals who connect with various services. This means that homeless individuals in Skid Row can resolve their citation fines by engaging in counseling for anger management, job training, addiction assistance, or even meeting with case workers for assistance with arranging housing. Additional opportunities to "work off" citation fines exist by assisting at partnering service providers, such as volunteering in the various missions and kitchens. The officers assigned to SCI, along with the two primary Senior Lead Officers in the Skid Row Area, are made aware of the dates and locations of scheduled HALO Citation Clinics and assist in referring people and spreading the word through community meetings and individual contacts.

Crime Reduction

- 36% of the arrests made by SCI officers within the Skid Row Area are for narcotics or alcohol related charges. Additionally, analysis of crime trends and arrests

have determined a direct correlation between the use of alcohol and/or drugs and instances of criminal violence.⁵

Throughout the four years of SCI existence, policing efforts and community improvements have resulted in the following notable successes within the Skid Row Area:

- A 46 percent overall reduction in Part I Crime, including the following:
 - Aggravated assault down 46 percent;
 - Robbery down 47 percent;
 - Burglary down 58 percent;
 - Burglary/Theft from Motor Vehicles down 71 percent;
 - Grand Theft Auto down 64 percent;
 - Grand Theft Person down 55 percent; and,
 - Plain Theft down 30 percent.⁶
- These crime reductions have been accomplished and maintained despite a gradual reduction of SCI personnel by almost 50 percent. Further reduction of police personnel would begin to negatively impact the ability to maintain this reduction in crime.
- Deaths in the Skid Row area have dropped 34 percent, with “street deaths” (frequently due to suicide, overdose, exposure or untreated health issues) dropping 60 percent.⁷
- Open lines of communication and collaboration have resulted in increased responsiveness by other City agencies, providing improvements in environmental cleanliness (refuse, graffiti, etc.), street and sidewalk repair and street lighting.
- In recognition of the unique challenge posed by the large parolee population that exists in Skid Row, SCI dedicated four personnel specifically to dealing with the issues related to parolees. These personnel not only work to track parolees present in the area who may engage in patterns of criminal behavior or victimize other Skid Row residents, but also to ensure those individuals on parole are provided with awareness and access to the services which can provide them with the best potential for success and rehabilitation.

Central City East Injunction

It has long been known by members of SCI that a large portion of the narcotics dealers active in the area do not reside in or near the Skid Row area. These parties have no ties to the community; they neither reside nor visit the area for purposes of taking advantage of the many social service providers in Skid Row. They journey to Skid Row each day in order to prey on, take advantage of, and/or to provide temptation to those who are attempting to improve their lives and overcome dangerous addictions within this recognized "Recovery Zone." These are “commuter” drug

⁵ Based on arrest statistics from January 1, 2010, through December 31, 2010. 24% of arrests by SCI officers involved narcotics offenses and 12% for alcohol related offenses.

⁶ Based on reported crime statistics for the Skid Row Area, comparing January 1 through December 31, 2005, versus January 1 through December 31, 2010.

⁷ Based on death reports within the Skid Row Area comparing January 1 through December 31, 2005, versus January 1 through December 31, 2010.

dealers who engage in extortion and intimidation with the community members to facilitate their drug trade.

In early 2010, in an effort to curb this historically blatant narcotics activity and the related crime in the Skid Row area, SCI partnered with the Los Angeles City Attorney's Gang Division and the District Attorney's Hardcore Gang Unit to investigate, prosecute and convict predatory criminals who frequented Skid Row for purposes of committing their crimes, while preying on vulnerable residents, including the homeless and mentally ill. Primary targets were identified as a result of their multiple arrests and successful convictions for narcotics sales in the area. This cooperative effort ultimately led to sufficient documentation to support court action against 80 named individuals who had repeated convictions for narcotics sales within the designated area and had no apparent ties to the community (either residing in Skid Row or pursuing services there).

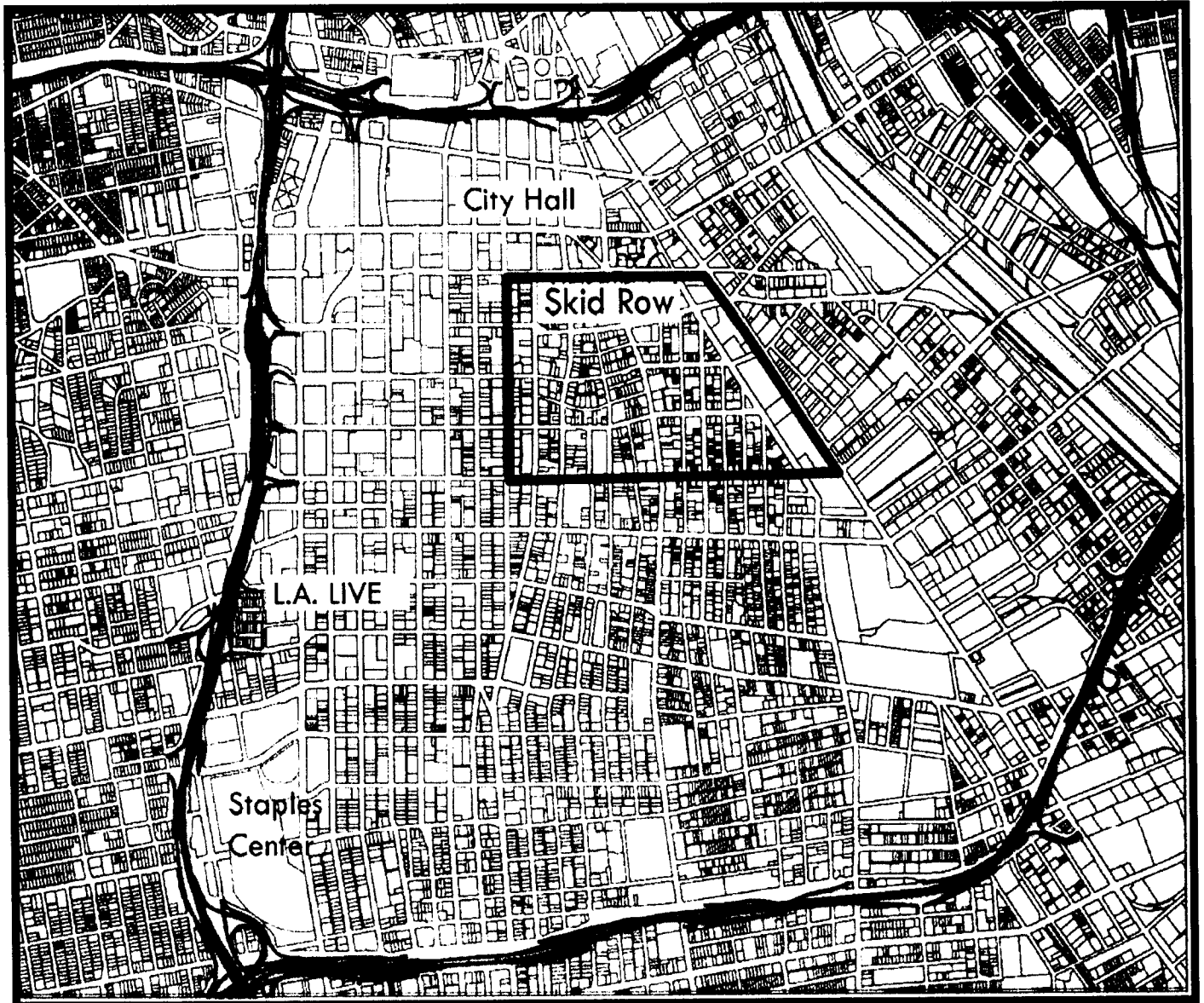
Because the nature of activity in the SCI area does not support the pursuit of a traditional gang injunction, the current efforts involve pursuit of an injunction based on the broad and potentially powerful Unlawful Business Practices Act (§17200). Designated the "Central City East Recovery Zone Injunction," it includes "mapping conditions" and stay away orders, as well as a legal remedy for those who can show they are legitimately residing in or pursuing services within the Skid Row area. In November of 2010, the presiding judge issued final approval for the injunction and approved service of the official stay away conditions to the first 23 defendants named in the injunction. To date, only one individual named in the injunction has pursued removal based on their participation in a legitimate program within Skid Row.

Conclusions. Decades ago, the City of Los Angeles participated in a specifically designed community development strategy which grouped a large number of service providers in a concentrated area on Skid Row. The unique systems SCI officers are currently engaged in, such as the SOS and Operation VALOR programs, are providing life changing and life saving services, which require ongoing participation and continued staffing of experienced personnel, who have been properly and uniquely trained.

The framework of the Safer Cities Initiative, led by the LAPD and the City Attorney's Office, provides the proper resources and responses through the appropriate staffing, training and collaboration the residents, business owners, and employees of the Skid Row area ultimately deserve.

COMMUNITY-BASED HUMAN RIGHTS ASSESSMENT: SKID ROW'S SAFER CITIES INITIATIVE

Los Angeles Community Action Network
December 2010



Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 7.

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 9.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.



artwork by: Art Hazelwood

COMMUNITY-BASED HUMAN RIGHTS ASSESSMENT: SKID ROW'S SAFER CITIES INITIATIVE

*Los Angeles Community Action Network
December 2010*

When Mayor Villaraigosa launched the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) in September 2006, Los Angeles' Skid Row became home to arguably the largest concentration of standing police forces in the country.¹ In a community with a population of approximately 12,000 – 15,000 residents, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) made over 19,000 arrests and issued roughly 24,000 citations in the Initiative's first two years. In 2007, a UCLA study found that the number of citations issued in the first year of SCI came at a rate up to 69 times higher than those found in other parts of a city already notorious for intense police activity.² While citation rates have been slightly reduced, arrest rates remained similar in the third and fourth years of SCI. Concerned with the sustained intensive policing of homeless and other low-income residents of Skid Row, and the lack of intervention by public officials, the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) sought to document some of the impacts to residents after four years SCI policies and practices.

LA CAN, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA), and other pro bono legal partners operate a weekly free legal clinic to provide representation for infraction citations, as well as address other legal issues that confront community residents. Legal clinic participants began to paint a startling picture of the Safer Cities patterns and practices, and the impacts on low-income people. For example, among other accounts of police interactions, physically-disabled residents report receiving crosswalk violation citations as a result of their inability to cross an intersection in sufficient time due to their use of wheelchairs, walkers, and canes. Among almost 600 tickets handled by LA CAN's legal clinic in 2009, 90% were for crosswalk violations/jaywalking and, among those that reported their disability status, 60% were people with disabilities. Given the fact that the fine for pedestrian signal violations is generally between \$159 and \$191, and that many Skid Row individuals live on fixed incomes between \$221 and \$850 per month, residents are often unable to pay monetary penalties. In just a few months, the fines can increase to over \$600 dollars. The person's driver's license may be suspended, and a warrant is often issued for arrest.

In addition to citations, residents come to the legal clinic with issues related to Safer Cities including criminal cases, police misconduct, and other issues beyond our current capacity. Through these stories and other incidents documented on videotape, it became clear that Safer Cities' impacts went beyond the police-reported statistics. To gain a more comprehensive description of resident-police interactions as well as more general information regarding citations and arrests, LA CAN conducted a survey of more than 200 Skid Row residents during August and September of 2010.

Over the course of two months, trained volunteers gathered information from respondents who live and/or receive services in the Skid Row community and who were primarily not already affiliated with LA CAN. Survey respondents were identified by their initials and year of birth, to avoid any duplication. Forrest Stuart, PhD Candidate in UCLA's Department of Sociology, served as a key advisor to the survey project, including oversight of interviewer protocol and data analysis.

The survey results demonstrate the vast impacts of the intense policing of Skid Row: incredibly high incidences of citation (56%) and arrest (54%) in the past year; loss of housing (52%) and/or services (42%) due to arrest; being subject to handcuffing and/or searches (75%) due to minor crosswalk violations; and a prevalent perception of racial profiling by police officers (75%). The full survey data is summarized on the following pages.³

¹ Gary Blasi and Forrest Stuart, "Has the Safer Cities Initiative in Skid Row Reduced Serious Crime?" (Los Angeles: UCLA Law School, 2008).

² Gary Blasi, "Policing Our Way Out of Homelessness?" Los Angeles; Inter-University Consortium Against Homelessness.

³ Note that the number of respondents in each section may vary due to respondents' choice to not answer, or due to the fact that certain questions are only relevant to, or asked of, particular subsets of respondents.

Demographics

The demographic characteristics of survey respondents mirror other records of the Skid Row population. Racially, respondents are predominantly African-American (60.1%). Non-Hispanic Whites (14.3%) and Latinos (10.8%) are the next largest racial groups.

The majority of respondents are male (68.7%), and the average age of the sample is 52.5 years old. Nearly half (48.5%) of respondents live in permanent housing, with 28% homeless and living in emergency or transitional housing, and 14.5% homeless and living on the streets. Almost three-quarters of respondents (73.8%) report either a physical or mental disability.

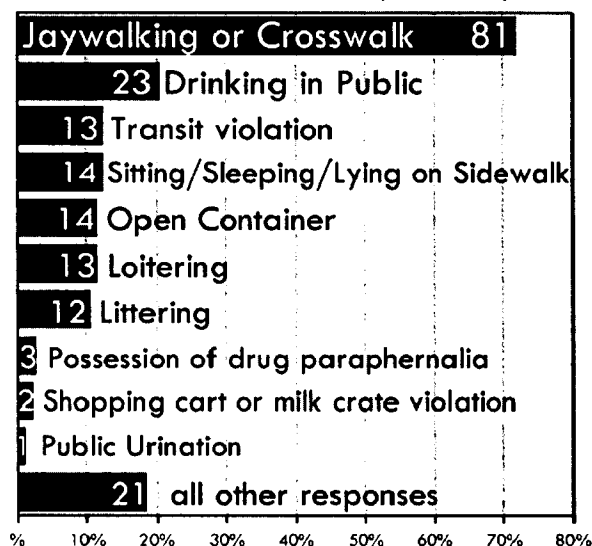
| Race/Ethnicity | Response Count | Response Percent |
|---------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| African-American | 122 | 60.1% |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 0 | 0.0% |
| Caucasian/White (Non-Hispanic) | 29 | 14.3% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 22 | 10.8% |
| Native American/American Indian | 7 | 3.4% |
| Multi-Racial | 2 | 1.0% |
| Other | 21 | 10.3% |
| Total | 203 | 100% |

Citations

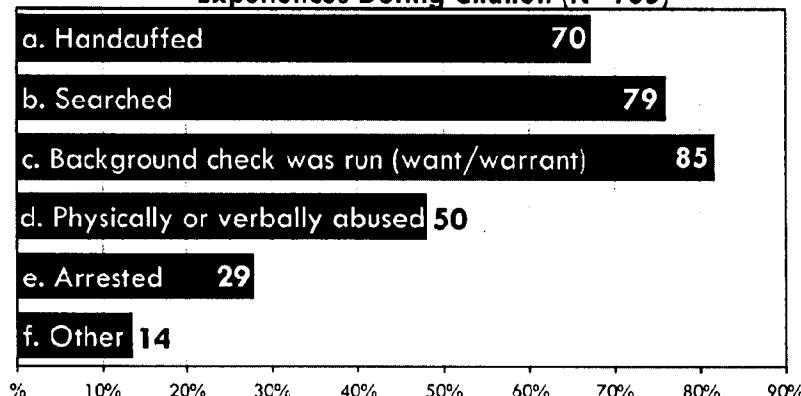
Residents were asked to estimate the number of citations they had received since the beginning of SCI in 2006. While not all respondents report receiving a citation, the average was 4 citations received per person. Because these estimates were over the course of four years, inquiring about the number of citations received in the last year would likely produce more accurate results.

When asked only about the previous year, 122 respondents (55.7%) report receiving a citation. Jaywalking/Crosswalk violations (71.7%) are by far the most frequently cited infractions, followed by drinking in public (20.4%), open container (12.4%), and sitting, lying, or sleeping on the sidewalk (12.4%).

Reason for Citation (N=113)



Experiences During Citation (N=105)



While receiving the citation, respondents report several police behaviors that seem excessive for minor violations, could violate constitutional rights and, more specifically, likely violate the 2009 "Fitzgerald" Settlement⁴.

A large majority (81%) report having their background checked while receiving a citation, 75.2% report being searched, 66.7% report being handcuffed. Almost half (47.6%) of respondents report being physically or verbally abused by the officer while receiving a citation.

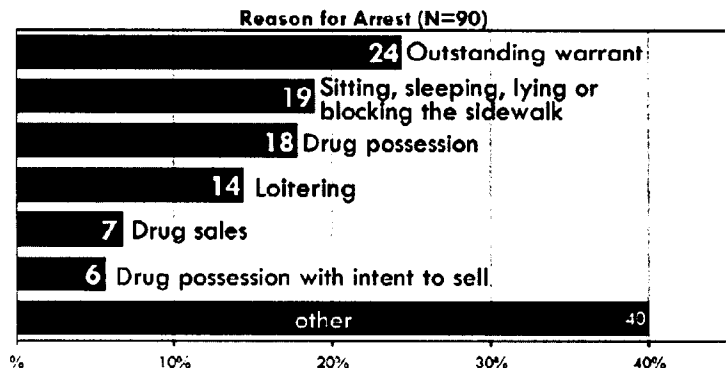
⁴ Case no. CV 03-1876NM (RZx); Fitzgerald vs. City of Los Angeles; 2009 Settlement Agreement states, among other things, "A search incident to arrest is not permitted when a person is merely cited and released in the field for an infraction or misdemeanor."

According to respondents, citations have negative effects beyond the officer abuse, fees and penalties. **As a result of their citations, 31% report losing social services, 26.8% report losing housing, and 16.9% report losing employment.** Proponents of Safer Cities often claim that enforcement activities actually benefit poor and homeless people by connecting them to services. When asked if they felt they had benefitted from their citation, 86.6% felt that they had *not* benefitted.

Arrests

Residents were asked to estimate the number of times they had been arrested since the beginning of SCL in 2006. While not all respondents report an arrest, taken as a whole, the average was 2.8 arrests per person. Because these estimates were over the course of four years, it was likely more beneficial to inquire about the number of arrests in the last year.

Limiting responses to the last year, 103 respondents (53.6%) report being arrested. This arrest rate is astounding when compared to the 2009 adult arrest rate in California (4.9%)⁵ and the 2010 arrest rate in the City of LA (approximately 3.9%)⁶.

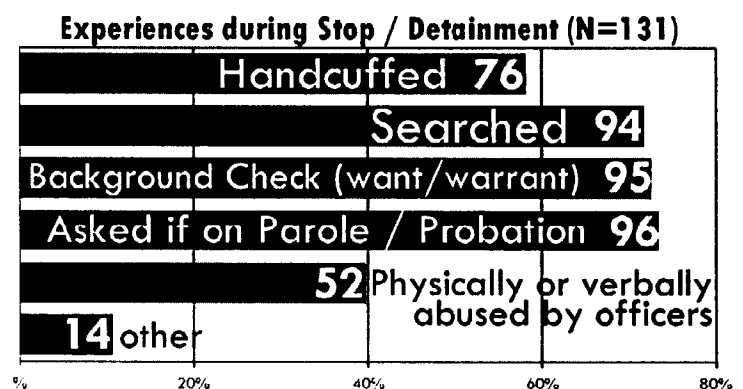


Outstanding warrants were cited as the most frequent reason for arrest (24.4%), with drug possession as the second most arrested offense (18.9%). **As a result of their arrest, 51.5% of respondents report losing housing, 42.4% report losing social services, and 16.4% report losing employment.** Over half (59.1%) of those arrested report physical or verbal abuse by officers.

Stops/Detainments without Citation or Arrest

In addition to citations and arrests, Skid Row residents have complained of police harassment in the form of frequent and warrantless stops and detainments. The majority of respondents (67.2%) confirmed the occurrence of such practices, reporting a stop/detainment resulting in neither a citation nor arrest.

In the last year, the average number of such stops/detainments was 5.3 per person. During these stops/detainments, the majority were handcuffed (60.3%), searched (74.6%), background checked (75.4%), asked if on probation or parole (76.2%).



As is the case with those receiving citations or being arrested, close to half (41.3%) of respondents report physical or verbal abuse by officers during a stop/detainment.

⁵ Office of the Attorney General, State of California. <http://ag.ca.gov/cjsc/keyfacts.php>.

⁶ Estimated using Citywide Compstat reports through 12/4/10. www.lapdonline.com.

Impact of Homelessness on Police Treatment

Respondents who are homeless and living on the streets report staggering rates of citations, arrests, and stops/detainments compared to the already high rates among all survey respondents.

| | Homeless (N=29) | All Respondents (N=203) |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Citations | 24 (82.8%) | 122 (55.7%) |
| Arrests | 23 (82.1%) | 103 (53.6%) |
| Stops/Detainments | 25 (89.3%) | 131 (67.2%) |

Among the homeless individuals currently living on the streets surveyed, 82.8% report receiving a citation, 82.1% report an arrest, and 89.3% report a stop/detainment in the last year.

Attitudes toward Skid Row Policing

The LA CAN survey also assessed respondents' attitudes toward policing in Skid Row. Interest in this information stemmed partially from an analysis of previously-unpublished findings from a 2007 Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) survey, administered as part of their bi-annual homeless count. Through a public records request, LA CAN obtained data from the survey to conduct a secondary analysis specifically in relation to the question of victimization. Over one-third (37%) of homeless respondents in LA County reported being a victim of police harassment since becoming homeless. This was the most prevalent form of victimization reported, exceeding assault (24%) and robbery (18%).

| Category of Victimization of Homeless People | Percentage Reported |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Police Harassment | 37% |
| Assault | 24% |
| Robbery | 18% |
| Domestic Violence | 9% |
| Sexual Assault | 7% |
| Rape | 6% |

Note: from LAHSA's data, obtained as public record, not LA CAN's survey

Fear of or actual victimization by the police is of even larger concern among homeless and other very low-income residents of Skid Row. Among all respondents in the LA CAN survey, **146 (78.5%) report that they do not feel safe from police violence. The same number reports that they do not feel safe from police harassment.** A similar majority of respondents (74.6%) report being profiled by police in the last year due to race, economic status, or residence in the Skid Row area.

Conclusions

The Los Angeles Police Department and other City Officials continue to tout the positive aspects of Safer Cities policing, primarily through the use of heavily critiqued crime data but also by claiming improvements in residents' lives and access to needed services. This survey data paints a different picture for homeless and poor, and mostly Black, residents of Skid Row – one in which people become disconnected from housing and services due to policing; in which mass arrests, citations and detentions have become the norm; where 8 out of 10 residents do not feel safe from police violence and harassment; and where frequent and aggressive police interactions produce anger and fear.

The experiences of residents represented by this report clearly illustrate the human rights violations created by the Safer Cities Initiative and the human toll residents are expected to shoulder in exchange for simply living in their own community. Survey results and ongoing data collection through LA CAN's legal clinic add to growing evidence that it is impossible for the City of Los Angeles to police its way out of homelessness and extreme poverty. These results also illustrate why more than 3,600 Skid Row residents and workers signed petitions to end the Safer Cities Initiative, submitted to LAPD Chief Beck in September 2010, but to this day continue to be ignored.



artwork by: Art Hazelwood

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