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Planning 'just' public space: Reimagining hostile designs through do-it-yourself urban design
tactics by unhoused communities in Los Angeles

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of
Philosophy in Urban Planning

by

Christopher Daniel Giamarino

2023

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Planning ‘just’ public space: Reimagining hostile designs through do-it-yourself urban design
tactics by unhoused communities in Los Angeles

by

Christopher Daniel Giamarino

Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Planning

University of California, Los Angeles, 2023

Vinit Mukhija

Kian Goh

Chris Herring

Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Committee Chair

In this dissertation, I explore the expansion of hostile designs as conceptualized zones of anti-homelessness and the production of do-it-yourself urban design interventions as tactical responses (i.e., community infrastructure and mutual aid services)—employing mapping, photography, and conversations with unhoused residents in Los Angeles. Historically, scholars have investigated the criminalization of homelessness, achieved through the enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances and the spatial banishment of unhoused individuals. Less study has gone to hostile regulations and spatial design conditions in shelter spaces and public spaces that shrink the capabilities of unhoused individuals to access bare necessities, partake in life-sustaining activities, and realize socio-spatial rights to the city and its public spaces. To intervene in this gap, I review an emerging suite of strategies—quality-of-life ordinances, spatial policing, and

hostile soft and hard design controls—that exist across Los Angeles’ anti-homeless landscape. Across four neighborhoods, I interviewed 36 unhoused individuals to understand their experiences with anti-homeless zones and responses to hostile designs within shelters and in public spaces. Additionally, I catalogued the grassroots construction of residential and community infrastructure by unhoused individuals. My key argument is that hostile designs encourage and, ultimately, criminalize and demolish DIY urban design interventions that seek to respond to conditions of homelessness. Hostile designs across shelters and public spaces shrink the socio-spatial rights of unhoused residents to access public spaces and realize capabilities allowing them to partake in life-sustaining activities. I advance the concept of “dwellable inhabitation,” which is a capability afforded through regulation and urban design that allows individuals to appropriate public space so that they can partake in life-sustaining activities when no accessible or reasonable alternatives exist. Here, I critique the processes and outcomes of hostile designs that reproduce homelessness, as experienced by unhoused residents and their DIY urban design responses. Then, grounded in the recommendations and demands of unhoused residents, I suggest how hostile designs can be transformed into just public space designs. My suggested policy and design recommendations follow an inclusive justice framework that addresses distributive, procedural, interactional, and recognitional aspects of justice, as well as care and repair considerations. Instead of fencing off parks, closing public restrooms, and criminalizing non-criminal activities like sleeping, cooking, or hanging out, I advocate for the abolition of hostile designs and recommend that city planners and urban designers should accommodate DIY urban design interventions to render public spaces in LA more socially, politically, and spatially accessible places that provide compassionate services and opportunities for housing.

The dissertation of Christopher Daniel Giamarino is approved.

Vinit Mukhija

Kian Goh

Chris Herring

Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles, 2023

In making places (such as a home), we make ourselves, and as we remake ourselves, so we perpetually reshape the places we are in, materially, conceptually as well as in how we live within them. This implies that places are not, cannot be, fixed and stable, but are subject to perpetual transformations as conceptions, material practices, and lived experiences change.

— David Harvey

The designer of the urban landscape must be constantly conscious of the tensions among the order given to a landscape, the fairness it concretizes, and the injustices it embodies. Through a predictably iterative process, injustices resurface and attack newly created landscapes to make just the unjust order that has been imposed.

— Randy Hester

Ultimately, the pursuit of just urban design entails operating across time as well as space. Urban designers have a triple responsibility. They need to begin with an awareness of past site-based injustices, give sustained attention to processes playing out in the present, and invigorate respectful dialogue based on visions of imagined alternative shared futures.

— Kian Goh, Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, and Vinit Mukhija

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Acknowledgments

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Overview

In March 2020, the city of Los Angeles closed to prevent the spread of coronavirus. A two-week lockdown of inessential activities extended into months and continues to this day. For the first year of COVID-19, which saw the city reopen and reclose several times, formal outreach to provide unhoused individuals and communities services and opportunities for shelter and housing placements were shut down. An unhoused community began to develop in a central city park called Echo Park. They began relying on mutual aid organizations and their tacit planning and design knowledge to construct health and hygiene infrastructure like showers, life-sustaining provisions like community kitchens, and appropriate public space for private shelter. Following public health guidelines to stop the spread of COVID-19, the community at Echo Park blossomed into a self-sufficient, autonomous, and community organized space on the western side of the man-made lake, while housed residents continued to occupy the eastern hill for short-lived, leisurely activities like picnics as well as walking around the trail that encircled the lake. Despite the necessity of grassroots planning and design tactics to provide shelter, food, electricity, and places to shower and use the restroom, stories of and experiences with ad hoc policing and harassment proliferated, as police officers and park rangers carried out attempts to close restrooms and arrest people sleeping in the park. As vaccines were administered and the city began to permanently reopen, complaints from housed residents about drug use and the use of public space for private dwelling led a mobilization to displace this community.

On March 24th, 2021, at the behest of formal city councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles Department of Sanitation (LA Sanitation)

carried out a police sweep and cleanup of the large unhoused encampment in the historic city park. Due to a lack of police enforcement and formal outreach since the inception of COVID-19, the unhoused community had reconfigured public space as shelter, replete with residential tent areas and a clothing swap, community garden, and food pantry. This do-it-yourself private and community-based infrastructure was targeted for demolition during the sweep and discarded by LA Sanitation. Approximately 200 individuals were displaced from the park and 182 protestors were arrested (Lenthang, 2021). While the focus of the sweep was on people living in the park, people sleeping in their vehicles on the perimeter of the park were also displaced. The visibility of this event renewed debates about policing of the unhoused, policy responses to homelessness, and the right to public space for both the unhoused people and neighboring residents.

Notably missing from these debates, however, were concerns about the impacts of increased securitization of public space through hostile designs on the do-it-yourself planning and design interventions by the autonomous encampment. Critics of the encampment community (i.e., local politicians, the police, and housed residents) were concerned about the use of public space by unhoused communities for private activities like sleep and going to the restroom. Historically, Echo Park functioned as a pleasure ground for leisurely strolls and other fleeting activities like picnics. From their perspectives, the public space was not meant to house unhoused individuals, provide services for impoverished people, and raise awareness and visibility of LA's growing homelessness crisis. Advocates for the unhoused and proponents of the autonomous community suggested that the DIY interventions addressed the lack of shelter and services and critiqued bylaws that criminalized being unhoused in public space. They posited that instead of criminalizing DIY urban design interventions, the city should learn from them and provide services and places in public for the unhoused to dwell.

While the pandemic has reemphasized the political, social, and environmental importance of public space, there have been renewed attempts to exclude unhoused people from public space through regulatory policies and architectural designs. Examples include, among other things, the creation of enforcement zones around shelters, the enforcement of anti-camping bans in city parks, and the zoning of streets to be off-limits to vehicular dwellings. Each regulatory boundary or codified ordinance comes with implicit and explicit material reinforcement, including planters on sidewalks, fences around parks (Figure 1), CCTV surveillance, tow trucks, private security officers, and police. Additional examples include the placement of boulders on sidewalks under freeway underpasses, the removal of street trees to eliminate shade, spikes on the exterior nooks and crannies of buildings to prevent sitting, and “bumproof” benches where arm rests are placed to prevent sleeping (Davis, 1990). For my dissertation, I investigated these ongoing processes, as well as responses to them, through implementations and contestations of hostile designs. I did so through an interdisciplinary analysis of four neighborhoods in Los Angeles to understand how hostile designs can be transformed into just urban designs through an investigation of the do-it-yourself (DIY) urban design tactics of unhoused communities.



Figure 1. Fencing of Echo Park Lake after the March 24th displacement.

Photograph by Christopher Daniel Giamarino

Do-it-yourself urban designs are “small-scale and creative, unauthorized yet intentionally functional and civic-minded ‘contributions’ or ‘improvements’ to urban spaces in forms inspired by official infrastructure” (Douglas, 2014, p. 6). Traditionally, DIY urban designs are produced by middle-class, college educated white residents who paint crosswalks or bike lanes or install communal libraries on sidewalks. There are ongoing debates as to whether these interventions

represent spatial practices of depoliticized placemaking (Lydon & Garcia, 2015), function as coping mechanisms to socio-spatial injustices (Kinder, 2016), reinforce tenets of neoliberal urbanism (Brenner, 2016), or transform hostile public space into common public space through political and spatial tactics to claim rights to appropriate and reconfigure the city for collective, justice-oriented desires (Spataro, 2016). Hostile designs are regulatory and architectural interventions that target and criminalize marginalized groups and their activities for spatial exclusion in public space (Rosenberger, 2020). They are tied to the broader political economy of cities, specifically policy and design strategies that aim to regulate and control the social, political, and economic uses of public space. Hostile designs include anti-homeless zones, private security, amenity absences like lack of public restrooms, and architectural interventions like fences and spikes. Often, as evidenced by the case of the Echo Park Lake displacement, hostile designs function to demolish any DIY urban design interventions by marginalized communities. Instead of demolition, learning from and accommodating DIY urban designs can advance “just urban design.” Urban design is composed of decision-making processes, practices, and outcomes that shape the public-facing built environment and how it can be used by people. Just urban design is a critical rethinking of top-down urban design practices that exclude marginalized groups by including them and giving them political agency in decision-making processes, practices, and outcomes, as well as accommodating their cultural practices and social activities in the production of public space to foster more inclusive public life.

To explore the incompatible socio-spatial dynamics between hostile designs and everyday do-it-yourself urban designs, the primary puzzling theoretical question I wished to answer was:

1. Is do-it-yourself urban design a transformative alternative to compassionate revanchism in reimagining hostile designs and enacting just public space designs?

To answer this broader theoretical question, I formulated three supplementary empirical research questions:

1. How have anti-homeless zones and hostile designs evolved during COVID-19, and what are their impacts on unhoused residents, community infrastructure, and mutual aid?
2. What are the do-it-yourself urban design tactics by unhoused communities, why do they engage in them?
3. How can cities learn from these tactics to enable the production of more equitable public space and enact just urban design?

I answered these questions through work in four neighborhoods in the city of Los Angeles—Echo Park, Harbor City, Van Nuys, and Venice. Within these networked communities,¹ I photographically documented DIY urban designs and conversed with unhoused residents to understand their experiences with spatial displacement and hostile designs and how and why they engage in DIY tactics.

This dissertation's main argument is that the expansion of anti-homeless zones includes hostile designs that encourage and, ultimately, criminalize the do-it-yourself construction of private and community infrastructure by unhoused residents. Under the false promise of services and transitions from shelters into permanent housing, unhoused people are pulled and coerced into service spaces with subpar social and architectural designs. The initial tolerance of DIY urban designs and their inevitable demolition represent an ongoing spatial shrinking of social rights to the city. This is reflected in the enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances that increase

policing and spatial displacement; the construction of insufficient shelter spaces for people previously living within these zones; the fencing off public spaces; the persistent harassment by housed residents; and the sporadic provision and removal of life-sustaining infrastructure from homeless encampments.

Prior research has defined hostile designs as public space objects that target marginalized groups for social and spatial exclusion (Chellew, 2016; Davis, 1990; de Fine Licht, 2017; Flusty, 2000; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1993; Petty, 2016; Rosenberger, 2017, 2020). For my dissertation, I define hostile designs as a suite of legally hybrid tools, composed of spatial displacement, anti-homeless regulations, and hostile architecture, that strip unhoused residents of their precarious social and spatial rights to the city. In response to subpar designs of temporary interim shelters, the closure of life-sustaining infrastructure like public restrooms, and the fencing off public spaces, unhoused residents construct DIY urban design interventions to cope and survive. They intervene through small-scale, incremental construction of semi-permanent structures, community infrastructure, and adaptive reuse of mundane architecture like walls, sidewalks, and streets. I find that across each neighborhood, most unhoused residents live between different housing types,ⁱⁱ and that this fluidity dictates what type of DIY intervention or response they develop. Instead of learning from these creative, necessary grassroots designs, the city bulldozes these architectural stopgaps. Demolition of DIY functions as a severe setback for unhoused residents leaving them without access to more secure shelter, bathrooms, showers, electricity, and water.

The criminalization of do-it-yourself urban designs by unhoused communities overlooks the potential of these small-scale, incremental tactics to improve public space and symbolizes a broader contraction of social, political, and spatial rights to the city. I posit that the fragmented

production of indeterminate anti-homeless zones throughout Los Angeles unveils an unjust landscape of hostile designs within an emerging neo-revanchist city. To reimagine hostile designs, I recommend urban design and policy recommendations that advance the concept of “dwellable inhabitation.” Dwellable inhabitation is a capability afforded through regulation and urban design, which allows individuals to appropriate public space so that they can partake in life-sustaining activities (e.g., sleeping and eating), when no accessible or reasonable alternatives exist. The recommendations, grounded in the experiences of hostile designs and do-it-yourself urban design tactics by unhoused residents, aim to enhance capabilities to occupy public space to engage in life-sustaining activities when no other livable alternatives exist.

The dissertation is divided into seven sections. First, I introduce the background of my study, the primary research questions, and discuss the significance of my dissertation and its contributions.

Second, I describe my theoretical framework, which is grounded in theories of justice and public space. This theoretical framework considers the broad literature on homelessness and has aided me in defining pertinent concepts, analyzing interviews, and operationalizing a just public space design framework to recommend policy and design solutions based on my findings.

Third, I review the literature on homelessness pertaining to regulation, policing, and resistance. I consider the dynamics of everyday life by dwelling type, including the regulation of the unhoused and their resistance to policing; legal and philosophical analyses of the enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances; case studies of public space privatization and the logics and agendas that shrink space for the unhoused along with the modes of resistance to regulation. Considering the various theoretical frameworks used to study homelessness, I

identify a research gap: there is a dearth of studies with a focused spatial lens that analyzes the experiences and contestations of hostile designs from the perspectives of unhoused people.

Fourth, I restate my research question and discuss my research design, including its relationship to my epistemological and theoretical frameworks. I also describe the geographic context of my research and research methodology. To understand how hostile designs stretch between shelters and public spaces to encourage and criminalize DIY urban designs, I carried out a content analysis and mapping of anti-homeless ordinances and shelter and public space designs, photographed DIY urban design tactics, and interviewed unhoused individuals.

Fifth, I present my findings, including contemporary trends in homelessness, regulation, and hostile designs in Los Angeles. In Chapter 5, I illustrate how the expansion of hostile designs, including the regulatory and architectural design flaws of shelters and policing and privatization of public space, have produced false hope for unhoused individuals in accessing services and opportunities for housing, while actively encouraging DIY urban design interventions in public spaces. In Chapter 6, I present a catalog of individual and communal do-it-yourself design tactical responses and explain why the experiences and demands of unhoused folks in public spaces lead to grassroots construction of infrastructure. I posit that DIY urban design interventions are responses to hostile designs and function as deromanticized coping and survival tactics.

Sixth, I suggest how just public space design can be enacted and practiced. Here, I offer speculative public space policies and design guidelines that can be utilized to produce more just public space processes and outcomes. These recommendations are normative, and I reflect on the inherent power dynamics and conflicts that may arise in decision-making processes and public spaces if these design interventions are rendered permanent.

In the concluding section, I reflect on the role that urban design should play in understanding different user groups and accommodating their activities in order to enact just urban design.

Homelessness, hostile designs, do-it-yourself urban design, and public space

Over half a million individuals are experiencing homelessness in the US, with 40 percent of this population living unsheltered on sidewalks, in public spaces, parks, and vehicles, as well as other interstitial spaces like riverbeds, industrial areas, and under freeways (Henry et al., 2021; Lyons-Warren & Lowery, 2020). While there are different categories of homelessness, I am interested in understanding the experiences of unhoused folks who have to contend with the enforcement of “quality of life” ordinances and hostile designs. While much attention has been given to hostile designs against individuals sleeping in public spaces, there has also been a proliferation of regulations that seek to restrict where people may sleep in their vehicle (Bauman, Rosen, et al., 2019). Examples of hostile designs against vehicular homelessness include the implementation and enforcement of citywide or overnight bans, police harassment, towing, citations, and, recently, the development of street zones around Safe Parking Programs that outlaw RVs from parking (Giamarino, Brozen, et al., 2023; Pruss & Cheng, 2020; So et al., 2016; Wakin, 2014b). Examples of hostile designs against unhoused individuals living in public spaces include anti-homeless ordinances and spatial policing (Kohn, 2004; Mitchell, 2003; N. Smith, 1996); and anti-homeless architecture like spikes abutting private property, bus bench armrests, and lack of provision of shade and public restrooms (Davis, 1990; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1993; Petty, 2016; Rosenberger, 2020).

Homelessness skyrocketed in the 1980s due to political-economic restructuring that brought forth the deindustrialization and outsourcing of well-paying jobs, the

deinstitutionalization of mental health care facilities, a massive decrease in affordable housing through urban renewal programs, the financialization of housing markets, fiscal austerity in the investment of welfare programs (i.e., welfare state retrenchment), and a crack-cocaine epidemic (J. Wolch & Dear, 1993). In the 1990s, cities began responding to the increase in visual homelessness through police sweeps that essentially eliminated access to public space for the unhoused (Davis, 1990; Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 2009; Mitchell, 2003; N. Smith, 1996). Recently, cities have invested in expanding services and shelter options for the unhoused, leading some scholars to satirically characterize them as more “compassionate” (Hennigan & Speer, 2019; Murphy, 2009). In the last twenty years, some US cities have invested in more compassionate policies to provide services and short- and long-term shelter for the unhoused (Murphy, 2009).ⁱⁱⁱ But, at the same time, as these scholars argue, cities have also continued to enforce quality-of-life ordinances despite seminal court rulings,^{iv} which allow the criminalization of unhoused individuals occupying public space if there are enough shelter beds available. In 2019, the 9th District Circuit Court ruling in *Martin v. the City of Boise* (2019; hereafter, *Martin*) ruled that an overnight camping ban constituted cruel and unusual punishment under the 8th Amendment because the city of Boise failed to provide sufficient shelter beds to justify enforcement of the ban.^v In response to pressure from court rulings, homeless activist efforts, and complaints by housed residents, cities have evolved their “quality of life” ordinances to increase policing in public space (Bauman, Rosen, et al., 2019; Herring, 2021).

Moving beyond an explicitly punitive response to regulating unsheltered homelessness, cities have adapted by implementing more hidden, seemingly innocuous policy and design strategies. These include passive regulatory and architectural responses as well as the carrying out of encampment sweeps around shelters under the guise of public health or sanitation

initiatives. Although less brazenly harsh, these new strategies still involve the use of municipal funds, purportedly aimed at alleviating homelessness, for increased regulation, policing, and spatial displacement of the unhoused. To understand this process, I analyze the increase in hostile designs, their impacts on homelessness and public space, and contestations of them by the unhoused in their fights for a right to the city.

Hostile designs are an understudied aspect of increased policing. They are physical modifications of parks, plazas, sidewalks, and streets to preclude dwelling or other stationary activities. A small but growing subsection of the literature on such “hostile design” points to the political agency of objects and their relationality to larger political and economic agendas in neoliberal cities in restricting access and use of public space while criminalizing the unhoused (de Fine Licht, 2017; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1993; Petty, 2016; Rosenberger, 2017, 2020). Singular objects like anti-homeless spikes or bus benches with arm rests that prevent sitting or sleeping have been studied relationally to broader political and economic agendas of urban policy.

However, the do-it-yourself urban design tactics by unhoused residents to extend their public and living spaces remain largely understudied. One’s ability to partake in do-it-yourself urban design without being criminalized depends on their socioeconomic positionality and race/ethnicity. As Gordon Douglas (2018) has illustrated in his work on small-scale design solutions that utilize formal infrastructure of the city to improve quality of life, communities of color and unhoused communities are less likely to participate in these tactics due to prior experiences with the police and the unsanctioned nature of these interventions. My dissertation addresses this gap by investigating the relationship between expanding anti-homeless zones of hostile designs and do-it-yourself design responses by unhoused communities in Los Angeles. I contribute to the

understudied and undertheorized hostile design and do-it-yourself urban design literature by exploring everyday experiences in and contestations against conceived spaces of homelessness.

To map how anti-homeless zones and hostile designs have evolved during COVID-19, I answer my first question (see Chapter 5) through a historical review of the expansion of LA's anti-homeless landscape and emerging hostile designs within shelters that extend out into public spaces. To catalog what do-it-yourself urban design tactics unhoused communities partake in and why, I answer the second question through my empirical work (i.e., photography and interviews) with unhoused communities in Echo Park, Harbor, City, Van Nuys, and Venice, as part of the Services Not Sweeps coalition. To articulate the role that city planners, urban designers, and policymakers should adopt to enact just urban design, I answer my third question by recommending policy solutions shaped by the contradictory desires and needs of unhoused residents; these recommendations are situated within a just urban design framework that I develop in Chapter 2.

I analyzed the spatial characteristics, proliferation, and implications of hostile designs across shelters and public spaces and catalogued do-it-yourself urban designs on sidewalks, in parks, and on public city streets as they relate to enforcement of ordinances and other political and economic agendas in Los Angeles. I compared how hostile designs impacted people living in tents, on sidewalks, and vehicles, which represent a growing segment of the unhoused population. Because the impacts of hostile designs, their relationships to larger political and economic agendas (Rosenberger, 2017), and the do-it-yourself urban design tactics as responses by unhoused communities are understudied and undertheorized (Douglas, 2018; Rosenberger, 2020), this dissertation serves as an in-depth, empirical contribution to this growing scholarship.

To reiterate, my key argument is that do-it-yourself urban design is a direct tactical and coping response to hostile designs. Hostile designs are embedded into the broader political economy and homeless management regime of Los Angeles. They are incorporated into the formal provision of homeless services and shelter, strengthen enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances, and limit access to life-sustaining infrastructure in the city. Although limited politically and spatially, these grassroots infrastructural interventions temporarily improve quality of life for houseless communities dwelling in public spaces. DIY interventions and tactics are aided by community organizing and individual donations, they are employed to ensure individual privacy and provide community infrastructure, and they offer immediate need-based solutions to the regulatory, programmatic, and architectural shortcomings of short-term “housing solutions” like shelters and tiny homes. I advocate for architects, city planners, politicians and policymakers, and urban designers to learn from these everyday DIY urban design tactics to enhance access to public spaces, which can serve as hubs for services and opportunities to transition into housing. To attain public space design justice and dwellable inhabitation, unhoused residents’ local planning and design knowledge should be listened to and incorporated into formal decision-making processes that shape public space regulations and design outcomes, which impact the quality of public space for housed and unhoused residents.

Next, I construct my theoretical framework of pertinent concepts before reviewing the extensive literature on homelessness, municipal regulation of unsheltered homelessness, public space privatization, and resistance to spatial policing. These include spatial justice, three revanchisms, hostile designs, and just urban design.^{vi}

CHAPTER 2

A theoretical and conceptual framework to study homelessness through a design lens

Homelessness and spatial justice

Homelessness can be viewed, first and foremost, as a policy failure that has produced inaccessibility to affordable housing for over half-a-million Americans.^{vii} In response to legal rulings and demands by housed residents and businesses, cities have responded to homelessness through increased regulation and policing of activities linked to one's status as unhoused. The criminalization of homelessness largely takes away the freedom to practice life-sustaining activities, feel basic human dignity, and exert agency (Waldron, 1991). The activities that these ordinances outlaw include sitting or resting on sidewalks and in parks, asking pedestrians for money to purchase food and water, using a vehicle as shelter, and blocking pedestrians on sidewalks. Importantly, the existence of homelessness represents an urban injustice—economic, political, racial, social, and spatial—in the private and public spaces of cities. It also signifies a lack of access to economic opportunities and housing that punishes the urban poor, fails to consider their needs in policymaking decisions, exacerbates racial inequities, and extends to the policing of public space, with ordinances crafted to serve the needs of housed residents.

Justice is a contentious and fuzzy concept (Markusen, 2003). This chapter is divided into four sections. First, I consider debates about justice and describe three approaches to justice that I use to inform my just public space design framework. Second, I scrutinize theoretical framings of poverty management as ambivalent municipal responses to homelessness in conversation with the approaches to justice outlined next. Third, I describe growing theoretical demands to critique and analyze newly emerging patterns of hostile designs. Fourth, I develop a just public space

design framework that I used to evaluate and critique newly emerging hostile designs and reimagine them as just public spaces.

Political philosophers have treated justice as an issue of fairness (Rawls, 1971) whereas neo-Marxist geographers have treated it as a class issue where equitable distribution of resources and open access to transit, jobs, and other opportunities in the city are of primary concern (Harvey, 1973/2009; Soja, 2010). With the rise in advocacy planning in the late 1960s (Davidoff, 1965), justice took a communicative turn, shifting away from just outcomes to improve pluralism and procedural justice in decision-making processes (Habermas, 1984; Healey, 2003; Lake, 2017). Yet, justice as a normative planning outcome to achieve diversity, equity, and democracy is still seen as integral to developing a just city (Fainstein, 2011). These various conceptions have been critiqued for ignoring race and gender (N. Fraser, 1995; Young, 1990), power differentials in deliberative processes (Fainstein, 2000; Innes & Booher, 2004), and everyday struggles for justice by marginalized groups (Lefebvre, 1968; Purcell, 2002). Notwithstanding these debates, for people experiencing homelessness, a more robust conception of justice requires a both/and approach to distributive, procedural, interactional, and recognitional justice in realizing more inclusive rights to the city and public space.

My framework (Figure 1) is informed by three approaches to justice: 1) the capability approach to justice (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 2009); 2) recognitional justice (N. Fraser, 1995; Young, 1990); and 3) the right to the city (Butler, 2012; Harvey, 2012b; Mitchell, 2003). I describe each approach to justice and how it can add to scholarship on homelessness in public space and to theories of hostile/just urban designs. I then present the theoretical framework of my research.

The capability approach to justice was developed by the work of Amartya Sen (2009) and Martha Nussbaum (2011). It focuses on the abilities and agency that a person or group of people must have to attain human dignity and achieve a basic level of freedom. The capability approach is composed of two tenets. First, one's freedom to achieve well-being is of prime importance. Second, well-being is based on one's ability to do and be certain things (called capabilities) and whether their capabilities to do and be have been realized (called functionings). Importantly, one's ability to realize well-being is structured by personal, social, political, economic, and environmental conditions. For example, the unhoused, like everyone else, should have the freedom to eat, sleep, and access shelter, but their ability to realize this well-being is severely curtailed by the political economy of contemporary cities. Often, their status as impoverished and unsheltered, their use of public space for shelter, and negative stereotypes about how they look or why they are unhoused are exploited to preclude them from realizing basic capabilities and functionings. This points to an injustice of recognition, or how the unhoused are consistently stigmatized and ignored in urban policy.

Recognitional justice takes a both/and approach to conceptualizing justice by acknowledging the class basis of distributive injustice, while paying attention to power differentials in struggles for justice based on the stigmatization of certain groups (i.e., by race/ethnicity, class, gender, socioeconomic status) and the lack of accommodation for their unique material needs in decision-making processes. Injustice is experienced by the unhoused because they exist outside of "*both* the political-economic structure *and* the cultural-valuational structure of society" (N. Fraser, 1995, p. 78). In this case, certain public space activities, tied to the status of being unhoused, are criminalized because they are viewed outside the normative order of acceptable public space usage (i.e., walking, shopping). Anti-homeless laws are codified

and enforced to structure public space around the logic of private property, subject unhoused individuals to policing, and encourage them to accept temporary shelter situations. Involving excluded groups like unhoused individuals in decision-making processes can work to address stigmatizations by enhancing equitable access to public participation and public spaces, which are not without their conflicts.

Critiquing and improving Jurgen Habermas' (1984) notion of the public sphere, Nancy Fraser (1990) argues that recognitional justice can be achieved through ongoing struggles for social equality, cultural diversity, and multiple publics to ensure true participatory democracy in the public sphere, the public realm, and associated public spaces. For example, abolishing anti-homeless ordinances that criminalize sleeping in a park requires political resistance by unhoused individuals and their advocates, which can enhance the different social groups and cultural activities that are allowed to occupy a public space for their diverse needs. "Justice should refer not only to distribution, but also to the institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation" (Young, 1990, p. 39). In the case of homelessness, recognitional justice acknowledges the importance in redistribution of material and economic resources like wages, housing, and access to public space, but also prioritizes the realization of individual dignity, personal capabilities and agency, and freedom from oppression (e.g., marginalization and violence in public spaces) and domination (e.g., lack of power in determining policy outcomes). Fraser's multiple publics approach can be used to inform how activities like sitting, sleeping, and panhandling are acceptable, non-criminal tactics used by the unhoused to get by. Multiple publics advances the idea that different cultural groups use public spaces for their diverse needs, and that competing activities and conflicts that arise are inherent in the use of public spaces. This approach can

oppose prior research that suggests regulations and design are needed to prevent panhandling lest there will be increased crime (Ellickson, 1996). Often, what generates conflict is not increased crime, but the contrasting spatial practices of mobile pedestrians and immobile panhandlers, and how cities often respond by outlawing those activities that disrupt pedestrian flow (Blomley, 2010).

However, as David Harvey (2009) argues, universal theories and claims to rights, justice, and freedom must be grounded in the economic, political, social, and spatial particulars of a place. Extending Habermas' and Fraser's approaches to public space, Kurt Iveson (1998) provides a way to apply a spatial approach to justice. He advocates for a multiple publics model to public space, which he applies to his work on graffiti. While we should celebrate cultural recognition of and alternative claims to public space, we should also investigate how space can limit or enhance everyday experiences. This is because "the experience of urban space structures the lived experience which contribute to group formation" and "attempts to occupy and transform these spaces are central aspects of the processes of group formation and identity construction" (Iveson, 1998, p. 30). Thinking of public space through a multi-public lens affords the consideration of the articulation of different cultural, political, and economic claims to space; the presence of overlapping and competing uses; how different groups blur the boundaries between public and private space; the ways that multiple scales of regulation and design processes might produce inclusive or exclusive space; and the role that urban planning plays in addressing oppression and domination in public space. I build off this model when discussing and referencing Iveson's later collaborative work with Setha Low in developing propositions for just public space (S. Low & Iveson, 2016). By thinking spatially through a multiple publics lens (i.e., housed versus unhoused), I can better contextualize how hostile designs are justified and

why they criminalize homelessness. For example, a park can fluctuate spatially and temporally for various user groups. From personal experiences using Echo Park during the pandemic, on one side of the park, housed residents were able to catch some sun and picnic, while unhoused residents on the other side of the park could stay in their tent, garden, or cook. Often, unhoused residents and housed residents socialized and interacted. At times, these social interactions involved requests for a beer or money, but they did not warrant the spectacle of policed demolition. From these reflections, city planners and urban designers can more appropriately recommend how decision-making processes and outcomes can ensure that the capabilities, non-criminal activities, and basic rights of unhoused individuals are not designed out of city spaces. Accommodating multiple occupations of public space for recreation, leisure, and shelter instead of criminalizing and displacing one particular user group advances multiple rights to the city and its public spaces.

The right to the city is a right to produce space through occupation and policymaking, which is often crafted following contentious political and spatial struggles between urban planners, architects, neighborhood groups, powerful individuals, and the general public. With the increase in quality-of-life ordinances that criminalize sitting, sleeping, and loitering in public spaces (Bauman, Rosen, et al., 2019), unhoused individuals do not appear to have the ability to attain basic human dignity by practicing life-sustaining practices like sleeping and going to the bathroom without police contact. Their rights to the city and to occupy public space are diminished. The experiences and perspectives of unhoused individuals are overlooked and not included in decision-making processes that shape how sidewalks and parks are used. Often, housed residents who have access to private property have power in influencing policy that determines how public spaces are used.

As alluded to, normative expectations of how public space can be used are contextualized by private property relations. James Holston (2008) defines contestations of state-sanctioned urban inequality (i.e., the regulation and criminalization of sitting and sleeping in public spaces) as forms of “insurgent citizenship.” These spatio-temporal tactics by marginalized groups often materialize at the spatial, social, and political “periphery” of cities. In the case of this Los Angeles-based study, the spatial peripheries spread throughout the fragmented metropolis from central plazas, sidewalks, and parks into interstitial spaces under freeways and everyday public spaces like the beach. The social peripheries are life-sustaining, private activities in public. The political peripheries are alternative productions of public space through the do-it-yourself design interventions that develop individual and community infrastructure. Forms of “insurgent citizenship” materialize and actively struggle against the regulation, policing, and designing out of non-criminal activities shaped by “inclusively inegalitarian” notions of citizenship to demand a right to the city and a right to exist in the city (Holston, 2008, p. 41). Holston primarily focuses on squatter movements and struggles by the urban poor in Brazil to attain rights to reside in informal private spaces of cities. I build on his notion of insurgent citizenship through what I call “dwellable inhabitation,” which is tied to ensuring rights to dwell in public spaces.

Dwellable inhabitation is a capability afforded through regulation and urban design, which allows individuals to appropriate public space so that they can partake in life-sustaining activities (e.g., sleeping and eating), when no accessible or reasonable alternatives exist. Like the concepts of “dwelling as difference” (Lancione, 2020) and “campzanship” (Sigona, 2015; Sparks, 2017a), dwellable inhabitation is an ongoing spatial and political practice of constructing a physical home to live in, articulating rights to situate this home or community in a desired space, and controlling how the iterative designs of this residence look like and function. This

concept prioritizes “autogestion” (Butler, 2012; Lefebvre, 2009) and the right to “inhabit” the city (Purcell, 2002). Autogestion is based on the capability for individuals to self-manage and control how they access, use, and produce space for their unique needs and desires. Purcell (2002) argues that struggling for a right to the city requires pro-democracy mobilizations against neoliberalization of public space. To achieve a right to the city, there are two requirements. First, urban inhabitants must have a seat at the decision-making table during negotiations, for example, concerning the design of a corporate plaza in downtown LA. This includes those user groups typically targeted for exclusion. Second, said inhabitants must be able to appropriate, occupy, and produce a common public space that is open and accessible. This requires a “clear priority for the use value of urban residents over the exchange value interests of capitalist firms” (Purcell, 2002, p. 103). Diverging from notions of insurgent citizenship, which does not consider how everyday public spaces can accommodate DIY interventions to claim rights to the city, dwellable inhabitation prioritizes the right for individuals to use temporarily use public space to dwell, sit, and sleep, as well as political demands and spatial struggles to attain this right. As will become clearer, enhancing dwellable inhabitation for unhoused residents improves the quality of public space for housed residents based on DIY solutions suggested by research participants (e.g., public restrooms, sanitation services). In contrast, spatial injustice is continually experienced by the unhoused and is a product of urban policy and design that shapes who is allowed to use public space and for what purpose.

In the case of public space, dwellable inhabitation and rights to the city are achieved through processes and practices where hostile public spaces are spatially transformed by grassroots communities into alternative places with public services like bathrooms, necessities like food, and areas to shelter safely. These processes and practices can be achieved through

design, spatial occupation, and protest, and can be done in partnership with formal institutions but usually take place due to a lack of assistance from policymakers and service providers. In the case of the Echo Park tent city, months of community organizing produced capabilities for tent city residents to control who accessed the communal area for safety reasons, how certain areas (e.g. the community garden and clothing swap) were used, and how public space was spatially transformed and reimagined as an autonomous community. This form of autogestion was done without a formal seat at decision-making tables, at a time when enforcement of an anti-camping ordinance was relaxed, which gave people a spatial and temporal opportunity to inhabit park space for life-sustaining practices.

Considering these three approaches, questions of justice arise related to homelessness in the city, the capabilities of unhoused individuals to realize freedoms and a sense of well-being, the recognition of their spatial activities as legitimate, and their right to dwellable inhabitation in public space. How do designs of public spaces limit the capabilities, activities, and rights of unhoused individuals? Who determines what activities should be incorporated or excluded from public space, and why? How can newly emerging exclusionary spaces be redesigned to ensure dwellable inhabitation? Recent policy responses point to the coexistence and codependence of both punitive and compassionate approaches. For example, the placement of shelters (compassionate) is often used to justify criminalization on nearby sidewalks (Herring, 2021). This points to a need to seriously consider how cities can move beyond strategies containing punitive approaches. Throughout this dissertation, I advance that the regulation and design of public space matter in determining how cities manage and ultimately end homelessness.

Revanchism, post-revanchism, and neo-revanchism

In the 1990s, it was par-for-the-course for cities to explicitly criminalize the unhoused and attempt to police them out of their jurisdiction to pave the way for gentrification. However, through a slew of lawsuits brought on by legal and political advocacy organizations, courts ruled that enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances violated several constitutional rights of unhoused individuals. In response, cities got creative about how they criminalized homelessness, with many of the responses being couched in compassionate language. An overlooked aspect of these debates was the production of innocuous urban design obstacles that made it increasingly hard for unhoused individuals to feel welcome in cities. Examples include constant surveillance by CCTVs, the establishment of Business Improvement District (BID) zones policed by private security, and police sweeps that destroy individuals' private property. There have been ongoing debates about whether criminalization through policy and design denotes a revengeful city or whether the presence of service and shelter provision depicts a more complex, quasi-compassionate landscape. I consider these debates briefly before positing that the unhoused are not experiencing a post-revanchist city. The neo-revanchist city that they experience is one with new forms of policies that expand conceptualized zones of anti-homelessness, produce hostile designs within shelter architectures and public spaces, and target the do-it-yourself urban design tactics of unhoused folks for criminalization. My position is further corroborated through my mapping of anti-homeless zones and hostile designs in Los Angeles.

The term revanchism was coined by Neil Smith (1996) in his case study of gentrification in New York City. It refers to a revenge-themed urban policy regime that shifted from service and shelter provision toward increased policing of the unhoused to displace them from urban space (N. Smith, 1996). Under uneven development, where capital flowed back into previously

divested inner-city real estate markets to revitalize residential property markets, appropriate public space activities were crafted to fit the needs and behavioral norms of newly arriving housed residents. Sleeping in parks, using drugs and drinking alcohol, and loitering in parks rather than walking through them became targeted activities for policing in cities who elected mayors on the promise that they would “clean up the streets.” Many of these initiatives and quality of life ordinances were seen as policy failures in the mid- to late-2000s because homelessness increased as policing pushed people to other public spaces and not into housing (Vitale, 2010). In response, cities passed bonds, propositions, and measures to increase service and shelter provision and construct some affordable housing. Relational approaches to homelessness were critical of the hyperbolic discourse that described poverty management as an all-out assault on the urban poor, and scholars began analyzing the “post-revanchist city” as a more compassionate homeless policy landscape with blurry geographies of punitiveness and care (Clarke & Parsell, 2020; DeVerteuil, 2006, 2014, 2019; Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2010; Murphy, 2009). This empirical work emphasized the role that “compassionate” service and shelter expansion has played in justifying and legitimizing punitive regimes of spatial displacement through police sweeps, leading the term post-revanchism to be replaced by compassionate revanchism (Hennigan & Speer, 2019).

Research during the 2000s has looked at the relationality between punitive and compassionate responses to homelessness, including public space clean up initiatives like the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) (Blasi, 2007; Blasi & Stuart, 2008; Vitale, 2010); decriminalization and sanctioning of tent cities with services and security (Herring, 2014; Herring & Lutz, 2015; May & Cloke, 2014; Sparks, 2017b; Speer, 2017, 2017); increased funding for policing of public space to encourage entry into rehabilitative services and shelter programs (DeVerteuil, 2006;

Herring, 2021; Stuart, 2016); and “housing first” initiatives (Hennigan, 2017; Hsu et al., 2016; Padgett et al., 2016). Notwithstanding increased geographies of care, this research has described responses to street homelessness as ambivalent at best, as many of these policies and programs are implemented according to ongoing tropes about the unhoused as deviant and dependent on the state for services (Sparks, 2012) as well as neoliberal logics of self-governance, surveillance, entrepreneurialism, and normalization (Hennigan, 2017). The provision of services, shelter, and housing co-exist and depend upon the policing, regulation, and design of public space (DeVerteuil, 2014). Ethnographic accounts of the dynamics between streets and shelters, and interviews with police officers and policymakers, detail the increased criminalization of unhoused individuals through improved provision of services and shelter because they are deemed as “service resistant” (Clarke & Parsell, 2020). Coercive social control is often employed through the police who offer either rehabilitative shelter or incarceration (Johnsen et al., 2018). This form of “therapeutic policing” leads unsheltered individuals into constant contact with police, the criminal justice system, and low-quality shelter systems with stringent rules (Stuart, 2016). The ruling in *Martin* and complaints by housed residents have been used by cities to justify investment in temporary shelter systems to increase criminalization and destruction of tents in nearby public spaces (Herring, 2021). Seen as existing outside normative neoliberal expectations of propertied citizenship (Dozier, 2019; Sparks, 2012), the unhoused are both excluded from private property, deemed service resistant, and regulated out of public spaces due to their purported obstruction of pedestrian flow and infringement on other people’s rights to move freely in public space (Blomley, 2009, 2010, 2011; Clarke & Parsell, 2020). This research points to continued criminalization of sitting, sleeping (either in tents or in vehicles), and

panhandling in public spaces through police discretion and territorialization of unhoused bodies (Herbert, 1997).

Recently, regulations that codify acceptable behaviors and policy that designs a gentrifying aesthetics of place have produced “neo-revanchist” landscapes that criminalize the unhoused through a “national politics of exclusion” (Levy, 2021, p. 923; N. Smith, 2009). In distinction to revanchist landscapes that expulse the unhoused from all city spaces through unconstitutional regulations and spatial policing without providing services and shelter, neo-revanchist landscapes push people into constant precarity through strategies of regulation, policing, and design of public spaces, which are justified through the provision of services and the existence of other interstitial spaces where the unhoused may dwell legally. Neo-revanchist landscapes are newly emerging spaces within municipalities that outlaw and criminalize sitting, sleeping, panhandling, and loitering. They can be multiscalar—a municipality, a residential district, a public park, or a series of street blocks.

The specific focus of this dissertation is these neo-revanchist public spaces that ban activities associated with unhoused individuals yet permit other housed inhabitants the opportunity to use them freely. While neo-revanchism may exist alongside more supportive geographies, there is still little focused empirical work on the political agency of hostile designs and contestations of them by unhoused folks to survive in public spaces. Just public space design, as produced by grassroots groups or the state, can offer alternative material affordances, recognize different claims to and activities in public space, and provide compassionate landscapes for social and political discourse, conviviality, and opportunities for service provision and transition into housing without criminalization.

Hostile designs: Creating the anti-commons

Visible street homelessness, the crowding of sidewalks with tents, the presence of large RVs and campers, and the obstruction of pedestrians by unhoused folks to ask for money or food are largely seen as a nuisance and in violation of ordinances that codify and enforce (through policing) a normative order and expectations of appropriate behavior in public space (Herbert, 1997). For example, cities view the primary use of sidewalks as serving pedestrian flow, so an obstruction like people sleeping in tents is seen as a nuisance that must be addressed to restore a sidewalk's normative order (Blomley, 2009, 2010). The enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances through spatial policing of the unhoused has been argued to stymie their basic freedoms and their ability to inhabit city space, and feel dignified (Waldron, 1991). Negative outcomes of constant policing and harassment include displacement, dispossession of personal property, and lasting psychological and material affects (Darrah-Okike et al., 2018; Herring et al., 2020). While the unhoused usually resort to exiting these public spaces or adapting their behaviors and appearances (DeVerteuil et al., 2009), the most radical form of resistance against displacement has been the continued occupation of parks, sidewalks, and other public spaces in the face of regulation (Camp, 2012; Crawford, 1995; Dozier, 2019; Mitchell, 2003; N. Smith, 1996). These debates have often centered around tensions between private property and public space use for private activities (Blomley, 2009; Ehrenfeucht & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014; Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006), redesign and rezoning of prime downtown spaces for white collar office workers and their consumptive uses like shopping (Ellickson, 1996; Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee, 1998), and legal, moral, and philosophical issues related to the right to the city, basic freedoms, and the democratic and social nature of public space (Camp & Heatherton, 2011;

Cianciotto, 2020; Gerry, 2007; Harvey, 2008; Mitchell & Heynan, 2009; Purcell, 2002; Waldron, 1991).

This research is important, yet it overlooks or cursorily mentions the effects of hostile urban design on the unhoused in everyday public spaces. Prior research that has looked into examples of hostile designs has done so in prime downtown spaces (Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee, 1998; Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 2009; Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006). This research has importantly critiqued the influence of private property and downtown corporations on the redesign and securitization of service-dependent areas like Skid Row and prime spaces like Downtown Los Angeles, which has raised important legal, philosophical, and policy debates about the exclusion of marginalized groups like the unhoused. However, much of this research has prioritized content analyses of downtown business plans with some photographs of architectural features. How these spaces are experienced and contested from the perspectives of excluded groups is not examined, and there is an explicit focus on spectacular public spaces. The ways in which cities determine legitimate users within newly emerging neo-revanchist spaces like parks, sidewalks, and streets, and how the unhoused contest and reimagine mundane public spaces demands further inquiry.

To address this oversight, I build on prior ethnographic research (Douglas, 2018, 2023) to explore examples of hostile designs and resistance to urban design injustice through do-it-yourself urban designs in everyday spaces inhabited by unhoused folks. In *The Help-Yourself City*, sociologist Gordon Douglas finds that informal urban design interventions like the painting of a bike line or construction of a communal library are deemed appropriate and formerly incorporated by cities based on an individual's socioeconomic status and demographic makeup. He suggests that one's right to access, transform, and use public space for their needs is based on

the perception of legitimacy in their intervention. Through photography and in-depth conversations with do-it-yourself urban designers, he explores the ways in which hostile designs (i.e., the lack of amenities like a bike lane) are experienced, contested, and transformed. However, this research leaves open questions about how marginalized groups may intervene and actively contest hostile designs to transform urban policy and design to be more just. I respond to this gap by employing photographic documentation and storytelling to understand how hostile designs are experienced and contested by unhoused folks in LA.

A “bumproof” bench, a fence erected around a public park to restrict access and entry, and the placement of planters on sidewalks are examples of hostile designs. Their primary goal is to prevent a certain user and activity from taking place. In these examples, the bench deters comfortable sitting or sleeping, the fence regulates who can use the park, and planters make it difficult to erect tents on sidewalks. Hostile designs are a form of environmental determinism inspired by Oscar Newman’s (1996) defensible space thesis and Kelling and Wilson’s (1982) broken windows theory. Using Pruitt-Igoe as an example, Oscar Newman argued that the high-density design of “towers-in-the-park” made residents feel a lack of control and responsibility for maintaining common areas, which produced crime (Newman, 1996). Architectural and environmental design, Newman suggested, could ensure that there are more eyes on the street to guarantee social control, regulate and deter crime, and promote public health for local communities. Newman posited that the three key design features to safeguard communities against criminality were territoriality, surveillance, and symbolic barriers. *Territoriality* worked to clearly demarcate public and private spaces so that residents would actively protect their communities from outsiders. Design examples of territoriality included walls and fences that would work to privatize public space. Increasing *surveillance* could be achieved through outdoor

lighting, well-trafficked pedestrian areas, playgrounds, or residential windows facing sidewalks. Lastly, *symbolic barriers* are strategically placed objects like street furniture or community gardens that indicate to people that they should care for spaces. Any design disorder with architectural objects that produce defensible space through territoriality, surveillance, and symbolic barriers can exacerbate criminality. A park without a fence, a shattered streetlight, or a damaged first-floor window are examples of broken windows. Broken windows is a criminological theory that argues that public space crime, anti-social behavior, or urban decay must be addressed through policy, policing, and design that upkeeps space to prevent increased crime (Kelling & Wilson, 1982). The essential argument here is that a singular broken window in a neighborhood would spiral it into decay and rampant crime, so it must be fixed right away. These theories have worked together to specifically target unhoused people living in public spaces through design and policing.

Yale Law professor Robert Ellickson (1996) rather tactlessly equated unhoused people who panhandle to individual broken windows that would negatively impact street life, disrupt pedestrian flow, and affect local merchants. To address panhandlers, he argued for zoning the unhoused out of prime business areas into small skid row districts. His suggestions have been widely adopted by cities. Here, the chronic misconduct of the unhoused (i.e., begging) produces compassion fatigue, and is considered a nuisance and an inconvenience to pedestrians (Ellickson, 1996). This has led cities to create zones where homelessness is allowed (e.g., Skid Row) and zones where their presence is criminalized (e.g., Downtown Los Angeles). Hostile designs in these spaces have been likened to fortresses replete with surveillance cameras, police, barricades, uncomfortable benches, and other objects that make life difficult for the urban poor (Davis, 1990).

Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris' (1993) research on the privatization of public space in Downtown Los Angeles pointed to two different categories of hostile designs she called "soft" and "hard" controls. Soft controls are designs of public spaces that simply do not provide facilities for unwanted groups, including benches, bathrooms, and shade, among other things or provide design elements that reduced their access—gates, walls, fences, above and below the street spaces, among other design features. Hard controls in privately-owned public spaces include CCTV monitoring, the presence of police and private security, and the enforcement of ordinances to displace groups like the unhoused. Since then, there has been scant attention paid to the impacts of hostile designs and their relationship to larger political, economic, and planning agendas of cities. Often, hostile designs are treated secondarily to larger processes like gentrification, property rights, police power, neoliberal urbanism, and the privatization of public space (Herbert, 1997; Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee, 1998; Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006; Sorkin, 1992; Wacquant, 2009). Even in scholarship that does focus on defensible architecture (Sorkin, 2008), the proliferation of barricades, fences, anti-homeless spikes, and increased security and surveillance are attributed to larger issues like protecting downtown spaces from terrorism and infringing upon the general public's rights.

Hostile designs have received renewed attention, specifically the cataloguing of defensive objects by highlighting contestations through observations of "desire lines" that reuse public space (Rosenberger, 2017; N. Smith & Walters, 2018). Smith and Walters (2018) argue that desire can function as a productive force that resists hostile architecture (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987) through simple acts like walking the city (de Certeau, 1984; Debord, 1959/2006). On desire lines, N. Smith & Walters (2018, p. 2991) state that:

Desire lines in their concrete sense represent ‘little tactics’, socially constructed, through which we might observe the history of a space and the power relationships it embodies. A desire line that diverts from a formalized path can inform us not only of the inadequacies of the structure, but of the institution’s willingness to tolerate, accept and sometimes absorb alternative routes. As informal paths are concreted and subsumed into the existing network, these small rebellions demonstrate that institutions can be and are responsive to the persistent disruptions that desire lines represent.

While city planners and urban designers often use participant-observation to understand how desire lines may be incorporated into formal public space designs, we can also conceptually assess how a pedestrian who aimlessly drifts through a street market, a group of protesters who occupy space to demand political change, or unhoused individuals who appropriate space for shelter produce social space and directly contest its privatization and the attendant exclusionary regulations and hostile designs. The limited research on the subject has applied liberal notions of justice as fairness to consider instances where anti-homeless spikes are justified because the unhoused have access to other spaces not directly abutting private property (de Fine Licht, 2017). For example, Petty (2016) reviews the paradoxical case study of anti-homeless spikes in London that sparked outrage by housed residents but revealed that they were not against broader processes of gentrification and commercialization of public space, which ultimately legitimized the presence of the spikes. What stands out about hostile architecture is that it is “explicitly coercive, violent and unjustly aimed at those towards the bottom of the socio-political spectrum, while other forms of social control and division remain largely invisible (normative) and therefore not the target of vociferous public outrage” (Petty, 2016, p. 73). Additionally, hostile designs can also refer to implicit (lack of facilities) and explicit (enforcement of regulations) metaphors and materialities that take away space for the unhoused (Rosenberger, 2020). Therefore, signs and regulations are also forms of hostile designs that exclude people through policing and placement of fences or by not providing certain facilities (e.g., restrooms) in parks.

The obvious implications and impacts of hostile designs are that they target the unhoused, don't take into consideration their needs and desires in planning and design processes, limit their capabilities in realizing their right to inhabit the city, and diminish the quality and use-value of commonly held public space.

Common public spaces are parks, plazas, sidewalks, and streets where groups who may be excluded in traditional public spaces or quasi-public spaces are able to appropriate, occupy, and produce their own space within urban settings. For example, the development of Echo Park into a self-sufficient encampment community produced a common space for unhoused individuals. Once it became fenced off, it transformed into an anti-commons. Cianciotto (2019) refers to anti-common spaces as quasi-public spaces that directly exclude commoning activities, which ascribe space a use value, through architectural and regulatory interventions. Common spaces are ascribed a use value by a particular group; are managed by them; can take place across different spaces and at random times; and may be exclusive—gated communities (Cianciotto, 2020; Harvey, 2012a). Neo-Marxist geographer David Harvey (2012a) argues that the most important aspect in the creation of a commons and continual commoning practices is a politically motivated appropriation of land for non-consumptive use that does not fall victim to capitalistic exploitation and enclosure. Here, the occupation of portions of Echo Park for private dwelling and the construction of hygiene infrastructure and community kitchen and gathering spaces functioned as a tactic of communing. This notion of the commons, or common spaces, differs from Hannah Arendt's (1958) conceptualization of a common public realm. Diverse groups who use the public realm commons are increasingly subjected to exclusive regulations of certain activities, commercialization, and privatization (Arendt, 1958). Of course, third places are important spaces for sociality and politics. They act as a bridge between the private nature of

property and the public culture of city streets by mitigating absolute “segregation, isolation, compartmentalization, and sterilization” (Oldenburg, 1999, p. 285). Yet, these public realms and third places are quasi-public. The opposite of common space is the anti-commons. Anti-commons are characterized by enclosure, regulation, and hostile architecture (e.g., bus bench with a middle divider to prevent unsheltered individuals to sleep on it). Anti-homeless public spaces in LA are often enclosed by fencing and police presence, regulated to ban activities associated with the status of being unhoused, and replete with hostile architecture like uncomfortable benches, surveillance, and lack of public restrooms.

Recent research on hostile architecture has reviewed media discourse and public responses to anti-homeless spikes that illustrate “longstanding humanitarian ambivalence” and reflect a “double distaste” of poor design and the urban poor in entrepreneurial cities (Petty, 2016, p. 77). Cities often respond ambivalently to homelessness in public space, allowing sitting and sleeping in some spaces while criminalizing it in others (DeVerteuil, 2014; Hennigan & Speer, 2019). Herring's (2014) research on how cities respond to encampment communities demonstrates myriad flexible homeless management strategies (e.g., tolerating the formation of tent cities; accommodating them as sanctioned housing alternatives) in response to tent cities that seclude and exclude spatially, politically and socially. In Phoenix, shelters were located outside of downtown to encourage people to use them, justify the enforcement of anti-homeless laws, and satiate local businesses’ desires to expel the unhoused from adjacent sidewalks.

Humanitarian and policy responses to homelessness suggest that regulations, designs, and services offered to the unhoused have either been punitive, paternalistic and demeaning, or offered *quid pro quo* in exchange for non-criminalization (Hennigan, 2017; Hennigan & Speer, 2019; Herring, 2021; Sparks, 2012). These studies point to the ways that homeless services and

shelters impact how public space can be used by the unhoused. Yet, they overlook how the physical redesign of mundane spaces like parks, sidewalks, and streets contributes to this hostility. What is important to understand is that the physical modification of public space eliminates political, social, and spatial rights for the unhoused.

Because there has not been a sustained effort to understand the political and social impact of hostile designs through an explicit spatial lens, I contribute to this literature gap by studying the experiences and contestations of hostile designs through DIY urban design responses by unhoused communities. Both Petty (2016) and Rosenberger (2020) call for more research on the role that media and public discourse play in justifying and legitimizing hostile designs, researching the roles that policymakers play in implementing and enforcing these designs, analyzing the materiality of the features that together comprise hostile designs, and critiquing the impacts that hostile designs have on rights to the city. Through my case study of homelessness and public space in LA, I explore how hostile designs are experienced and contested. I argue that without editorializing, critiquing, and rethinking hostile designs, access to public space for the unhoused will continue to be erased and inalienable rights will be eliminated. To understand how hostile urban designs may be evaluated and reimagined as just urban designs, I develop an operational framework that informs my analysis of hostile designs, do-it-yourself designs, stories and knowledge from unhoused people, and structure my policy and design recommendations to produce more just public spaces.

Defining and operationalizing just public space designs

Just public space design stands in contrast to hostile design. Considering justice in urban design, do-it-yourself urban designs, instead of being overlooked or targeted for criminalization, would be learned from and incorporated into formal public space planning and design processes,

practices, and outcomes. In this section, I develop an operational framework to with five interconnected just public space propositions to learn from the DIY urban design responses to hostile designs (Figure 2). In doing so, I consider the three previous approaches to justice I outlined above (i.e., capabilities approach, recognitional justice, and right to the city); previous and ongoing responses to homeless management (i.e., revanchism, post-revanchism, and neo-revanchism); and calls for more empirical research and theorization of emerging resistance to hostile designs. These three theoretical angles help inform the development of my framework. This framework serves two functions. First, it works as an evaluative tool to critically analyze hostile designs and DIY urban design responses. Second, it serves as a normative guide when listening to unhoused folks and incorporating their needs and desires into speculative urban design and city planning policy recommendations. In the penultimate chapter of this dissertation, I provide examples of how city planners and urban designers can reimagine public space to be more just. These recommendations draw from my interviews with unhoused folks, analysis of do-it-yourself design tactics, and critiques of hostile design photographs. They are incorporated into public space planning and design guidelines that can be useful for unhoused communities, city planning and urban design agencies, and policymakers. A normative goal of urban design has been to promote outcomes that render public space more accessible, inclusive, sociable, and political. However, past theorizations of justice in urban design often offer normative concepts for urban design practitioners to consider, which have either been aspirational or unrealized because they are decontextualized from the political and economic realities of urban planning processes and outcomes.

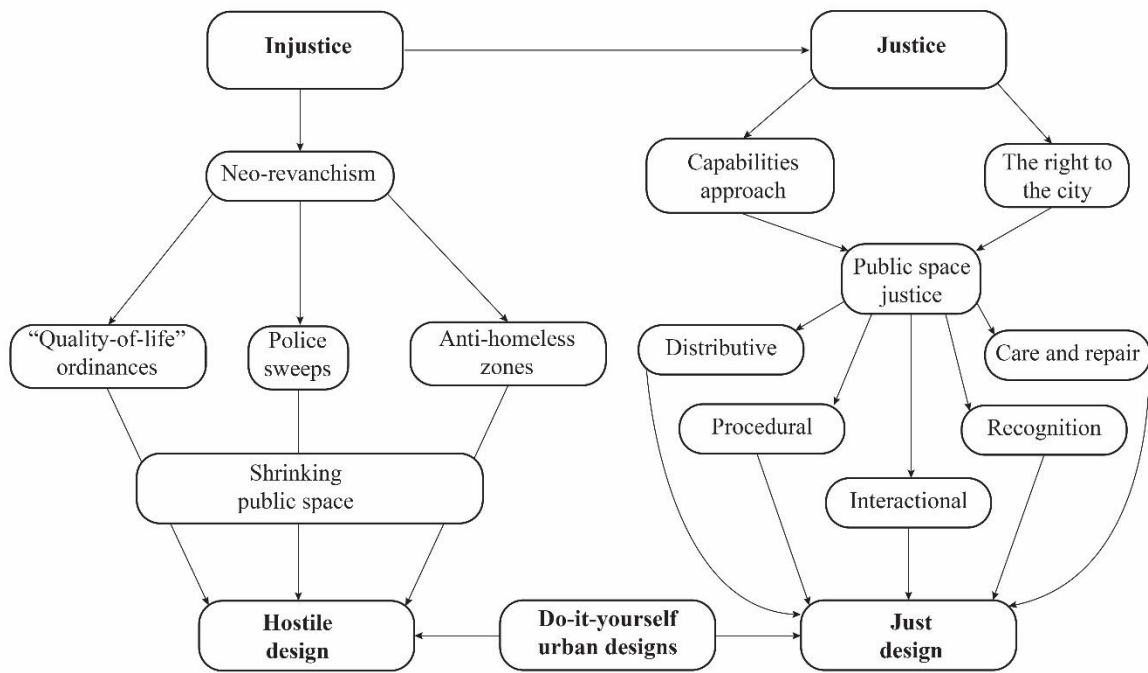


Figure 2. Public space (in)justice and do-it-yourself urban designs framework. Design by Christopher Giamarino.

Early design justice ideas like Howard’s Garden City (1898/1965) and *Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne’s* (CIAM) Athens charter of modernist design principles sought to address industrial ills and social injustices associated with unchecked urbanization. But these visions—often espoused by architects—were not practically applied and contextualized within actually existing social and political processes in the political economy of American cities (Birch, 2011; Giamarino et al., 2022; Goh, 2019). For example, in the American context, modernist design principles were coupled with processes of urban renewal that led to the demolition of mixed land uses and socioeconomically and demographically diverse

neighborhoods in exchange for urban form that prioritized functionally separated land uses, suburbanization, car-centric streets, and homogenized, segregated neighborhoods.

Much later, Kevin Lynch (1981) sought to develop a normative theory of just urban design ('good city form') by answering the question "What makes a good city?" The purpose of Lynch's normative theory was to establish a baseline for city planning processes and urban design outcomes that would afford individuals the ability to interact with, influence, and enjoy city spaces. To achieve good city form, five performance dimensions must be addressed including *vitality* (degree to which built form supports vital functions, biological requirements and capabilities of human beings), *sense* (degree to which built form creates a match between the environment, sensory and mental capabilities, and cultural constructs), *fit* (degree to which built form and capacity of spaces match the patterns and quantity of actions people engage in), *access* (degree to which built form allows us to reach other people, activities, resources, services, information, or places), and *control* (degree to use and access of spaces and activities, their creation, repair, modification and management is controlled by those who use, work or reside in them) (K. Lynch, 1981). Lynch argues that a just spatial allocation of these dimensions will vary by context and therefore offers no single theory of "goodness."

It is important to note that normative visions of good or just urban design, while helpful for thinking about how to create a more inclusive public realm by improving access, aesthetics, ecological processes, and social interactions (Gehl, 1971/1987; Hester, 2006; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2012; K. Lynch, 1981), are usually apolitical and similarly separated from actually existing socio-spatial contexts and everyday life. Recent debates have argued that justice should be the subject (Lake, 2017) or object (Fainstein, 2011) of city planning and urban design. Subject-based arguments contend that participatory processes must be equitable to better ensure just outcomes,

while object-based arguments posit that cities should evaluate outcomes according to normative propositions like democracy, diversity, and equity. Again, this dichotomization is problematic, as both design processes, practices, and outcomes should be considered when thinking through the design of just public space.

Recently, other public space and design scholars have proffered similar baseline dimensions to ensure just public space design. Low and Iveson (2016) have comprehensively conceptualized how to evaluate, plan, and design just public space through the *redistribution* of public spaces to increase access; the *recognition* of difference and the need to accommodate diverse cultural practices into public spaces without fear of policing; the need to foster *encounter* and *interaction* between different social groups as a tool for social learning; a motive to establish an *care and repair* to encourage pro-social behaviors such as maintaining a high-quality public space; and *procedural fairness* in planning and design processes for communities whose voices have been systematically and historically locked out of decision-making and urban policy.

This last issue of procedural fairness is a lingering issue in urban planning and urban design, as experts in the field still struggle to relinquish control of how space is planned and designed (Lowery & Schweitzer, 2019). Design justice can be achieved by incorporating the voices and demands of unhoused individuals into decision-making processes that can ensure procedural justice and just design outcomes. Lowery and Schweitzer (2019) challenge cities to be more adaptive, anticipatory, and generative of just outcomes, based a variety of spatial, social, economic, racial, and cultural factors, processes, and practices of the everyday. For the unhoused, just public space design will protect their right to inhabit the city by producing affordances that permit necessary life-sustaining practices, allow these practices to influence design knowledge, and inform how design experts respond to public spaces.

I draw from Kian Goh's (2019) political economy approach to conceptualizing just urban design as a process, practice, and outcome. Her work in Jakarta has explored the spatial transformations of design processes, practices, and outcomes by *kampung* (settlements constructed through grassroots efforts to access housing by the urban poor) residents as they fight for more socially and environmentally just visions. Here, informal residents' struggles were articulated at the local community level, sought to ensure procedural fairness, and worked to block evictions engendered by Jakarta's regional political-economic desires to create a world class waterfront funded by global flows of Dutch capital investment to engineer climate infrastructure (Goh, 2019). At each level—the global, the regional, and the local—urban design plans and counter-design plans produce political (i.e., governmental desire to create world class waterfront), material (i.e., construction of large sea wall to achieve political desire), and imagined (i.e., Jakarta as a global city ideal for foreign investment) visions. Drawing on Goh's political economy approach to conceptualizing just urban design at multiple scales, I will also investigate how the continued privatization of public space in Los Angeles, as it leads to the production of hostile public spaces and spatial exclusion of unhoused folks, is legitimized and contested politically, materially, and imaginatively in design processes, practices, and outcomes by various actors.

Again, Goh's work (2019) analyzing the competing design visions between the city of Jakarta and *kampung* (informal housing) residents provides insight into how research on just urban design can assess inequities in the processes, practices, and outcomes of urban design to render all three aspects more just. In all three arenas, contestation, conflict, and negotiation are present because policymakers and local residents have competing spatial visions of what a just city should look like. Procedural justice occurs when participatory processes increase inclusion

and address issues of power. Within the scope of my research, political actors that decide to re-enforce an anti-camping ordinance would have to include unhoused individuals in this decision-making process. Design (practice) justice is achieved when competing formal and informal design goals are included in normative visions for a future-oriented just city. Within the scope of my research, design justice could be attained by reimagining how a park like Echo Park could be rezoned, remodeled, and redesigned without displacing unhoused folks. Encampments could exist, trash receptacles and sanitation services could be provided, and housed residents could peacefully use the park. Design outcomes can be evaluated based on whether just or unjust visions were realized in public space redesign. Within the scope of my research, the spatial displacement of unhoused folks and demolition of their private and community infrastructure from Echo Park would be in violation of several propositions of just urban design.

Drawing from philosophical and design writings on justice, I operationalize just public space design through five justice dimensions—distributive, procedural, interactional, recognitional, and care and repair (Table 1). This operational framework has been updated from a previous one that I developed with my colleagues at UCLA (Giamarino et al., 2022). I add “Care and repair” as an additional aspect of my framework for just public space design. I do so because a frequent question I have been asked with this work is, “What about other user groups that use sidewalks or parks?” Ensuring “care and repair” answers this question by taking into consideration other users of public space who may be impacted or inconvenienced by the presence of unhoused individuals on sidewalks, in parks or plazas, or sleeping in RVs on streets. From personal experience as a skateboarder, and from my own perspective on public space and spatial justice, I would also argue that unlike housed residents who have access to private shelter, kitchens, and bathrooms in the convenience of their home or apartment, unhoused people’s

access to public space is a matter of survival. Importantly, my operational framework of justice can be applied to other marginalized groups whose cultural practices are targeted by quality-of-life ordinances, policing, and hostile architecture. This framework serves two functions. First, as I studied everyday life and material experiences within hostile public spaces, I analyzed conversations with unhoused residents through each justice proposition when appropriate to formulate grounded policy and design recommendations. Second, applying just public space design concepts to specific socio-spatial contexts in LA can assist city planners and urban designers in crafting design processes, practices, and outcomes that are socially and spatially just. This framework helps me suggest how public space can be more just and develop policy and design recommendations for use and reference by unhoused folks, advocacy organizations, city planners and urban designers, and politicians and policymakers.

Justice conception	Operational definition
Distributive	Design outcomes that redistribute public amenities and infrastructure goods in cities and regions to produce a more equitable distribution of social amenities, infrastructure, and resources in the built environment. ^{viii}
Procedural	Design processes that ensure that unhoused individuals are well represented and have a voice in creating urban form by actively promoting participation and collaborative decision-making. ^{ix}
Interactional	Design processes and outcomes that treat homeless individuals with dignity and make them feel welcome in the production and consumption of built form by encouraging multiple users and activities to interact and share the public realm. ^x
Recognitional	Design processes and outcomes that prioritize the cultural claims of homeless individuals by recognizing diverse users and activities in the public realm. ^{xi}
Care and repair	Design processes and outcomes that encourage homeless individuals to maintain and steward public spaces, to peacefully co-exist with other participants and reduce social conflicts. ^{xii}

Table 1. Just public space design framework for unhoused communities. Adapted from Giamarino et al. (2022).

The production of hostile designs via homeless management policy is an injustice that can be reimaged by analyzing DIY urban design responses using this operational framework. This just public space design framework incorporates prior theories of justice, including the capability approach, recognitional justice and a multi-public spatial lens, and the right to the city.

1990s revanchist and 2000s compassionate revanchist studies often downplay, or outright ignore, the role that urban design plays in producing newly hostile public spaces. Therefore, I adopt a more critical focus on the study of neo-revanchist public spaces. I use the above framework to evaluate the resistance to hostile designs through do-it-yourself design by

unhoused folks, which is the focus of my empirical work. With a relative lack of empirical and theoretical insight on hostile designs, I catalogue and analyzed DIY urban design resistance to hostile designs and recommend policy and design recommendations. In so doing, I produce an applied, comparative study of the experiences with and contestations to hostile designs by the unhoused in LA.

I find that fencing a park to restrict access, zoning a sidewalk to outlaw camping, and restricting streets to ban vehicular dwellings are hostile designs that make it more difficult to sleep, receive services, and practice everyday life. I also find that producing exclusionary public spaces is not without contestation; people may move to other parks or sidewalks or find other streets to park on. I argue that if cities pay attention to contestations within these spaces,^{xiii} they will be better equipped to formulate policy and design recommendations that provide much-needed services and opportunities to transition people into housing without pushing them to other interstitial spaces in the city. My interdisciplinary methodological approach, structured by my just public space design framework, explores the experiences and contestations of these spaces and draws policy and design recommendations listening to the voices of the unhoused.

The theoretical framework, including pertinent concepts from the wide-ranging literature on homelessness, spatial justice, and urban design, informs my reading of the literature on homelessness as it relates to regulation and resistance. I turn to reviewing this literature next.

CHAPTER 3

Literature review

As of 2022, 582,462 people in the United States were experiencing homelessness on a single night, with 40 percent living in tents, makeshift shelters, and vehicles in public spaces, parks, and streets (de Sousa et al., 2022).^{xiv} Before the political-economic restructuring of the 1980s, people living in public spaces were few and far between, with much of this population being either single working-class men or associated with particular activities like drinking, panhandling, or prostitution (Spradley, 1970; Stark, 1987). Starting in earnest in the late 1980s, the unhoused population skyrocketed and diversified due to structural factors including, *inter alia*, deindustrialization and the outsourcing of high-wage jobs, the financialization of housing markets and divestment in socialized housing, fiscal austerity and gutting of welfare programs, the deinstitutionalization of mental healthcare institutions, and the emergence of a crack cocaine epidemic (J. R. Wolch et al., 1988). In tandem with the rise in visible homelessness in urban public spaces, starting in the 1990s, mayors like Rudy Giuliani in New York City were elected to clean up the streets and implement policies to revitalize neighborhoods through gentrification (N. Smith, 1996). To clean up the streets, cities developed quality-of-life ordinances that targeted non-criminal activities like sleeping, sitting, loitering, or panhandling in public spaces, which directly targeted and criminalized the presence and conduct of unhoused people. While cities have recently invested in addressing homelessness through the provision of social services, temporary shelter, and affordable housing (Byrne et al., 2014; DeVerteuil, 2019; Murphy, 2009), they have also concurrently revamped quality-of-life ordinances to carry out police sweeps and give people the option to accept services and shelter or be ticketed, arrested, or pushed to other interstitial spaces (National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2019b). Unhoused

individuals living in tents/makeshift shelters and vehicles adopt tactics of resistance such as changing their appearance or living in particular spaces that are less visible to avoid police regulation (Stuart, 2016; Wakin, 2014a).

The purpose of the literature review is three-fold. First, I present a general overview of the reasons for the precipitous growth in unsheltered homelessness and the regulation-resistance dialectic that structures how unhoused people navigate public space in cities. I present the dialectic of regulation-resistance to think through the tensions between strategies of socio-spatial exclusion and legal control of unhoused folks and tactics of contestation by unhoused folks in public spaces. This regulation-resistance dialectic is informative for my empirical work on the hostile versus just design dynamics in public spaces. Second, I review the suite of tools—ordinances, policing, and privatization—that together function as hostile urban design processes, practices, and outcomes that subject unhoused folks to spatial banishment. Lastly, I study conventional tactics of resistance to this regulatory strategy of expulsion from urban space. Here, I elucidate the implicit yet understated connections between urban design, law, policing, privatization, and resistance. I suggest that the drafting and codification of ordinances act as an urban design process; the enforcement of ordinances through spatial policing and displacement of the unhoused represents an urban design practice, and the securitization of public space through soft and hard strategies of privatization are an urban design outcome.

My review of the literature is divided into five sections. First, I review different categories of homelessness, responsive strategies of regulation through policy and policing, and tactics of resistance by unhoused individuals living in tents/makeshift shelters and vehicles. Second, I examine the evolution of quality-of-life ordinances and the impacts of their enforcement as an urban design process. This section focuses on the punitive nature and

constitutional dubiousness of laws regulating homelessness. I discuss the impacts of hostile urban design practice through criminalization on the mental, physical, and material well-being of unhoused folks, analyze the philosophical and social implications of displacement on basic freedoms to human dignity and rights to the city, and problematize the *quid pro quo* nature of the increased enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances. Third, I analyze this regulation and resistance dialectic at the city scale through gentrification, the privatization of public space, and regulation as urban design strategies and outcomes. I review the broader political and social impacts of privatization on public space quality and the targeted impacts on the unhoused. Fourth, I review four specific modes of resistance to quality-of-life ordinances and public space policing by the unhoused—exit, adaptation, persistence, and voice—through case studies that focus on the dynamics of sidewalk life (exit), becoming “copwise” (Stuart, 2016) in the streets (adaptation), the development of tent cities (persistence), and protests and tactics against police harassment (voice). I suggest that paying attention to how the unhoused resist these hostile processes, practices, and outcomes can educate concerned advocates, city planners, and urban designers on how exclusionary public spaces can be transformed into just public spaces. Fifth, and lastly, I discuss the gap in my contribution to this literature.

While the literature on homelessness appears comprehensive, decades of scholarship either briefly discusses, glances over, or completely ignores the effects of hostile design processes, practices, and outcomes. Specifically, research downplays impacts on affordances and access to public space for people living in tents or vehicles. Additionally, the political and economic agendas tied behind these designs, the justifications given for their existence, and their evolution after the court ruling in *Martin* and during the COVID-19 pandemic demand attention.

Lastly, the do-it-yourself design solutions they engender and the potential for DIY urban designs to be accommodated to produce just public space have largely been ignored.

Differences in homelessness by dwelling type^{xv}

For unsheltered homelessness, there are two broad typologies. First, there the hyper-visible population of people sleeping in tents or makeshift shelters on sidewalks in skid rows, in parks, tent cities, or other interstitial spaces like riverbeds and under freeways. A majority of studies on unsheltered homelessness have focused on the tactics and regulation of unhoused individuals living in public spaces (Mitchell, 2003, 2020; Stuart, 2016). This is primarily due to the fact that unhoused people living on sidewalks and in parks are hypervisible and have been subjected to the enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances that lead to spatial exclusion (Herring et al., 2020; Mitchell, 1997; N. Smith, 1996). These studies have largely overlooked the regulation of a growing population of individuals and households living in cars, vans, and RVs/campers (Lyons-Warren & Lowery, 2020; Pollard, 2018; Pruss et al., 2022; Quinn, 2018; Wakin, 2014b). The second typology of unsheltered homelessness is the growing number of people living in between their vehicles and public spaces. Living or recreating in a vehicle is not a new fad, as “van life” and RVs have been used by, among others, outdoor enthusiasts and retirees on cross-country road trips (Counts & Counts, 2001; Twitchell, 2014). In contrast, however, people living in vehicles out of necessity are viewed in problematic terms by urban policy makers similar to those that live completely unsheltered in a public space. Often, people living in tents or vehicles are viewed as shelter resistant because they do not accept shelter or desire other interim housing provided by a city (Pruss, 2019). Compared to living in a tent or makeshift shelter, living in a vehicle provides a number of benefits including safer, more stable, and secure shelter for those who have experienced violence on the streets, in shelters, or at home, while also providing

individuals and households with a sense of private property ownership and agency in avoiding police detection (Craft, 2020; Wakin, 2005, 2014b). Additionally, having access to a vehicle can also increase access to jobs, schools, services, shopping, and other amenities that cities have to offer (Allard, 2004; Allard & Roth, 2010; Blumenberg & Ong, 2001; Blumenberg & Pierce, 2014). Nevertheless, like people living in tents and makeshift shelters, vehicular dwellings have been increasingly targeted by citywide bans, permit requirements, and time limits on particular streets, which lead to tickets and car impoundment, while the vehicle owners are not in their car during the day (National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2019b; Pruss, 2019; So et al., 2016).^{xvi}

The dialectics of regulation and resistance

Cities have implemented four different strategies to regulate and restrict the unhoused from using public space for basic biological needs: 1) enforce quality-of-life ordinances; 2) employ zoning and containment tools; 3) redesign of public spaces; and 4) sanitation operations to clear encampments and dispossess people of property.

In response to dubious court rulings, cities continue to redesign and enforce quality-of-life ordinances to restore order in public spaces. Beckett and Herbert (2010) presented a case study of anti-homeless laws in Seattle, including parks exclusion laws (i.e., anti-camping), trespass laws (i.e., loitering near private property), and off-limit orders (i.e., Business Improvement Districts). They argued that quality-of-life ordinances, hostile architecture, and police sweeps act as “legally hybrid tools” that exacerbate the punitiveness of banishment strategies, produce a city of “no go” areas, and make it difficult for activists and unhoused folks to resist spatial exclusion. Such ordinances are anti-homeless, eliminating the use of public space for dwelling, outlawing biological necessities, and stymieing basic freedoms (Waldron,

1991). As cities seek partnerships with real estate developers in downtown redevelopment efforts, they continue to enact laws that reduce the agency of the unhoused (Mitchell and Staeheli 2006). During the ongoing back-to-the-city movement, cities implement urban development agendas that prioritize gentrification, and, in so doing, listen to NIMBY and business demands with little consideration for the rights and well-being of unhoused folks (Mitchell, 2011).

Historically, tent cities and service-dependent ghettos have been subjected to zoning plans and containment strategies to preserve the economic development potential of land uses. In the 1990s, cities sought to spatially contain homelessness through zoning. Ellickson (1996) advocated for the adoption of zoning that would criminalize chronic misconduct within central business districts, while allowing it in Skid Rows and other marginal spaces. Such strategies of containment, supported by soft and hard design controls like the closure of public bathrooms (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1993) displace the urban poor from spaces that provide access to food and services (Schor et al., 2003). More recently, Parker's (2020) history of the spatial perseverance of tent cities in Sacramento, from the Great Depression to after the Great Recession, demonstrates how encampments are politically and spatially segregated from urban development aspirations of economic growth. Through the enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances, unhoused folks are also partitioned from public view to the less visible urban periphery.

Routine maintenance of infrastructure is adopted by cities as a strategy to clean up areas with encampments. Gordon and Byron (2021) describe policy efforts in Toronto and San Francisco to exclude unhoused people in spaces through maintenance. They critique the unequal distribution and maintenance of formal housing and informal encampments. Here, they reveal the politics of informal infrastructure production and how maintenance intervenes in cities. Maintenance can be routinized or ad hoc, based on decision-making power or complaints by

housed residents. The displacement of unhoused folks helps cities to maintain functional order, promote economic development agendas and particular architectural aesthetics. The authors suggest that future research considers the conditions of exclusion that lead to informal interventions, critiques the political discourse around maintenance and cleanups, understands who benefits, from it and reflects on how best to accommodate informal community infrastructure.

Lastly, the use of big data, photographing encampments, and the employment of public health discourses by sanitation departments to clean and clear public spaces are new strategies of exclusion where cities make homelessness visible and police them through re-enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances. Goldfischer's (2018; 2020) presents two case studies that demonstrate how New York City has implemented strategies to increase the visibility of homelessness, stoke fear of disorder and re-criminalize unhoused communities. These campaigns included the 2015 "Peek-a-boo, we see you too" campaign, which encouraged residents to take photographs of and report unhoused people as well as increased use of 311 data to identify encampment hotspots and schedule routine maintenance that is carried out as street cleanups and police sweeps. A quick scan of 311 complaint data in open data portals for San Francisco and Los Angeles demonstrates the ongoing role of complaints about encampments in spatial displacement. These case studies demonstrate how taking photographs of unhoused individuals without their consent dehumanizes and disrespects them, fosters visual cues that they are not allowed to use public spaces for life-sustaining activities, and shifts focus away from broader political economic processes like gentrification that produce homelessness. Open data, in this case geographic coordinates of public spaces with greater than two tents, also shifts the public focus away from policing and displacement strategies and toward perceived disorder caused by homelessness.

Partnering with 311 complaints, another discursive strategy that justifies street cleanups and police sweeps of encampments in public spaces is the use of public health discourses by sanitation departments to criminalize “homelessness in public space under the guise of sanitation and public health” (Herring, 2021, p. 278). As will become clearer in Chapter 5, quality-of-life ordinances and police sweeps are legitimized in LA through purported concerns with public health, sanitation and hygiene, well-being, and livability.

In response to increased regulation, unhoused individuals adopt one or more of the following four tactics of resistance to avoid policing or trick the police into thinking they are not unhoused (DeVerteuil et al., 2009): 1) leaving a space altogether when confronted by the police, 2) adapting their appearance and behaviors^{xvii} or avoiding locations where police patrol (Casey et al., 2008), 3) staying in a public space and developing larger encampment communities, and/or 4) working with advocacy groups to protest policing through events and blocking police sweeps (Camp, 2012; Dozier, 2019).^{xviii}

To understand the context and evolution of legally hybrid tools of spatial banishment for unhoused folks, I review the evolution of vagrancy laws into quality-of-life ordinances as design process and the rise in the policing of homelessness as design practice. After providing this context, I look at the impacts of enforcement on public space design outcomes. Throughout both sections, I highlight the spatial, material, and psychological impacts of hostile design processes, practices, and outcomes on unhoused folks.

“Quality of life” ordinances and homelessness

The codification and enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances can directly or indirectly produce hostile designs and degrade public space quality. The first vagrancy law was codified in 1394 in

England and targeted able-bodied individuals who chose to be unemployed and hang out in public spaces (Chambliss, 1964). In colonial America, British vagrancy laws were used by cities to eliminate activities associated with uprootedness, such as loitering and begging. In the late 19th century, US cities adopted vagrancy ordinances to target street activities such as panhandling and prostitution (Adler, 1989; Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 2009). These vagrancy ordinances became so arbitrarily adopted by municipalities, often outlawing non-criminal activities like loitering on a sidewalk, waiting for a ride, or being identified by the police as a suspicious street character. Ultimately in 1972, the US Supreme Court ruled them to be unconstitutionally vague in the case of *Papachristou*.^{xix}

Still, as visible homelessness proliferated in many US cities in the 1980s and 1990s, several mayors were elected on promises to “clean up the streets” (Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 2009; Mitchell, 1997). Cities like Seattle, Tempe, LA, and New York, among others, began implementing “quality of life” ordinances in the 1990s to give police discretion in criminalizing the status of being unhoused (Amster, 2003; Blomley, 2012; Herring et al., 2020; Mitchell, 2003; Smith, 1996). Targeting sleeping, camping, lying and sitting, dwelling in vehicles, loitering, panhandling, and food sharing (National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2019b), “these codes have grown longer and more detailed as legislators have continued to confront challenges to social order and community life by enlarging the scope of vagrancy statutes” (Adler, 1989, p. 216).

Historian Jeffrey Adler (1989) has argued that we should pay attention to how vagrancy laws and quality of life ordinances have been dubiously implemented to maintain social and moral order through policing of non-criminal activities like standing, sitting, and sleeping. Geographer Nicholas Blomley (2012) encourages researchers to explore how this police logic—

urban laws that target and criminalize objects, obstructions, people, and behaviors—evolve and impact rights-based claims to public space. Scholars have noted that such legislation aims to primarily protect capital and elite property interests (Blomley, 2009; Chambliss, 1964; Ehrenfeucht & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014; Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006). As cities sought partnerships with real estate developers in downtown redevelopment efforts, they enacted laws that reduce the agency of the unhoused. For example, Mitchell and Staeheli (2006) show that the redevelopment of Horton Plaza in San Diego entailed privatization of its space and enforcement of ordinances which criminalized loitering, panhandling, and drinking alcohol in public.

Anti-homeless ordinances should be contextualized within the larger global dynamics of neoliberalism, financialization of capital resulting in housing market unaffordability, and gentrification (Kohn, 2004; Mitchell, 2003; Peck & Tickell, 2002; N. Smith, 1996). These macrostructural forces have led to the privatization and fortressing of public space and its increased policing and surveillance. Following police crackdowns of the unhoused in NYC in the 1990s, under the Giuliani administration, to make way for development and gentrification, and carry out spatial displacement sweeps through punitive treatment of the unhoused by increased policing in public spaces.

Cities also adopted informal zoning that forbids misconduct associated with one's status as unhoused in central business districts, while allowing it in skid rows and other interstitial public spaces in cities. This controversial model has been adopted by many cities in justifying and enforcing "quality of life" ordinances. Exclusionary public space regulations constitute forms of cruel and unusual punishment, as well as violate basic civil and human rights of the unhoused (Blomley, 2009; P. Lynch, 2002; Waldron, 1991). They deny them basic freedoms, dignity, humanity, and the satisfaction of certain biological necessities. The National Law Center

on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP) (2019a) notes that such ordinances leave little to no space for life-sustaining activities, fail to address the structural problems leading to homelessness, and push individuals into an endless cycle of policing and incarceration at the expense of city budgets and taxpayers. With some exceptions, court rulings have found these ordinances unconstitutional, as they violate the cruel and unusual punishment clause of the 8th Amendment (Amster, 2003; Dozier, 2019; Ellickson, 1996; Gerry, 2007; Kieschnick, 2018; Mitchell, 1998b). Not only do municipal ordinances ban quotidian activities like sitting on sidewalks, but they also simultaneously bar individuals from performing life-sustaining practices throughout the city like sleeping, going to the bathroom, asking someone for money, or cooking food.

As part of these efforts, there has been an uptick in ordinances targeting and criminalizing people who use public spaces to sleep in tents or in their cars (Bauman, Bal, et al., 2019; Bauman, Rosen, et al., 2019). From 2006 to 2019, the NLCHP's *No Safe Place* report surveyed 187 cities and found an increase in citywide and place-based laws that criminalize camping, sleeping, and sitting in public spaces as well as living in vehicles on city streets. Since 2006, 33 new laws were passed to criminalize camping in tents citywide (representing a 92% increase), while 44 new laws banning place-based camping were implemented (representing a 70% increase). Bans that targeted sleeping citywide increased by 50% (13 new laws), while place-based bans on sleeping grew by 29% (16 new laws). Citywide bans on sitting or lying down increased by 78% (45 new laws). Over the same time period of 13 years, the NLCHP's *Housing Not Handcuffs 2019* report found that the number of anti-homeless ordinances criminalizing vehicular homelessness increased by 213 percent. From 2011 to 2014, there was a 119 percent increase in comprehensive bans. Individuals in violation of ordinances and/or bans

can face fines and jail time, furthering their financial precarity and systems involvement. A 2019 survey of 187 cities found that 72 percent of them have at least one law restricting camping, 51 percent have at least one law restricting sleeping, 55 percent have at least one law prohibiting sitting and/or lying down in public, and 50 percent have one or more laws restricting dwelling in vehicles (National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2019a).

Research has found a direct link between the growth in different types of homelessness (i.e., tents, street, vehicular) and increased criminalization of camping, sleeping, sitting/lying, and living in vehicles (National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2019b; Pruss & Cheng, 2020; Speer, 2018). The spatial, material, and psychological effects of enforcing these bans through sweeps and other strategies like citations or towing of vehicles are severe, including feelings of disempowerment; insecurity through displacement and dispossession of personal property; exacerbated mental trauma; and constant contact with the criminal justice system (Craft, 2020; Herring et al., 2020; Stuart, 2016). The ongoing spatial and social impacts of enforcing these ordinances have profound impacts on the quality of care, feelings of dignity and agency, rights to the city, and public space that the unhoused can access. To compound these effects, legal rulings about the constitutionality of enforcement in the United States have lacked consensus and opened up opportunities for continued criminalization through the annihilation of space by law (Mitchell, 1997, 1998a, 1998b). This has resulted in proposals to redesign public spaces like People’s Park in Berkeley (Mitchell, 2003) and LOVE Park in Philadelphia (Cianciotto, 2020) to restrict access and use by unhoused individuals.

Following the US Constitution, judicial reviews of the constitutionality of vagrancy and “quality of life” ordinances have tested the facts of each case against the free speech and freedom to assemble clauses of the 1st Amendment (Baldwin v. D’Andrea, 2013; Loper v. New York City

Police Dept., 1991; *Young v. New York City Transit Authority*, 1990), the unreasonable searches and seizures clause of the 4th Amendment (*Johnson v. City of Dallas*, 1994; *Lavan v. City of Los Angeles*, 2011; *Pottinger v. City of Miami*, 1992), the cruel and unusual punishment clause of the 8th Amendment (*Anderson v. City of Portland*, 2009; *City of Denver v. Burton*, 2019; *Johnson v. City of Dallas*, 1994; *Jones v. City of Los Angeles*, 2006; *Pottinger v. City of Miami*, 1992; *Robert Martin v. City of Boise*, 2019; *Robinson v. California*, 1962; *State of Oregon v. Barrett*, 2020; *Tobe v. Santa Ana*, 1995), and/or the due process and equal protection clauses of the 14th Amendment (*Pottinger v. City of Miami*, 1992; *Robinson v. California*, 1962). Generally, these cases were filed as lawsuits against violations of municipal ordinances and subsequent arrests, jail time, and fines, while states and cities filed appeals to reverse decisions in favor of injunctive relief.

Courts must weigh whether these ordinances directly target a person’s conduct or their status. The “status doctrine” stipulates that it is unconstitutional for a state or city ordinance to criminalize conduct directly linked to one’s addiction, affliction with disease, or status as unhoused or impoverished (*Kieschnick*, 2018; *Robinson v. California*, 1962). Courts also test whether “quality of life” ordinances comprehensively ban free speech, loitering, and dwelling in public spaces; the extent to which cities are appropriately exercising their police power in maintaining a sense of order and control for the general well-being of the public; and whether adequate constitutional challenges are being raised to challenge these ordinances as part of a “necessity defense” (*Tobe v. Santa Ana*, 1995). The necessity defense tests whether an ordinance unjustly targets a biologically necessary activity like sleeping, going to the bathroom, or eating and drinking.

To illustrate the impact of vague court rulings, I describe how enforcement of anti-camping ordinances has been tested through the cruel and unusual punishment clause of the 8th Amendment. Court outcomes have not resulted in substantial injunctive relief or abolition of “quality of life” ordinances. The city of LA reached a settlement in 2006 to stop enforcing its “sit-lie” ordinance until the city could provide 1,250 shelter units to unhoused individuals in Skid Row, a requirement met in 2018 (Gerry, 2007, *Jones v. City of Los Angeles*, 2006). In Portland, Oregon, the District Court established the “Anderson Agreement” that requires the city to provide reasonable notification to tent city residents that their campsite is unlawful and will be cleared out by the police (*Anderson v. City of Portland*, 2009). In 2019, these inconsistencies were met with a definitive ruling by the Ninth Circuit concerning an anti-camping ordinance in Boise, Idaho (*Martin v. City of Boise*, 2019). The court found that bans on sitting or sleeping in public space, whether absolute or targeted, constitute cruel and unusual punishment. This ruling was not appealed in the US Supreme Court, and the case is seen as a major victory for the rights of the unhoused. Subsequently, the Denver County Court cited *Martin* in dismissing a defendant’s ticket in violation of an anticamping ordinance, which the court ruled was unconstitutional (*City of Denver v. Burton*, 2019). Advocates for the unhoused and people experiencing unsheltered homelessness were given what appeared to be a definitive ruling concerning the unconstitutionality of increased criminalization of individuals who continue to sleep outside in public spaces.

Turning to the merits, the panel held that the Cruel and Unusual Punishments Clause of the Eighth Amendment precluded the enforcement of a statute prohibiting sleeping outside against homeless individuals with no access to alternative shelter. The panel held that, as long as there is no option of sleeping indoors, the government cannot criminalize indigent, homeless people for sleeping outdoors, on public property, on the false premise they had a choice in the matter. —*The 9th Circuit, Martin v. City of Boise - 920 F.3d 584 (9th Cir. 2019)*

The 9th Circuit Court ruled that “quality of life” ordinances are unconstitutional because they violate the cruel and unusual punishment clause of the 8th amendment. Essentially, if the number of unhoused individuals is higher than the amount of affordable housing units and shelter space available, a city cannot criminalize one’s status as unhoused which produces a situation where they require public space for sitting, sleeping, and survival. Despite the ruling in *Martin*, however, the lack of consensus between the US Supreme Court, district courts, and appellate courts have encouraged some cities to adapt their anti-homeless ordinances to criminalize conduct in particular spaces, while not explicitly targeting one’s status as unhoused or comprehensively banning unhoused folks from public space. In 2020, the Court of Appeals in Oregon ruled in favor of the enforcement of an anti-camping ordinance that resulted in a ticket given to an unhoused individual (*State of Oregon v. Barrett*, 2020). Without explicitly presenting the facts of a constitutional challenge, court rulings have often ruled in favor of municipal ordinances and discretionary police power. Cities throughout the US continue to redesign and enforce anti-homeless ordinances because of the courts’ dubious legal conclusions.

Cities continue to implement new quality-of-life ordinances or reconfigure previous ones to skirt rulings by criminalizing one’s conduct in different spaces and at different times. Recent case studies in Honolulu (Darrah-Okike et al., 2018) and San Francisco (Herring et al., 2020) have documented the material, psychological, and spatial impacts that enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances have on unhoused individuals. Through semi-structured interviews and conversations, individuals have elucidated how important property, such as tents, IDs, and medications, has been discarded; their mental health has been affected through constant fear of displacement; and they are pushed into a constant cycle of movement to avoid police contact.

While legal, philosophical, and empirical analyses of the enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances demonstrate a trend toward increased criminalization of unsheltered homelessness through policing, little connections are made between increased regulation and shrinkage of public space in a sustained manner. However, increased criminalization strategies against “urban undesirables” (Levy, 2021; P., 2020) through regulation has also reconfigured public space design and impacted the quality of public space through the production of hostile architecture. As an urban design process, the drafting and implementation of quality-of-life ordinances is tied directly to the urban design practice of enforcement, policing, and displacement. This practice often produces exclusionary urban design outcomes that are regulatory and/or architectural. For example, anti-homeless regulations that criminalize one’s ability to rest or sleep in a public space are strengthened through architectural interventions like increased surveillance and presence of uncomfortable public space objects. Anti-homeless spikes, oddly designed bus benches, increased security, and fortressing of parks are often the products of municipal ordinances and target the life-sustaining practices of unhoused individuals. Recent interviews with unhoused folks demonstrate the negative material, psychological, and spatial traumas that enforcement of these ordinances brings about, but they do not elucidate how public space is reconfigured and/or contested. Legitimization and enforcement of ordinances have broader political and social implications for public space.

Public space design and homelessness: Privatization and hostility

The enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances that targets behavior works in tandem with urban design practices that strategically impose “soft” and “hard” controls in public spaces (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1993). In public spaces, examples of soft controls include the omnipresence of fencing, bollards, Jersey barriers, and other “architectures of dis-assurance” (Boddy, 2008). “Hard”

controls may be the zoning of a Business Improvement District (BID) that brings about private security, surveillance, and increased policing. “Hard” controls are more visible outcomes from the implementation and enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances because we are more likely to interact with the police, see their cars, or be disturbed by their treatment of unhoused people. Both types of controls increase perceptions of fear and insecurity for unhoused folks, and severely curtail their capabilities to access public space, fight for fundamental rights to the city, and enjoy basic freedoms to assemble, speak, or petition.

Public spaces are the metaphorical and material heart of cities, serving as places of social, political, religious, and economic activity, as well as accessible, democratic, and open spaces for diverse populations, greenspace, and more-than-human inhabitants (Amin, 2008; Carr et al., 1992; Estrada, 2008; Harvey, 2006; D. Hayden, 1995; J. Jacobs, 1961; Kostof, 1987; S. Low & Smith, 2006; Sennett, 1974). Public spaces include publicly owned and managed streets, sidewalks, parks, and plazas. Yet, the ideal of public space as just space (Larson, 2018) overlooks the political and economic agendas of cities in enforcing regulations and implementing designs that control and even ban populations who fail to conform to normative expectations of appropriate behavior. These hostile designs are tied to broader urbanization processes like gentrification and neoliberal urbanism. I draw from the literature to describe the implications of these processes on the privatization of public space as it relates to targeting the status of a person being unhoused.

Gentrification was originally described as a process of residential revitalization in previously disinvested urban areas with a declining industrial workforce (Glass, 1964). Critical scholarship shifted focus away from explaining gentrification as a residential phenomenon to exploring the political economic processes and outcomes of gentrification. Here, scholars looked

at the impacts of capital reinvestment in working class neighborhoods on evictions and displacement, neighborhood dynamics between longtime residents and the newly arriving gentry, cultural practices and cultural consumption, and appropriate functions and users of public space (Chaskin & Joseph, 2013; J. C. Fraser, 2004; Freeman, 2006; Langeegger, 2016; Slater, 2011; N. Smith, 1996; Zukin, 2010). Cities that adopt neoliberal urban policy agendas laud gentrification as a net “positive” benefit for lower-income, communities of color because it mixes incomes, reduces crime, provides better services and small business opportunities, and integrates communities into the overall development plans of cities (Chaskin & Joseph, 2013). Notwithstanding these purported positive benefits, there is a dark side to gentrification. Pertinent to implementation of hostile designs through the privatization of public space, gentrification leads to the displacement of people from city space, criminalizes activities such as standing or sitting in public spaces through the enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances, and transforms public spaces into commodified zones where consumptive activities like shopping are catered to. The increase in regulation of activities and people in public space is also pursued through design following neoliberal urban policy agendas.

Many scholars have argued that neoliberal architectural, city planning, and urban design practices are problematic because they control and police targeted groups like immigrant street vendors, the unhoused, or skateboarders (Davis, 1990; Devlin, 2018; Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 2009; Mitchell, 2003; Nemeth, 2006). Neoliberalism refers to a suite of things, including a political-economic ideology, form of governance, and urban policy agenda. Generally speaking, neoliberalism is a political-economic ideology in the 1970s and 1980s that was espoused by the political systems of Thatcherism and Reaganomics (Harvey, 2005). While lauded as a way to make government more efficient, this urban policy agenda led to the

deindustrialization and outsourcing of high-wage manufacturing jobs, the financialization of housing markets, fiscal austerity and the gutting of social welfare programs, and securitization of public space (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Peck et al., 2013; Peck & Tickell, 2002). The term neoliberal connotes privatized provision and management of public spaces that have become fortified and surveilled; governmental actors that operate according to free market logics of competitiveness and entrepreneurialism and frequently use public-private partnerships to commercialize space; and mass-production of commodified theme park spaces that have stymied urban inhabitants' abilities to shape public space according to their unique desires. City governments are encouraged to act as private entities, establish private-public partnerships to implement urban policy, and laud urban inhabitants who exhibit characteristics of rugged individualism, competitiveness, and entrepreneurialism (Dardot & Laval, 2009/2013; Davies, 2014). With the increased securitization, surveillance, and management of quasi-public space by private actors like corporations and the police (Kohn, 2004; Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee, 1998; Marcuse, 2006; Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006; Németh & Hollander, 2010), who can access and use space for their unique needs is severely curtailed. Several pervasive logics guide increased privatization of public space through regulation and design.

Commercialization and privatization of downtown spaces in LA, NYC, San Diego, and San Francisco, among other cities, produce public spaces that are inward-oriented and enclosed, detached from the city, and securitized through the presence of private security and surveillance technologies. This outcome is hostile architecture that ensures consumptive practices but deters unwanted visitors, and is exclusive in nature (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1993). The structured and commercialized nature of these spaces stymies informal sociality and everyday politics by creating inaccessible sites for corporate marketing, shopping, and temporary use (usually during

lunch time). BIDs, museums, corporate developers, and police forces all conspire to treat a visitor to these spaces less as a citizen and more as a consumer in a market of goods. This inevitably favors those who are not discriminated against, who are not spatially segregated based on their race, and who are wealthy (Frug, 2018).

Through a case study of access to Horton Plaza for the unhoused in San Diego, Mitchell and Lynn Staeheli (2006) explore how urban redevelopment and property shape people's right to the city. They identify four reasons why the relationship between property and public space tends toward exclusion. First, excluding a certain group is tied to relational property rights that seek to increase a property's land value. Second, rules that bolster one's right to private property have expanded to public spaces and the public realm. Third, exclusionary laws in public space reduce the agency of the unhoused. Fourth, when public space is handed over to private developers and BIDs, it is regulated as private property, but the fragmented nature of this privatization leads to opportunities for contestation. There exists an irreconcilable tension between dwelling, the logic of property ownership in public space, spatio-temporal regulations, and feelings of discomfort by the general public who feel that their right to not encounter visible poverty trumps an unhoused person's right to survive in public space (Ehrenfeucht & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014).

The pervasive logic of private property and reliance on police discretion to maintain public order increasingly privatizes public spaces and criminalizes the unhoused (Blomley, 2009; Ehrenfeucht & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014; Herbert, 1997). This dynamic has been highlighted through archival and legal analyses of ordinances (Amster, 2003; Kieschnick, 2018; Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 2009), spatial investigations of design and development plans (Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee, 1998), and ethnographic research on policing of the unpropertied according to normative expectations of appropriate public space use (Herring et al., 2020; Stuart,

2016). There has also been resistance to increased regulation, particularly through spatial appropriation and occupation, the creation of alternative expressions of home that blur boundaries between public and private space, and by influencing urban policy.

The privatization of public space is done through redesigns that increase “soft” and “hard” controls, produced by urban development agendas, and is also achieved through the enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances. Literature on this subject importantly problematizes the way in which urban design and regulation degrade the social, political, and architectural qualities of public space. Yet, many of these studies focus on privately-owned public spaces like corporate plazas, financial districts, or outdoor malls. Case studies function as content analyses of development plans or legal analyses of development outcomes with little attention paid to urban design and everyday life. There is a need to understand how policy agendas and regulations collaborate to produce hostile designs in other mundane spaces near and within parks, sidewalks, and streets. I address this oversight by contributing an empirical, comparative study to supplement this literature, documenting how spatial exclusion through design is experienced and contested by unhoused folks, and working with them to recommend more just public space design outcomes. Resistance to spatial exclusion by unhoused individuals may well suggest ways in which urban design outcomes can be more socio-spatially just.

Resisting geographies of punishment

Early accounts of fights against spatial exclusion suggested that the most politically radical act was to appropriate and occupy public space. In *The Right to the City*, Don Mitchell (2003) argued that the ability to restore the democratic ideal of public space as open and inclusive is contingent on direct action to use, occupy, and appropriate it. The extension of private property rights into the public realm and the legitimization of middle class norms and expectations of

appropriate behavior increase the exclusionary nature of public space, especially through the imposition of anti-homeless ordinances (Mitchell, 2003; Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006). Through a case study of the fight for a right to decriminalize camping in People's Park in Berkeley during the 1980s and 1990s, he details how efforts by the city of Berkeley to place spatial and temporal restrictions pushed the unhoused into the park and led to a series of protests. By legally analyzing how "quality of life" ordinances eliminate public space for the unhoused, who have nowhere else to go, Mitchell (2003) demonstrates how the most basic freedom to exist and survive in the city is erased.

In response, the unhoused develop microgeographical tactics of resistance in different space typologies to exercise individual agency, claim public space, and struggle against local state domination and oppression (DeVerteuil et al., 2009). These spatial typologies include prime upper-class commercial spaces in downtowns, marginal lower-income service-dependent spaces like Skid Rows, and transitional spaces in-between (i.e., sidewalks, parks, and freeway underpasses). As previously mentioned, individuals either exit, adapt, persist, or protest policing and the privatization of public space. Unhoused individuals often leave areas subjected to police sweeps to avoid further personal property loss or psychological trauma. They may adapt by changing their personal appearance or behavior to avoid suspicion by the police. For example, unhoused women who are targeted by the police and subjected to sexual abuse often use this tactic (Casey et al., 2008). This avoidance tactic parochially known as being "copwise" is commonplace in Skid Row (Stuart, 2016). Unhoused individuals may persist by occupying interstitial spaces (e.g., next to railroads, alongside freeways) and staying invisible. Another form of persistence is practiced by gravitating toward and staying in parts of the city with higher concentrations of services, shelters, and single-room occupancies. Research in Honolulu, LA,

San Francisco, and Seattle, based on interviews with unhoused folks, has demonstrated the harmful impacts of a lack of persistence, including displacement to areas without services and clinics and dispossession of ID cards, medicine, and other personal property (Darrah-Okike et al., 2018; Herbert & Beckett, 2010; Herring et al., 2020; Stuart, 2016). Additionally, scholars describe the widespread proliferation and concentration of tent cities as massive forms of protest; resistance against anti-homeless ordinances through spatial persistence; and spaces of autonomy, community, and self-sufficiency, but also as cost-effective containment strategies of the unhoused in cities (Herring, 2014; Herring & Lutz, 2015; Orr et al., 2023; Speer, 2018). Some tent cities have been formalized as autonomous zones with utilities infrastructure, communal lifestyles, no rent, cheap services, and more freedom compared to shelters, while others have been increasingly securitized, fenced in, and subjected to similar dynamics experienced in mega-shelters (Herring, 2014; Sparks, 2017b; Speer, 2018). Lastly, voice, or vocalization through dissent, is the least used form of resistance by the unhoused, mainly because their key goals in using public space is for survival and detection avoidance (DeVerteuil et al., 2009).

Participatory action research, particularly undertaken in collaboration with the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN), housing activists, and unhoused individuals in Skid Row, has illustrated ways in which spatial persistence and vocal resistance are employed to present alternative discourses about the treatment of unhoused individuals (Camp, 2012; Dozier, 2019; Herring et al., 2020; Middleton, 2014). The goal is to reimagine alternative urban futures beyond policing and toward permanent housing. Skid Row has served as a site of service concentration and “contested development” (and ongoing research) through urban policy decisions. The 1976 Policy of Containment, colloquially known as the “Blue Book,” helped to build and buttress the concentration of affordable housing and social service infrastructure in

Skid Row's 50-block area (Dozier, 2019). For example, the 2012 Operation Skid Row festival was labelled as a "blues moment" within the "blues geography" of Skid Row, serving as a political, musical, and educational platform to expose material conditions, critique racial policing and carcerality, and resist ongoing neoliberalization and gentrification of space (Camp, 2012).

Deshonay Dozier (2019, p. 179), working within Skid Row, describes tactics of resistance against policing, which "reveals the push-and-pull contradictions that occur when spatial difference is challenged and reproduced." Specifically, she highlights how LA CAN trains unhoused individuals on how to use their cell phones to record instances of police brutality and hostile streetscape conditions (i.e., lack of sanitation services) to advocate for an alternative urban future with more services, less policing, and housing justice. The case of "SafeGround Sacramento" illustrates acts of "dissensus" in an autonomous tent city whose inhabitants organize "traditional and innovative strategies of agitation, including street protests, letters to local media, teach-ins, interviews with local media, informal conversations, direct actions, and other tactics" (Middleton, 2014, p. 324). The purpose of each strategy is to push back on stigmatizations and misrepresentations of who is experiencing homelessness and why, and what specific help they need. In each case, vocal resistance plays a discursive, political, and spatial role. Discursively, displaying alternative representations of homelessness pushes back against stereotypes of drunkenness, criminality, addiction, and service resistance, which are invoked to place blame on individual failings and not structural issues like unaffordable housing markets. Politically, resistance through the tactics helps to document human rights violations, police brutality, and unsanitary conditions, which strengthen lawsuits and point to alternative urban futures. Spatially, housing activists and unhoused individuals occupy public space to make their presence known. But organizations like LA CAN have also been involved in the production of

do-it-yourself urban designs to counter and resist hostile designs, including grassroots infrastructure, do-it-yourself design, and a mapping campaign to increase access to handwashing stations, bathrooms, and shower facilities (Skid Row Power, 2020).

The production of do-it-yourself urban designs from marginalized groups has received scant attention in research on do-it-yourself design (Douglas, 2018; Kinder, 2016). Examples from Asia demonstrate how vendors, migrants, and squatters work to legitimize and incorporate their activities into (in)formal public spaces through appropriation and resistance (Chalana & Hou, 2016; Chiu, 2013; Kim, 2015). Often, ethnographic research has pointed to inequalities in whose DIY designs are perceived as legitimate by policymakers. While inequities exist in the production of just urban design, there needs to be a more sustained focus on how resistance and demands for a right to the city can be incorporated into urban design processes, practices, and outcomes (*cf.* Douglas, 2023).

Here, I draw on the work of Talmadge Wright (1997) and Walter Hood (1999) who have both researched just urban design processes, practices, and outcomes by marginalized folks. Talmadge Wright's storytelling-based research is grounded in the voices of unhoused individuals and compares two tactical resistance movements by unhoused communities in San Jose and Chicago. Their tacit planning and design knowledge suggests how land-based struggles can point to grassroots, place-based housing solutions that geographically reimagine how space could and should be used in cities to address homelessness. Walter Hood's design work serves as an example of incorporating resistance through urban design for persons experiencing homelessness and for African Americans in West Oakland's Durant Minipark. At the park, Hood wrote daily diaries and produced renderings that depicted mutable programmatic pieces that were meant to serve multiple users and activities, including alcoholics, sex-workers, and children (Hood, 1999).

In my dissertation, taking inspiration from Walter Hood, I wrote daily diaries; photographed examples of DIY resistance to hostile designs and critique hostile designs stretching across shelters and public spaces (similar to LA CAN's work); and interviewed unhoused individuals to reimagine public spaces through my just public design framework.

Hostile designs, do-it-yourself urban design, and just public space design: Research gaps

As unsheltered homelessness—people living in tents, semi-permanent structures, and vehicles—continues to grow, so do the number of anti-homeless ordinances and relational hostile designs. Enforcement of these ordinances leads to increased criminalization and policing, which has profound impacts on the material and psychological well-beings of unhoused folks. However, this research has loosely considered how enforcement of these ordinances leads to the production of privatized public space in places like downtowns and Skid Rows (Ehrenfeucht & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014; Ellickson, 1996; Stuart, 2014), large encampments (Herring & Lutz, 2015), prominent city parks (Mitchell, 2003; N. Smith, 1996), and service-dependent areas (Dozier, 2019; Stuart, 2016; Vitale, 2010; J. R. Wolch & Dear, 1993). While concerns about constitutional rights to occupy public space are important, and I incorporate them into my study, less attention has been paid to how the privatization of public space is experienced and contested in more mundane spaces like parks, sidewalks, and streets in the post-*Martin* era.^{xx} The enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances and production of hostile public spaces degrades the social, political, and architectural quality of public space. Reviews of downtown development plans and corporate plazas point to the omnipresence of “soft” and “hard” controls that limit who has access to use quasi-public spaces (e.g., Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee, 1998). This hostile design process and practice, which have been called “building paranoia,” is intended to “intercept and repel or filter would-be users” through camouflage (i.e., hiding plaza space),

restricting access (i.e., no sidewalks or entry points), fencing out users, creating uncomfortable designs (i.e., sloped seats), and employing private security (Flusty, 1994). Yet, more research is needed on what hostile designs look like, how they function, and how they are experienced and contested by unhoused people. Resistance to hostile designs should be studied to formulate design recommendations that are more just. While design cannot solve social issues and structural causes of homelessness, the process of ordinance codification and practice of spatial enforcement produce architectural outcomes that make it difficult for people to access services and opportunities for housing.

One previous study that mirrored my dissertation was conducted by a graduate student named Jessica Annan (2021) who explored how hostile architecture in Calgary is understood by formerly unhoused people. Engaging with four advocates for the unhoused, the researcher found that unhoused people understand how hostile architecture excludes them in urban space and is tied to broader strategies of spatial exclusion. The purpose of this study was to conduct a sociological analysis of hostile architecture that investigates unhoused residents' lived experiences with and knowledge of anti-homeless public space objects in central city spaces.

I build on this work by exploring how hostile designs are produced throughout urban spaces occupied by unhoused communities, specifically where new service architectures are provided in sprawling Los Angeles. These primarily include sidewalks and streets near temporary shelter spaces. Here, I investigate the relationality between hostile designs in public spaces like parks, their impacts on leftover spaces where encampments are permitted to exist, and grassroots design responses to provide shelter, community infrastructure, and mutual aid by unhoused communities. Additionally, while I interviewed some advocates who were experiencing or had previously experienced homelessness, most of my collaborators were

currently unhoused structure builders with do-it-yourself urban design knowledge. Structure builders are individuals who possess tacit urban planning and architectural knowledge and build makeshift private residential structures that address pitfalls in the design of shelters and provide protection from harsh elements in public space. They also adaptively reuse things like buckets, wooden pallets, tables, discarded trash, spray paint, and infrastructure to plan and design community infrastructure like restrooms, showers, and community recreational and arts spaces. The analytical and theoretical focus of my dissertation, like Annan's (2021), includes the lived experiences of unhoused people navigating hostile designs in Los Angeles, but importantly explores the limitations and potential policy solutions of do-it-yourself urban designs as a tactical response to hostile designs in improving public space design outcomes, access, and quality.

My dissertation investigates do-it-yourself urban design responses by unhoused residents in relation to their experiences with "design paranoia" (Chellew, 2016) and hostile designs. I consider the relationality between expanding anti-homeless zones, subpar shelter options, hostile designs in public spaces, and do-it-yourself resistance. Then, I reflect on the effectiveness and policy implications of do-it-yourself urban design tactics in improving public space quality.

It is important to understand, critique, and reimagine hostile designs that target the unhoused for several reasons. First, there is a need to analyze how such designs are tied to and justified by the enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances and provision of short-term shelter architectures. Second, hostile designs also limit constitutional rights to access public space and partake in life-sustaining, social, and political activities. Third, the privatization of public space does not only occur in corporate downtowns or skid rows; mundane spaces like parks, sidewalks, and streets are also being regulated and redesigned. Fourth, little is known about how these designs are experienced and how they are contested by marginalized groups. Fifth, and as I

discuss below, there is a lack of empirical studies and theoretical insights on hostile designs and do-it-yourself designs from the lived experiences of unhoused communities. There is also a need to incorporate photographic documentation and storytelling to understand how hostile designs are experienced and contested. From these contestations, city planners and urban designers can formulate recommendations, grounded in their DIY urban design knowledge, can improve decision-making processes, homeless response strategies, urban design outcomes, and public space use and access.

Contribution to the academic literature on homelessness

Scholarship has not looked at existing and newly emerging hostile designs within and across spaces of homelessness relationally, how they are experienced and contested through DIY urban design tactics, and what recommendations the unhoused have for improving the quality of public space based on their local do-it-yourself urban design knowledge. In a chapter entitled “Infrastructure of Community,” the After Echo Park Lake research collective describes how the ebb and flow of regulatory enforcement led to the transformation of public space at Echo Park into an autonomous, self-sufficient community, which was inevitably targeted for displacement (Roy et al., 2022, pp. 67–99). Residents occupied public space for shelter, organized cleanups to maintain cleanliness, and built community and mutual aid infrastructure like power-up charging tables, a communal kitchen, a community garden, and showers that directly addressed community members’ traumatic experiences with subpar designs of formal service spaces like shelters. I build off this study to explicitly focus on how do-it-yourself urban designs can inform and improve public space policy and design, service provision, and opportunities to transition into housing without fear of arrest.

Research on homelessness is largely lacking a spatial focus on the relationship between hostile designs existing within homeless service spaces and everyday public spaces and do-it-yourself urban design responses to this hostility by unhoused folks. Emerging scholarship on anti-homeless architecture in the United Kingdom (Petty, 2016) and Brazil (Ferraz et al., 2018) has explicitly focused on the political agendas of anti-homeless spikes in connection to processes of gentrification. Closely tied to research on the enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances and the privatization of public space, photographic documentation of these objects (i.e., anti-homeless spikes and “bumproof” benches) showcases their ties to neoliberal urban policy agendas and securitization of public space. Limited research on hostile designs argues that this form of spatial exclusion is distinct because it explicitly coerces through aesthetic means an individual not to do something in a public space. However, without sustained empirical studies of this phenomenon, examples of hostile designs remain relatively invisible and spark little to no public outrage. Therefore, a key aspect of my dissertation is to critique hostile designs and describe them so that they are made more aware to the public. Specifically, I detail the regulations, policing, and soft and hard controls that exist within shelters and spill out into public spaces. Additionally, following Annan’s (2021) call for more research on how to make public spaces more inhabitable, common, and shared, I catalog do-it-yourself urban designs and explore their potential to produce more “inviting design” that creates a “radically inclusive and compassionate cityscape” (Annan, 2021, p. 93).

Despite the proliferation of hostile designs in cities, there has been little focused scholarship on their impacts on targeted populations, resistance to their exclusionary nature through grassroots efforts, and alternative design visions developed through the construction of private and community infrastructure by unhoused communities. Most research on hostile

designs has not been the subject of sustained theoretical and empirical inquiry (Lambert, 2013; Rosenberger, 2017). Rosenberger's (2017) pamphlet attempts to raise awareness of hostile designs—"bumproof" benches and closed trash cans—through photography. He argues that anti-homeless law and design supports a dominant stability in use of a public space, while curtailing an object's multiple uses, which he calls "multistabilities." His provocation is that there is nothing morally objectionable about using a bench for sitting and sleeping, and that attempts to curb these multiple stabilities are unjust. Recently, Rosenberger (2020) has called for further empirical inquiry into what hostile designs look like, how they are justified, and how they are resisted to increase awareness and address their unjustness through design.

This is important because other hostile design research has ignored or been uncritical of anti-homeless architecture, at times advocating for hostile designs (de Fine Licht, 2017). de Fine Licht's research in Sweden is reductionist and downplays the impacts of hostile designs on certain user group's access to public space for social, political, and recreational activities. For example, he adopts a libertarian, "broken windows" lens to argue that certain users should be excluded (i.e., skateboarders) because they are well-off or may bring minor disturbances to parks (i.e., the unhoused). Discourse about mutual respect and private property rights are invoked to justify these claims. In contrast, I agree with Rosenberger (2020) that a more critical lens is needed to describe and critique these hostile designs, understand their justifications and impacts, weigh their justness, and reimagine public space for multistabilities. I intervene in this call with an in-depth case study of the relationship between hostile anti-homeless designs and do-it-yourself urban design tactics through photography and conversations with unhoused folks across four sites in Los Angeles.

This research has utility beyond its urban planning and urban design contributions to homelessness and public space. Previous homelessness scholarship, especially sociological and geographic research, has used interviews with unhoused individuals to understand their experiences with policing, resistance in public spaces, or life on the streets or in shelters. My dissertation ties together the implicit gaps between anti-homeless ordinances as urban design process, spatial policing and displacement as urban design practice, privatization of space as design outcome, and DIY urban design resistance as counter-design. Together, I pull together previous strands of revanchist and compassionate revanchist scholarship and illustrate how these processes, practices, and outcomes represent a suite of legally hybrid tools that cities employ to produce and justify hostile designs that are then resisted through do-it-yourself designs. Individuals are not anti-shelter and do not universally desire to occupy public spaces for dwelling. Rather, they are resistant to the hostile regulations, designs, and architecture that exist within shelters and extend into public spaces because of their exclusion from planning and design decision-making processes. DIY urban design interventions are direct coping responses to dehumanizing regulations, inadequate infrastructure, and failed provision of life-sustaining amenities like shelter and restrooms. Instead of criminalization through demolition, I propose how cities can and should enact just urban design. By applying a focused socio-spatial lens, I contribute an in-depth case study on hostile designs, do-it-yourself urban design, and public space design justice. Next, I present my research design.

CHAPTER 4

Research design

Research Purpose

The purpose of my research design was three-fold:

First, I traced the materiality of newly emerging hostile designs that exist within shelters and extend into public spaces. Here, I catalogued do-it-yourself urban design responses to them in the city of Los Angeles. By building a catalog of various forms of community-based responses to hostile designs, I contribute empirical data to an understudied aspect of how cities regulate homelessness through spatial means. In doing so, my descriptions of these spaces not only demonstrate their spatial reality and/or hostility through the experiences and contestations of the unhoused but also illustrate how hostile designs impact the overall quality of public space for other users. Additionally, it is important to understand how DIY urban design responses attempt to provide life-sustaining infrastructure for people to partake in biologically necessary activities like going to sleep, using the restroom, and eating.

Second, I detailed unhoused individuals' experiences with and contestations of hostile public space settings and their needs and desires for more just spatial settings (described below in *Geographic scope II*). While scholars have interviewed unhoused individuals and activists to understand the impacts of policing, the dynamics of regulation, and the resistance to sweeps or other forms of policing, they have not offered specific policy recommendations to address hostile designs, improve urban design processes and outcomes, and transform public spaces into more just spaces for the unhoused.

Third, I analyzed interviews and photographs to critique how the transformation of public space through exclusionary anti-homeless designs impacts the overall quality of public space for

other users. By uplifting and legitimizing the policy and design recommendations of the unhoused, I suggest how cities can work to create more just urban design that improves public space quality.

My research design is divided into four sections. First, I describe my methodological approach, which is grounded in urban humanities, and explain how it assists me in answering my research questions. Second, I describe the spatial context and scales I examine in my research. Third, I discuss the participants I collaborated with. Fourth, I detail two humanities practices I employ to catalog and analyze four neighborhoods with overlapping hostile spaces and DIY responses.

Research questions

Before laying out my research design, I restate my empirical research questions.

1. How have urban design processes, practices, and outcomes produced anti-homeless zones and hostile designs during COVID-19?
2. What are the do-it-yourself urban design tactics by unhoused communities, why do they engage in them?
3. How can cities design more equitable public spaces based on the do-it-yourself urban design responses by unhoused communities?

An urban humanities approach to reimagining hostile designs

Drawing from my involvement in UCLA's Urban Humanities Initiative (UHI), I adopted an interdisciplinary approach to analyze hostile design settings. This humanist research strategy encourages the use of nontraditional methods to understand different everyday experiences and to increase spatial justice in public space (Cuff et al., 2020). By nontraditional I mean methods

not commonly utilized in the social sciences or urban planning. An urban humanist fuses methods to investigate the socio-physical context of the urban, including, among others, ethnographic fieldwork, film and photography, historical archiving, fictional writings, critical cartography, and storytelling. Through this approach, I studied multiple cultural expressions, everyday practices, and materialities of unhoused individuals across similar public spaces. The benefit of urban humanities methods is that they encourage collaboration with community organizations, prioritize grounded and self-reflexive social readings of everyday life in public spaces, enable iterative experimentation with a cache of socio-spatial research strategies, and urge urban humanists to reimagine future urban spaces as sites of spatial justice for marginalized groups (Cuff et al., 2020). By documenting DIY responses to hostile designs, I traced architectural instances of hostility, everyday experiences, and contestations of them (Zeisel, 2006). More specifically, I examined two hostile spaces—one historical and one existing—as case studies, assessed their impacts on people’s experiences through the narratives of unhoused individuals, and offered recommendations for their transformation into more just public spaces.

Epistemologically, I wanted to understand the everyday experiences and contestations of hostile designs through a mixture of anthropological/ethnographic (socially constructivist), participatory action research (advocacy/collaborative), and traditional planning (pragmatic, policy-oriented) methods (Creswell, 2003). Spatially, I produced knowledge of hostile designs grounded in the everyday experiences of them and DIY contestations by unhoused folks. By prioritizing their voices in confronting public space hostility, my research subscribes to tenets of Participatory Action Research (PAR)—political, change-oriented, and empowerment-oriented, collaborative, and critical. My policy and design recommendations are grounded in voices that

have traditionally been powerless in formulating planning and design processes, practices, and outcomes.

My previous work on homelessness has consisted largely of quantitative, geographic, and content analyses pertaining to recent trends in homelessness in Los Angeles, the contemporary anti-homeless policy landscape, and the impacts of regulations on spatial concentrations of vehicular homelessness.^{xxi} The originality of my methodological approach is to map hostile designs and document do-it-yourself urban designs as tactical responses, which extend and supplement past qualitative and PAR approaches with a specific focus on how urban design can be collaboratively reimagined as spatially just. In what follows, I give a brief overview of these methods and how they connect to my theoretical and empirical contributions and provide a more comprehensive account of this approach in the research design section of this chapter.

My humanities approach pays attention to the spatial practices and temporal tactics of unhoused individuals in experiencing and contesting hostile designs. Specifically, I employ two humanities methods. First, I employ *filmic sensing*: a photographic catalog that depicts the everyday materiality of resistance to hostile designs and uncovers how do-it-yourself urban designs resists anti-homeless zones, policing, and displacement. Second, I integrate *digital storytelling*: narratives from unhoused individuals about their experiences contesting hostile designs in their private and community spaces; their do-it-yourself design tactics and why they practice them; and their recommendations for just public space production.

From Fall 2022 through March 2023, I completed each interdisciplinary practice and collected my data. Through ongoing volunteer work, legal and political advocacy assistance, and connections at the Services Not Sweeps coalition—a decentralized network of 35 advocacy organizations throughout the city of LA, I conducted site visits at each space to complete

interviews and ask individuals if I could take photographs of their do-it-yourself urban designs. I built rapport with one person at each site (an unhoused or formerly unhoused person actively involved in mutual aid and activism), who served as my key informant when approaching other people for interviews. My interviews were semi-structured and functioned as conversations, as I had memorized my questions. Because encampments throughout the city continue to be swept, I worked with lead organizers to get in touch with people who had experienced and contested the fencing of Echo Park, sweeps at encampments in Harbor City and Van Nuys, and the street restrictions in Venice. My grounded approach was iterative; these spaces and the residents changed, and my sampling strategy followed convenient sampling and snowball techniques.

There are three limitations to my methodological approach. First, I focused on four neighborhoods across the City of LA instead of one in-depth case study. While this geographic breadth enhances the generalizability of my findings, the short period of research compromises the depth of empirical findings that a single public space case study may have supplied. However, this choice was out of my control, as the city began ramping up sweeps of houseless communities through Mayor Karen Bass' "Inside Safe" initiative. Additionally, the analytical focus of my study is on DIY urban design responses and not a specific community typology of unsheltered homelessness. Second, given time constraints and the unevenness of street cleanups and police sweeps, I was unable to follow-up and/or conduct additional interviews with individuals involved in this iteration of my research. However, I have maintained contact with several participants and provided manuscripts for their ongoing organizing work, as requested. Third, by analyzing recommendations within a just public space design framework and offering broad design guidelines, I did not consider how possible emerging conflicts and contestations in decision-making processes and design outcomes may play out in space between housed and

unhoused residents, the police, and other public space users given uneven power dynamics. For example, I could have assessed these unequal power dynamics in decision-making processes regarding shelter and public space designs by interviewing policymakers, service providers, and architects, as to why my recommendations may or may not work. Additionally, I focused on enacting just urban design in public spaces, so my recommendations do not consider the decision-making processes that lead to the hostile designs (i.e., regulations and architecture) of shelters and how they could be better redesigned by involving unhoused individuals. Nevertheless, the just public space design framework could be adapted and applied to shelters to reimagine their regulatory and design issues.

Notwithstanding these limitations, I wanted to investigate do-it-yourself urban design responses to hostile designs with the intention to promote new imaginaries—grounded in the voices of unhoused individuals who are often ignored in decision-making processes affecting the design of public spaces—about how public space should look and function. My spatial approach and grounded findings were structured by my theoretical frameworks, including hostile designs, do-it-yourself urban designs, and public space justice. In the penultimate chapter, I reflect on the contradictions that arose during my conversations, and I speculate how public space processes and outcomes can be more just.

Why Los Angeles as a case study

Los Angeles is an extreme and critical case study that helps me analyze the tensions between the production of hostile designs by cities and counter-designs by the unhoused (Flyvbjerg, 2006). As an *extreme* case, LA is the epicenter of unsheltered homelessness and has historically been the subject of much research on the privatization of public space, policing, and everyday experiences of the unhoused. As a *critical* case, LA's poverty management strategies often serve

as policy models for other cities, so understanding the regulation of unsheltered homelessness through laws and urban design are of strategic importance to my critique of hostile designs and reimagining them through DIY urban design tactics to produce just public space design recommendations. While I cannot claim that my choice of LA functions as a *paradigmatic* case, I hope that investigating LA's role in adopting dubious ordinances to reshape public space in hostile ways allows some generalizable claims about justice in the city. Through a qualitative case study design, my inductive findings function as photographic and descriptive narratives of competing processes, practices, and outcomes of urban design across four neighborhoods and public spaces according to different dwelling types in LA. Lastly, my choice of four neighborhoods helps me to collect more data, answer my research questions, and produce a policy-relevant narrative useful for policymakers, activists, and researchers, that explains the complex processes and practices that produce hostile outcomes and DIY responses (Mukhija, 2010). In an ideal world, my case study approach would be generalizable to other urban contexts, but the reality is that my findings and policy recommendations may serve different purposes for different people. It is my hope that my humanities-based interdisciplinary case study approach will encourage cities to reimagine how urban design of public space can be more just.

Scales of homelessness, hostile designs, and DIY in Los Angeles

Geographic scope I: The Los Angeles Continuum of Care and the city of Los Angeles

My geographic scopes were multiscalar, focusing on multiple homeless geographies in Los Angeles. The first scale is metropolitan Los Angeles within the Los Angeles Continuum of Care, the service and shelter provision geography that manages homelessness. It is composed of 85 out of 88 cities in Los Angeles County (excluding Glendale, Long Beach, and Pasadena).^{xxii} Based on past research,^{xxiii} I focus on the city scale in chapter 5 on homelessness in Los Angeles. In this

chapter, I provide a brief contemporary historical overview of homelessness in LA and descriptive statistics on trends in homelessness over the last five years by dwelling type, the types of anti-homeless ordinances and landscapes that are within this geography, and poverty management and policy responses to homelessness that produce hostile designs.

Geographic scope II: Networked public spaces of anti-homeless zones, hostile designs, and DIY

The second scale is place-based and is represented by four different settings (typologies) of homelessness—the fenced park, the zoned sidewalk, restricted streets, and interstitial spaces—across four neighborhoods (Figure 3). This choice of four neighborhoods is based on the networked nature of the Services Not Sweeps coalition, where key informants informed me that I should connect with activists at different spaces throughout the city to get a broader sample of viewpoints, as well as escalated efforts by the city to displace people from public spaces into short-term shelters.^{xxiv} Based on a prior fellowship as well as volunteer and professional work, I used my contacts to participate in collaborative participant-observation, documentation, and conversations across each neighborhood—Echo Park, Harbor City, Van Nuys, and Venice. For each setting, I describe the materiality of the space, the regulations that led to its creation, how unhoused people and activists experience (or have experienced) and contest (or have contested) hostile designs, the broader impacts of each space on the quality of public space for the general public, and recommendations from the perspectives of unhoused individuals on transforming each setting. My analytical focus is on do-it-yourself urban designs, as previously explained.

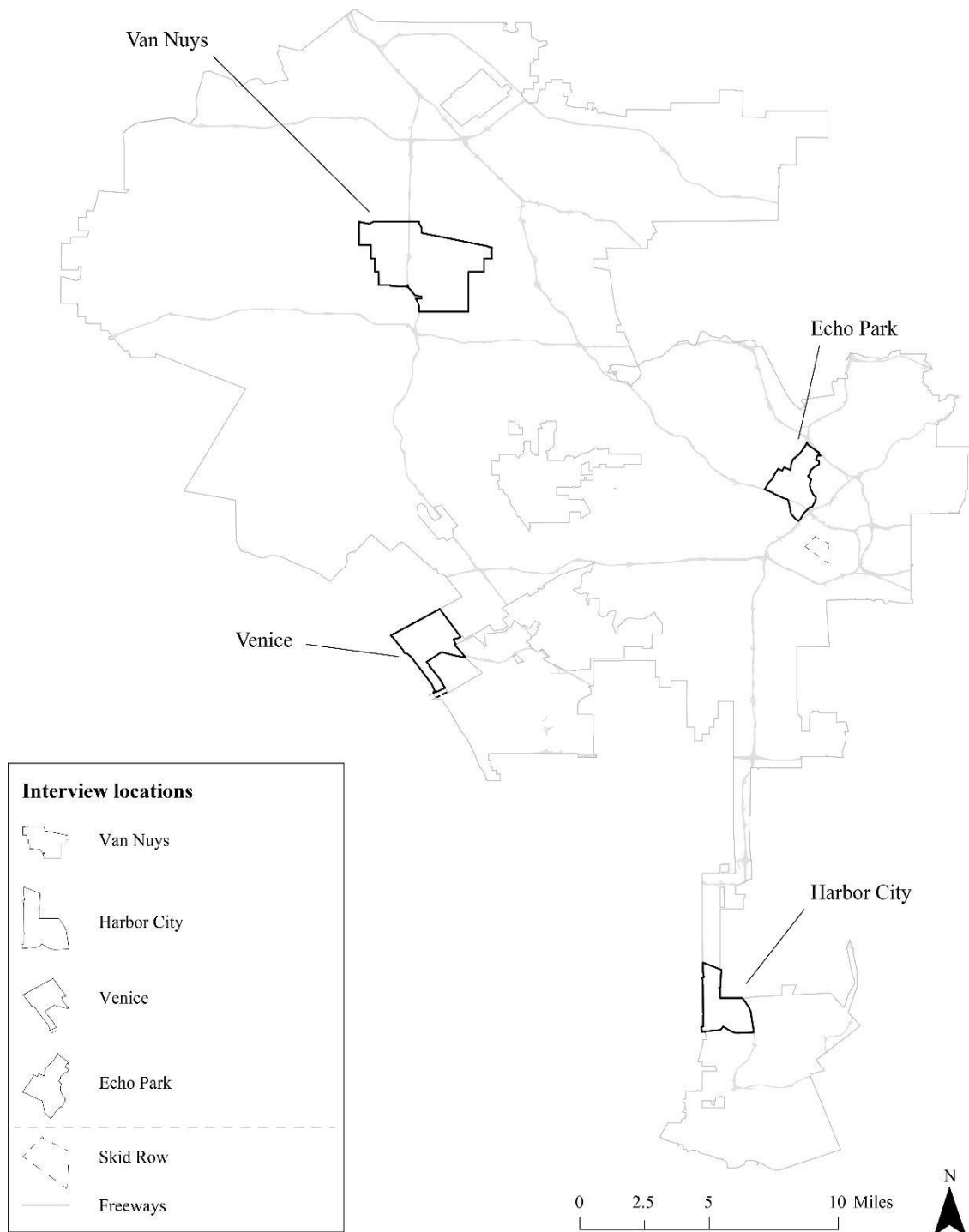


Figure 3. Neighborhoods where fieldwork and interviews were conducted. Map designed by Christopher Giamarino.

As will become clearer in Chapters 5 and 6, residents I spoke to across all four neighborhoods lived between shelters, public spaces, and vehicles and tents, as well as experienced similar anti-homeless regulations and hostile designs. Therefore, I created a typology of the four neighborhoods (see Table 3, Chapter 6, page 189).

The first space in my hostile design typology is the fenced park. As the name connotes, this space is a public city park that has now been surrounded by a chain link fence to restrict and regulate access, entry, and use by the unhoused. Both Echo Park (in Echo Park, Los Angeles, CA) and MacArthur Park (in Westlake, Los Angeles, CA) were spaces where smaller tent cities had developed with services such as portable restrooms, hygiene stations, and rapid COVID-19 mobile testing sites. The city decided to reenforce Los Angeles Municipal Code 63.44 (B) (26) (d), a prohibition on erecting tents and camping in city parks. Prompted by announcements that these parks would undergo renovations, which at the time of writing had not materialized, the fenced park has emerged as a new hostile space. Here, I focus on the community infrastructure that was built at Echo Park through conversations with former residents, and why the park remains a popular space with current residents. My personal experiences living near and experiencing the Echo Park Rise Up encampment served as the jumping-off point of my research on do-it-yourself urban designs. I also had established connections with previous residents through the Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy. From my time spent skateboarding at Echo Park Skatepark, I had friendships with people living in their vehicles on the perimeter of the park after the displacement led to observations and interviews.

The second space is the zoned sidewalk. The city of Los Angeles has invested in transitional shelters through the A Bridge Home (ABH) program. These shelters are located in parts of the city where the unhoused have erected tents on sidewalks. Because the city is

providing shelter in these locations, it has zoned boundaries around them where living on sidewalks is illegal. The zones are called Special Enforcement Zones (SECZ) where the police, sanitation employees, and outreach workers move people beyond their borders and often confiscate and discard their personal property. These sweeps happen weekly. The city has justified this zoning and displacement strategy through the provision of services and shelter within the zone. Following footnote 8 in *Martin*, which states that in some circumstances a city is allowed to criminalize dwelling in public space, the zoned sidewalk has emerged in certain spaces of the city. The zone I worked in was in Van Nuys in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles, CA. My capacity was a Graduate Student Researcher at the UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy's "Displaceability by Design" research group. We formed the Aetna Street Insurgent Research Collective. I built off previous work with activists in the San Fernando Valley mapping the production of anti-homeless landscapes. Here, I worked with an organized encampment community in Van Nuys.

The third space is restricted streets in the beach neighborhood of Venice, Los Angeles, CA. After presenting previous work on vehicular homelessness, key organizers in Venice reached out to me for assistance with ongoing legal advocacy work, especially because the newly elected councilmember in City Council District 11, which includes Venice, is expanding anti-homeless zones, police sweeps, and spatial displacement strategies. As part of the CD11 Committee for Human Rights Housing Committee, I interviewed unhoused people contending with these ongoing strategies, which included parking enforcement, police sweeps, and NIMBY harassment (e.g., slashed tires, hostile architecture like planters on sidewalks).

The fourth space is an interstitial alleyway space near a fenced off park and Tiny Home village in the South Bay neighborhood of Los Angeles called Harbor City. Through networked

activist connections between organizers in Van Nuys and organizers in Harbor City, I met with residents who were displaced from a vacant lot and park that were both fenced off.

There are a few qualifications and criteria for my choice in analyzing these four spaces. First, they were chosen through a strategic sampling strategy in collaboration with mutual aid organizers working within the Services Not Sweeps Coalition. After building trust with these organizers based on previous volunteer mapping research, they invited me to meet with structure builders to photograph their DIY urban designs and interview them. Second, all four spaces were not compared formally to assess similarities and differences. They were selected to enhance the breadth and generalizability of my empirical findings given the short period of time that I conducted this research. Third, I chose four spaces to get a better understanding of the diversity of hostile regulatory and architectural designs within new shelter types, how they have extended out into public spaces and impacted unhoused individuals' experiences in different public space types, and what DIY urban design tactics are produced in response to contest hostile designs. Across all four spaces, I noticed a convergence on how hostile designs encouraged and criminalized DIY urban design responses. This process revealed itself as I investigated the political and social justifications and impacts of hostile designs, understood the experiences and contestations by activists and the unhoused, and proposed alternative regulatory and design policies to create more just public spaces.

Participants

Using my personal connections and past work with advocacy organizations, I observed the everyday experiences and contestations taking place across four hostile spaces through the perspectives of and conversations with unhoused individuals and formerly unhoused individuals who work within advocacy organizations.^{xxv} I relied on the Services Not Sweeps coalition to

gain access to encampment spaces and to conduct interviews. Senior members of the Services Not Sweeps coalition kindly ensured that I would have access to interview people. The purpose of including activists was to connect me to unhoused inhabitants who experience and contest these spaces to build rapport through outreach and advocacy, engage in participant-observation and documentation of DIY responses to hostile designs, and understand their policy and design recommendations through semi-structured interviews. I primarily focused on this group of participants because their vocal resistance to these newly emerging spaces and their demands for policy change continue to be ignored.

From these longstanding connections, I worked with and interviewed 36 unhoused folks. Of the 36, three were heavily involved organizers living in RVs. Four of the 36 were presently housed when I interviewed them; three were formerly unhoused residents in the Echo Park Lake community, and one was previously unhoused in Harbor City. Of the 36 houseless individuals, 23 identified as male (64%), 12 identified as female (33%), and one identified as a transgender male (1%). Regarding race and ethnicity, 10 individuals identified as multi-racial (34%), 7 individuals are Black/African American (24%), 5 are Caucasian (17%), 4 are Hispanic/Latinx (14%), 2 are indigenous (7%), and 1 is Asian/Pacific Islander (3%). The average age of individuals I interviewed was 46 years old with the youngest being 30 years old and the oldest being 68 years old. A sizable number of people I spoke to live between shelters, vehicles, and public spaces. For example, of the 36 individuals, 14 (39 %) had current access to a vehicle for shelter. Considering the diverse perspectives of the participants in my research, I integrated their policy and design recommendations into reimagining hostile designs as just public space designs.

Socio-spatial positionality and institutional support

It is important for me to acknowledge my social and spatial positionality as a middle-class White academic researcher entering and studying public spaces that function as people's homes (for extended reflections on my positionality see Appendix I). I have never been unhoused and my initial interest in researching, critiquing, and rethinking hostile designs comes from my almost 20 years of skateboarding. As someone whose use of public space has been restricted through hostile architecture (not identically criminalized and policed), I am passionate about appropriating and reinterpreting public space through spatial and temporal tactics. Therefore, I was primarily interested in how the grassroots city planning processes and DIY urban design tactics by unhoused folks could inform more just public space outcomes. It was important for me to be primarily interested in cataloguing and analyzing the materiality of hostile architecture and DIY designs. Additionally, when interviewing unhoused individuals, I made sure to set realistic expectations about what my dissertation could and could not do to inform actual homeless management policies in LA, which still primarily rely on criminalization and policing strategies. I also made sure every respondent's identity was anonymous and confidential and that any photographs that I took of the public spaces across all four neighborhoods did not include people since my focus was design of public space.

Following recommendations on building trust and practicing reciprocity in community-based research (Diver & Higgins, 2014; Maiter et al., 2008), I attempted to offset unequal power dynamics in three ways when conducting my research. First, I was fortunate to have funding through a Haynes Lindley Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, which allowed me to compensate each participant in my research with a \$30 gift card. I asked each participant what type of gift card they wanted before purchasing. Depending on the location of each space, gift cards were

purchased for Ralph's, Vons, Target, or a Visa gift card. The Visa gift card was requested for people often living between their vehicles and semi-permanent tent structures for maintenance and repairs (i.e., popped tire on an RV). For all interviews in Van Nuys, the UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy provided \$50 Target gift cards. The research at Van Nuys asked more questions than what was included on my IRB protocol. Therefore, I only analyzed the questions included from my dissertation in these interviews. Second, by collaboratively working with the Services Not Sweeps coalition and the UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy's Aetna Street Insurgent Research Collective,^{xxvi} I assisted in co-producing additional knowledge about unhoused communities' fights against hostile designs and policing that could be used in ongoing legal battles and policy work. Third, my research design purposefully gave unhoused individuals and activists permission to use any photographs and stories from my research for their ongoing outreach work, political advocacy efforts, and protest movements. To support ongoing political and legal advocacy, key organizers in each community wanted to utilize the stories I collected for art exhibitions concerning displacement, lawsuits, and institutional research. In some instances, reciprocation was realized through financial compensation. In others, simply having a conversation and giving people space to tell their story of hostile designs and their creative do-it-yourself urban design solutions was sufficient. "It's great that people like you come to talk to us and give a shit".¹ For more artistically inclined people, we exchanged poetry as a form of reciprocation (Appendix II). In one of the communities (Van Nuys), we also hosted a street festival to celebrate the history, art, culture, and community-based resistance through do-it-yourself tactics, including painting of a crosswalk as a traffic calming technique, music, food, etc. This research is a long-term project that will continue

¹ Dwight, personal communication, February 4, 2023

beyond this dissertation. Therefore, I have maintained contact with people involved in my research and plan to continue checking in to see how they're doing and assisting in whatever way I can.

Building trust and reciprocity in academic researcher-research participant relationships is an ongoing, and uneven, process of negotiating power. Through ongoing mutual aid volunteerism, assistance with political and legal advocacy, compensation for time, and anonymization of participants in this research, I attempted to assuage negative impacts in exchange for uplifting the creative potential of do-it-yourself urban designs by participants, their stories contending with hostile designs, and recommendations for more just public space outcome.

Urban humanist practices, measures, and procedures

My primary methodology was an urban humanities case study approach with two sets of procedures. I employed filmic sensing (photographic cataloguing) and digital storytelling (interviewing) as two interrelated urban humanities practices which helped me answer my research questions.

Filming sensing: Creating an empirical catalog of DIY responses to hostile designs

To catalog each space and describe the material complexity of their hostility, I engaged with collage photography, borrowing from filmic sensing. Filmic sensing is the production of video montages through film or the use of collage photography to showcase how public space is designed and experienced from the perspectives of different users. The outcome is often a three-to-five-minute video to bring viewers into the space through a particular experiential and theoretical lens. Referencing this method, I was able to contribute a more complex, empirical catalog of DIY resistance to hostile designs (beyond individual objects) to the understudied

literature. Additionally, my photographic catalog functions as an archive that can be used in ongoing political and legal advocacy efforts by the organizations I collaborated with in my dissertation. The use of photography to understand how city planning processes and urban design outcomes shape public spaces and dictate who can use them and how can seminal knowledge on everyday life by documenting interactions with the urban design and architecture of cities. Important insights have been produced from the use of photography in concert with critical social commentary, philosophy, and planning theory. Inspiring precedents for my work include more traditional behavioral mapping documentaries about the social life of privately-owned public spaces in New York City (Whyte, 1980), a photographic mapping of urban decay over time in cities like Los Angeles and New York (Vergara, 1995), the use of historical photography and narratives to spatialize invisible urban and social landscapes into public memory (D. Hayden, 1995), and the use of photography to understand everyday life in a do-it-yourself subcultural playground and skatepark on the Williamsburg waterfront in Brooklyn, New York (Campo, 2013). My hope is that this method encourages city planners, urban designers, and architects to look at the intricate details of public spaces, streetscape, and other architectural clues to understand how hostile designs impact marginalized groups like the unhoused (A. B. Jacobs, 1985). I did so by cataloging the material reality of experiences with hostile designs and do-it-yourself responses, putting them into conversation with my theoretical framework and conversations with unhoused individuals, to reimagine how public spaces can be more just.

I refer to historical photographs of the displaced Echo Park Lake community (see Roy et al., 2022) and took photographs of hostile designs and do-it-yourself designs at all four sites. The purpose was to analyze the various DIY design tactics that existed. Additionally, I wanted to document the multiple zones, hostile designs, and do-it-yourself responses that stretch across Los

Angeles and unhoused communities. For hostile designs within shelter spaces, I relied on conversations with unhoused individuals and a content analysis of online secondary sources that describe the rules and designs of them.

To catalog historical photographs, which I analyzed through a report on the Echo Park Lake community (Roy et al., 2022), I conversed with former residents of the Echo Park Lake community and analyzed photographs from a report on the failed displacement of the community (Roy et al., 2022). I specifically analyzed examples of grassroots city planning and urban design across all four neighborhoods and took copious amounts of notes on how each community was laid out. There were several scenarios where DIY design tactics took place after the 2021 sweep. For example, on August 7th, 2022, an unidentified group of people took down parts of the chain link fence surrounding Echo Park Lake and called their tactics a “community de-fence.” On August 8th, I took photographs of signage, the fence, remnants of contestation (i.e., holes cut in the fence), and ongoing regulatory strategies (i.e., park rangers).

For the four neighborhood spaces, I photographed streetscape characteristics that were either hostile or afforded gaps in regulation where dwellings are allowed to develop. I did not take photographs of the outside or inside of homes. Rather, I documented do-it-yourself urban designs that functioned as community and mutual aid infrastructure. Where fences, signs, and other instances of hostility existed, I took photographs to catalog a representative sample of hostile anti-homeless architecture. To avoid privacy issues with unhoused individuals, I took photographs of architectural features.

I stored photographs in a secure Google Drive folder and archived them. For each image, I added the date it was taken, what the photograph depicts, and a brief paragraph description of the function of the architecture or social dynamics in the photograph. My photographs were

thematized by each just public space design proposition, exposed what hostile designs existed and were shared across each space, and detailed similar DIY urban design responses.

It is important to note that the large sweep of Echo Park, weekly sweeps of the other spaces, and hidden displacement and policing strategies took place over the course of my research. To understand the experiences and contestations of these hostile designs, as well as formulate policy and design recommendations grounded in everyday life of unhoused folks, storytelling through interviews was of the utmost importance in reimagining hostile spaces as just public spaces. This was done through site visits with my institutional and advocacy organizational connections.

Digital storytelling: Vocal resistance and demands to create more just urban designs

To document past and present experiences and contestations of hostile designs, the most important aspect of my grounded, emergent, and iterative humanist approach was to interview unhoused individuals across networked communities. Based on previous academic and professional work, I have built rapport with organizations and was able to set up interviews. Based on past collaborative research mapping anti-homeless ordinances with KFA and ongoing volunteer work, I also received a letter of support from lead organizers of the Services Not Sweeps coalition to conduct interviews with unhoused individuals and incorporate their voices into policy and design recommendations (Appendix III). For unhoused folks, I asked them questions that helped answer my primary research questions: How have you experienced and resisted hostile designs? Why do you think the city is fencing off parks and conducting police sweeps around shelters? What are other examples of hostile designs you've experienced? How have you used DIY urban design to resist and/or respond to hostile designs? How would you

redesign these spaces to fit your unique needs? What planning and design have you been involved in to improve your quality of life and/or community spaces?

Through semi-structured interviews and informal conversations, I kept a digital journal of the language used about each space, why regulations worked or didn't work, what was hostile about the public spaces and adjacent service spaces, and how and why individuals participated in do-it-yourself urban designs. In Appendix IV, I have included the interview instrument with questions. To get the conversation started, I asked my respondents to introduce themselves, their experiences with the police and formal outreach, and why they became unhoused. For each interview, I used my iPhone with a Bluetooth microphone to record. Although I collected the interviewee's name, I used a pseudonym generator for confidentiality purposes (reedsy, 2023). Using Otter.ai transcription technology on my phone, I automatically transcribed each interview and exported to a Word Document. Using the constant comparative method with Atlas.ti (Glaser & Strauss, 2006), a qualitative coding software, I read through each interview transcription and coded conversational snippets according to my theoretical frameworks, as well as policy and design recommendations that emerged as defined by my just public space design framework.

The broad coding groups included revanchism (post- and neo-), hostile designs, do-it-yourself urban design, contradictions (found between individual interviewees and across dwelling types), and just public space design propositions. While conversations were coded according to my theoretical frameworks, I stopped conducting semi-structured interviews when I noticed theoretical saturation and redundancy with responses and experiences with hostile designs and the types of do-it-yourself urban design tactics that were mentioned (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Some methodological scholars have provided operational models of how to measure saturation and quantifiable statistics about how many interviews are enough, with widely

divergent ranges of what is the appropriate sample size (Guest et al., 2006, 2020; Lowe et al., 2018). Prior work on similar topics has ranged from four in-depth interviews (Annan, 2021) to 43 in-depth interviews (Herring et al., 2020). I am in agreement with recent scholars that saturation represents a logical fallacy that no new knowledge can be discovered about a topic through the development of an absolute conceptual model (Braun & Clarke, 2021; J. Low, 2019). Therefore, I stopped conducting interviews when I felt that the information collected was redundant and adequately helped me answer my research questions related to the concepts, processes, and experiences of hostile designs and do-it-yourself urban designs within the broader political economy of Los Angeles, as well as recommendations to render more just public spaces from the perspectives of unhoused communities.

I interviewed 36 unhoused individuals. This happened after thematic coding of the first 6 interviewees where no new codes were generated for the remaining 30 transcripts. Thematic saturation occurred when I was able to read through each of the remaining transcripts multiple times in relation to my theoretical frameworks as well as my identification of contradictions across conversations and apply the same codes from the first 6 interviews. All in all, 153 unique codes were generated that could be grouped into 9 unique coding groups (Appendix V).

On average, each interview lasted 30 minutes for a total of approximately 18 hours of narrative data. The average age of participants was 45 years old with the minimum being 30 years old and maximum being 67 years old. 24 individuals identified as male (67%); 12 individuals identified as female (33%). The breakdown in interviews by neighborhood included 12 in Van Nuys (33%), 11 in Venice (31%), 8 in Harbor City (22%), and 5 in Echo Park (14%). For further breakdown on age, gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, houseless status, reason for being unhoused, and dwelling type, please see Appendix VI.^{xxvii}

The semi-structured interviews helped me identify additional insights into how urban design processes, practices, and outcomes have functioned to redesign each public space to be more hostile and encourage do-it-yourself responses. Coded transcripts allowed me to evaluate public space design outcomes according to my operational framework on just urban design. Interviews and conversations were transformed into narratives that were put into conversation with broader discourse on the political economic agenda of policymakers in LA and my photographic depictions of DIY and hostile designs. I blended the narratives into the cataloged photographs to give cultural, experiential, and historical context to my representation of the materiality of each hostile space.

Together, I performed two interdisciplinary methods to better understand relational hostile designs, what they look like, how they are experienced and contested through do-it-yourself urban designs, and how they can be reimagined to render public space more just. First, filmic sensing as photography helped me to contextualize the socio-spatial realities of grassroots planning and design resistance to hostile designs within each setting. Here, I created a photographic catalog of hostile design elements with written descriptions, my initial thoughts on certain objects, and what each object does to effect the quality of life for unhoused individuals and the quality of public space. More importantly, I catalogued do-it-yourself urban design resistance and began noticing similar designs shared across each space. Second, digital storytelling incorporated narratives from unhoused folks about their experiences with and resistance to hostile designs and recommendations to redesign public spaces to be more just. Their stories confronted dominant discourses about how each space is regulated, policed, and privatized, offered experiential counternarratives that formed value judgments about whether a space is hostile or not, and pointed to policy and design recommendations that would help cities

provide more just public spaces, dependable services, and opportunities to access housing. To address urban policy and design challenges, planners must mediate political disagreements and utilize their technical expertise in concert with inhabitants' tacit knowledge about an urban issue (Friedmann, 1989). I used filmic sensing and digital storytelling to catalog do-it-yourself urban design responses to hostile designs and propose how the local knowledge of unhoused individuals and activists can and should be included in policy and design processes to produce more just public spaces.

After mapping the expansion of anti-homeless ordinances during COVID-19 in LA, I had unanswered questions that required the use of photography and storytelling to fill in the visual and experiential gaps. Questions remained from the content analysis and mapping of anti-homeless ordinances and zones, which spatialized the broader shrinking of public space. What do hostile regulations and designs that exist within shelters and public spaces look like? What DIY urban design interventions are unhoused communities engaging in to respond to this hostility? By taking and analyzing photographs of four spaces with designated shelters attached to anti-homeless zones where structure builders were constructing DIY private residential and community infrastructure, I was able to answer these first two questions. But I wanted to know how these hostile designs were experienced, why people chose to live in a public space in relation to shelters, how people built private/community infrastructure, why they engaged in DIY urban design interventions, and what planning and design lessons cities could learn from them in order to enact more just public space regulations and designs. Therefore, semi-structured interviews helped me to answer these last remaining questions to tell stories about how hostile designs were experienced, why people engaged in DIY urban design interventions, and what

planning and design lessons could be learned and applied to public spaces to produce an inclusive public space environment for unhoused communities.

From hostile designs to just urban designs

To recommend just public space design guidelines for unhoused folks, I initially drew inspiration from communicative planning theory to specifically listen to the voices of the unhoused (Healey, 2003), citizen participation to support full citizen control in having a say over planning and design decisions (Arnstein, 1969), and advocacy planning to produce more just public spaces (Davidoff, 1965). Over the course of my dissertation, I adapted urban humanities practices to demonstrate how a more political, audacious, creative, and therapeutic planning imagination can solve complex issues in public space (Sandercock, 2004). Politically, I chose to collaborate with, listen to, and advocate for the unhoused and activists by strategically studying responses to hostile designs and rethinking what just urban design for them can look like. Audaciously, I incorporated their voices to reimagine how public space can function politically and socially beyond logics of property, pedestrian mobility, and middle-class norms. While my policy and design recommendations are grounded in the political, economic, and social realities that unhoused individuals experience in Los Angeles, using my just public space framework as an evaluative tool to critique hostile spaces and develop more just public space designs both prioritizes the legitimate claims and life-sustaining practices of the unhoused as well as addresses the minor inconveniences experienced by housed residents using these public spaces. Creatively, this urban humanities approach afforded me the ability to incorporate and improve emerging interdisciplinary practices to study homelessness and public space beyond more traditional quantitative methods. Therapeutically, borrowing from Sandercock's (2004) definition, I hope that incorporating socio-spatial narratives and contestations by unhoused individuals promotes

the inclusion of their voices in future policy and design processes and outcomes, recognizes their needs as legitimate, and works toward a future where public spaces are less hostile and more just. Urban design processes that continually justify exclusionary design practices and work to produce hostile design outcomes further entrench political and economic agendas that privatize public space, spatially displace unhoused individuals, and fail to address structural causes of homelessness. Designing just public spaces can afford unhoused folks the ability to realize basic well-being and access necessary services and housing opportunities by having a right to use public spaces.

In the next chapter, I present recent trends in homelessness, regulatory strategies to manage homelessness in public space, and short-term shelter strategies within the COVID-19 political economy of Los Angeles. Here, I map quality-of-life ordinances and link their legal enforcement to service and shelter provision, as well as contextualize the compassionate and hostile aspects of these spaces with interviews and photographs to spatialize the ongoing production of anti-homeless zones and hostile designs.

CHAPTER 5

Contemporary trends of homelessness in Los Angeles^{xxviii}

According to the 2022 homeless census conducted by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, today in the city of Los Angeles there are 28,458 unsheltered individuals living on sidewalks, in parks, and other public spaces on any given night (LAHSA, 2022a). This represents a 60 percent increase in unsheltered homelessness since 2015. The Economic Roundtable (Flaming & Burns, 2017), a nonprofit policy research organization that conducts quantitative analyses of complex open data, has previously estimated that the annual homeless count is an undercount due to training pitfalls with volunteers and methodological shortcomings like reliance on windshield surveys, as well as unhoused people's desires to remain hidden—especially those living in vehicles—from plain sight and policing (Ivey et al., 2018; D. Smith, 2022). Therefore, the 28,458 unhoused, unsheltered individuals counted in the city of Los Angeles may only reflect 25 percent of the total population, which means that on any given night over 100,000 individuals are seeking shelter on sidewalks, parks, public streets, and other interstitial spaces (i.e., near or under freeway overpasses). This growth in unsheltered homelessness is not new, and it can be linked to historical processes of neoliberalization starting in the late 1970s and continuing to this day.

Neoliberal urban development processes in LA include the deindustrialization of blue-collar jobs, deinstitutionalization of mental health services, financialization of housing markets (e.g., the conversion of low-income housing into market rate housing in Skid Row), exclusionary zoning, reductions of federal funding for housing, reduction in welfare payments, stagnant wages, and efforts to deconcentrate services and shelters from Skid Row throughout the city of Los Angeles (Collins & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2016; Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee, 1998; Mitchell,

2011; Reese et al., 2010; Stuart, 2016; J. R. Wolch & Dear, 1993). The “1976 Blue Book” plan sought, but ultimately failed, to contain homelessness in Skid Row through the preservation of low-income housing stock, the rezoning of industrial land uses to produce permanently affordable housing, and the expansion of compassionate services to other parts of LA (Gudis, 2022). From the 1980s to 2010s, according to Gudis (2022), responses to homelessness included policing unhoused people into an “urban campground” during the 1984 Olympics, the nonprofitization of homelessness management through the expansion of mission shelters, and failure to expand affordable housing and social services to other parts of the city due to NIMBY resistance (Reese et al., 2010).

The failure of Los Angeles to end homelessness owes to the historical reproduction of homelessness as a product of a capitalist political economy imposed through the regulatory and spatial partitioning of social relations between the housed and unhoused, wealthy and poor, and deserving and undeserving in space (Mitchell, 2011). Today, less politically contentious strategies have been adopted through the expansion of short-term shelters in interstitial spaces in industrial areas, near freeways, and along transit routes, while police sweeps, presently called CARE/CARE+ (Comprehensive Cleaning and Rapid Engagement) cleanups (LAsanitation, 2023), work to shepherd unhoused people into these subpar temporary shelter spaces (Stuart, 2014).^{xxix} In this chapter, I argue that the expansion of services and short-term shelter strategies is tied to the regulation of unsheltered homelessness in Los Angeles public spaces and works to legitimize the shrinkage of social and spatial rights to the city through zoning, policing, displacement, and hostile designs.

I advance my argument through four interrelated sections. First, I describe the contemporary regulatory and homeless service landscape. This includes court rulings, quality-of-

life ordinances, spatial policing programs, and renewed policy efforts to provide services to and shelter for LA's growing unhoused population. I demonstrate how the investment in short-term shelter solutions rationalizes the shrinkage of public space access for unhoused individuals, while simultaneously failing to provide enough beds to legitimize the enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances.

Second, I map the expanding anti-homeless landscape in LA and its ties to the construction of new shelter facilities and everyday public spaces. I suggest that each street cleanup and police sweep are legitimized by the presence of a designated shelter and purported offer of placement into a shelter, but ultimately function to strengthen anti-homeless regulations and hostile designs that shrink public space.

Third, I critique the regulation and design of four emerging shelter spaces through stories from unhoused individuals with lived experience in them. While I acknowledge that a shelter is preferable to living unprotected in public space, I posit that, as currently regulated and designed, they are uninhabitable, hostile, and dehumanizing. Additionally, their relationality to hostile public space designs demonstrates their primary intent—to contain visible poverty and criminalize unhoused individuals who cannot access the under-supply of shelter spaces.

Fourth, through photographs of public space regulations and hostile amenities and stories from unhoused individuals, I editorialize the fluctuating soft and hard design controls that shrink socio-spatial rights to city space for unhoused individuals. I reflect on the uncertainties that arise when offers of shelter and promises to be placed into permanent housing initially produce false hope before bringing people into contact with hostile regulations and design in shelters and public spaces. These precarious situations include being evicted, being pushed to other public spaces and shelter locations, getting arrested, allowing access to public space amenities like

restrooms before taking them away, and, eventually, resorting to DIY urban design interventions to cope and survive.

The regulatory and homeless service landscape in Los Angeles

In Los Angeles, several seminal court cases and ongoing activist struggles are worth noting as they relate to *Martin* and the criminalization of the unhoused in public space in exchange for services and shelter. Two court cases were the results of lawsuits in response to increased policing of homelessness in Skid Row through LA's Safer Cities Initiative (SCI), which was an effort to clean up the streets in Skid Row, deconcentrate service infrastructure to other parts of LA, and ultimately gentrify Skid Row through zero tolerance policing and police sweeps (Reese et al., 2010; Vitale, 2010). Following the dictums of the "broken window's thesis," the role of SCI was to "eliminate numerous encampments and reduce public loitering" (Vitale, 2010, p. 868). As homelessness in Los Angeles continued to grow, SCI received intense scrutiny for spending hundreds of millions of dollars on policing when this money could have been spent on the construction of affordable housing. Gary Blasi (2007) found that while SCI reduced drug-related crimes in Skid Row, it forced unhoused people into a spatial cycle between incarceration, shelters, and the streets, as many were unable to pay fines and became ineligible for harm reduction services.

In the early 2000s, with LA's renewed interest in revitalizing its downtown, clashes between unhoused activists and local businesses reached a tipping point, as former police chief William J. Bratton began re-enforcing the "sit-lie" ordinance. This subjected unhoused individuals, who had nowhere else to sleep or sit due to a shortage of shelter beds and affordable and permanent housing, to fines of \$1,000 and six months or more of incarceration. In 2003, the ACLU brought a lawsuit against the city. In *Jones v. City of Los Angeles* (2006), a district court

initially upheld the “sit-lie” ordinance (41.18d was first implemented in 1968) because it criminalized a person’s conduct and not their socioeconomic status. However in 2006, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Edward Jones and other unhoused individuals in Skid Row had illustrated past harm and the threat of continued future punishment without the possibility of accessing permanent housing (Gerry, 2007). The settlement stated that until the city of Los Angeles provided 1,250 permanent housing units, it could not reinforce the “sit-lie” ordinance. In 2018, the city met this requirement and resumed enforcement of the ordinance until the ruling in *Martin*. In *Lavan v. City of Los Angeles* (2011), Tony Lavan and seven other individuals living in Skid Row filed a lawsuit against the City of Los Angeles for seizing and discarding their personal property that had accrued on sidewalks, which was in violation of the “bulky items” ordinance (codified as 56.11). The Ninth Circuit ruled in favor of Lavan and company, arguing that seizing and discarding the personal property of an unhoused person violated the “unreasonable searches and seizures” clause of the 4th Amendment.

For the growing number of unhoused people living in cars, vans, campers, and recreational vehicles (RVs), the 1983 ordinance L.A.M.C. § 85.02 prohibits people from sleeping in their vehicles overnight. The city renewed efforts to enforce 85.02, citing concerns with trash and street cleanliness, which led to the arrest of six individuals for possessing food and bedding in their vehicles, including Cheyenne Desertrain who was using their car to eat food, talk on their cellphone, and avoid the rain. In *Desertrain v. City of Los Angeles* (2014), the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals found the enforcement of 85.02 to be unconstitutionally vague under the Due Process clause of the 14th Amendment because the city failed to give adequate notice about what conduct the law prohibits and enforcement encouraged discrimination against unhoused individuals. There have been renewed efforts by the police and city councilmembers to unconstitutionally

enforce overnight camping bans in parks, on sidewalks, and in vehicles on public streets, as evidenced by the Echo Park Lake displacement, renewed efforts to re-enforce 85.02, and my correspondence with unhoused residents across all four neighborhoods. For example, the Board of Police Commissioners released a report that associated the presence of RVs on public streets with crime, although the correspondence acknowledged that the association was insufficient (*RE: CRIMES ORIGINATING FROM OR OCCURRING WITHIN CORRIDORS POPULATED WITH RECREATIONAL VEHICLES.*, 2022). Despite these court rulings, the City of Los Angeles continues to adapt, implementing new programs, enforcing existing ordinances, and practicing other hidden strategies to criminalize people sleeping in tents.

To justify sweeps, the city adopted a more ambivalent, seemingly less punitive (i.e., post-revanchist) approach to managing and eliminating unsheltered homelessness. This included countywide Measure H—a \$.25 sales tax, which was passed in 2015 that began raising \$355 million for homeless services (i.e., financial assistance, case management, and legal aid) per year for ten years starting in 2017, and Proposition HHH—a \$1.2 billion bond measure, which was passed by the city of LA to build 10,000 new apartments over 10 years. Three years later, however, researchers from the California Policy Lab found that 50 percent of unhoused people approached by case workers had received rental assistance even though it was seen as the most beneficial program to solve homelessness, while legal services was the second most requested service for purposes like eviction defense (Wachter et al., 2020). Additionally, only 23 percent of individuals that were identified by predictive models as at risk of becoming unhoused were enrolled in Measure-H prevention services. This points to a countywide deficiency in enrollment for social services, financial and legal assistance, and housing placements. After five years of Proposition HHH, there had only been 1,000 permanently supportive and affordable housing

units built at \$500,000 per unit, which due to issues like reduced demand for tax write-offs by developers has failed to keep pace with the growth in unsheltered homelessness caused by economic and housing precarity during the COVID-19 pandemic (Scott & Gonzalez, 2021).

Due to the slow pace of delivering affordable housing units, the city of Los Angeles has provided short-term solutions through the construction of A Bridge Home shelters—often built in areas with known encampments, Tiny Home villages—sheds near freeways, Project Homekey—a state initiative to seize motels and hotels and convert them into permanent supportive housing, and Safe Parking programs—the conversion of public parking or “postsecular” (May & Cloke, 2014) lots into safe, secure overnight sleeping locations. Postsecularity signifies partnerships between public agencies and faith-based institutions that come together to address homeless management issues, give churches power and a public voice in serving unhoused populations, and provide spaces of care and political hope as a “powerful challenge to the more regressive developments in the policing and ‘servicing’ of homeless people” under compassionate revanchist regimes (May & Cloke, 2014, p. 906). Postsecular safe parking lots are partnerships between service providers and, often, third-party nonprofits like churches that have surface parking lots that can be converted into Safe Parking sites. Former Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti implemented the shelter program “A Bridge Home” (ABH), which seeks to act as a temporary bridge from being homeless to living in permanent housing. The program has not been very successful, however. By November 20th, 2020, only 15 percent of 1,500 individuals placed into these shelters had moved to permanent affordable housing (Oreskes & Smith, 2020). Around each shelter, the city has set up a Special Enforcement Zone (SECZ). Here, outreach workers at the Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority (hereafter, LAHSA), LA Sanitation employees, and LAPD officers enforce street clean ups, notifying unhoused

individuals in particular areas that they must leave for street cleaning or be subjected to policing and dispossession. LA continues to spend millions of dollars on sweeps instead of services, and temporary shelters prove to be ineffective (Tinoco, 2019b, 2019a, 2020). The enforcement of 41.18 (the “sit-lie” law) is justified through short-term offers of shelter through programs like Project Homekey (formerly Project Roomkey) and Tiny Home Villages. This strategy of offering either shelter or jailtime reflects historical policing and spatial banishment strategies undertaken by the city (DeVerteuil et al., 2009). The large park sweeps in Echo Park and MacArthur Park were the result of the city allowing encampment concentration and then deciding to enforce 63.44, an ordinance that bans overnight camping in city parks. The city has also proposed to amend ordinance 85.02 to zone where people can and cannot sleep overnight in an effort to influence vehicular dwellings to park in safe parking lots away from prime spaces (Swan, 2019). Under the new mayoral administration, Mayor Karen Bass has continued, expanded, and sped up efforts to place people living in public spaces into hotel and motel rooms through their Inside Safe initiative—a continuation of Project Homekey (Matthew, 2023; Mayor Karen Bass, 2022).

It is worth noting the calculated discourse espoused in L.A.M.C § 41.18, 56.11, 63.44, and 85.02. The public health and well-being language plays a significant role in legitimizing enforcement. The “sit-lie” law (41.18) seeks to prevent obstructions (i.e., a person sitting or lying on the ground) of the “public right-of-way” that “impedes passage, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990,” within 500 feet of a school, library, or park, or within 1,000 feet of a designate shelter facility. The “bulky items” law (56.11) targets “any tangible property” for trashing or transfer to “The Bin” in Skid Row to:

to balance the needs of the residents and public at large to access clean and sanitary public areas consistent with the intended uses for the public areas with the needs of the individuals, who have no other alternatives for the storage of personal property, to retain access to a limited amount of personal property in public areas.

The “park camping ban” (63.44) outlaws camping overnight in public parks because these public goods “should be accessible and available to residents and the public at large for their intended recreational uses,” and camping in a park “can create a public health or safety hazard that adversely affects” the park and the rights of people using it for recreational activities. The “safe parking streets” (85.02) simply outlaws dwelling in a vehicle in residential districts and near schools, subjecting individuals and households to citations. The language embedded in these ordinances marks unhoused residents as “chronic street nuisances” that annoy “most other users” for a “protracted period” (Ellickson, 1996, p. 1169). Implied in each ordinance, sitting or sleeping on sidewalks or in parks, possessing or building “bedding, sleeping bags, hammocks, sheds, structures, mattresses, couches, chairs, other furniture, appliances, and personal items such as household items, luggage, backpacks, clothing, documents, and medication” (Amended by Ord. No. 187,586, Eff. 9/18/22.), or living in one’s vehicle will present public health risks associated with basic hygiene, crime, and sanitation that will negatively impact the general welfare of and rights to public space for housed residents, which represent the majority of inhabitants in LA. While documenting the hostile shelter and public space designs that are carried out in the next few sections, I illustrate how enforcement of these ordinances and their outcomes on-the-ground reproduce the problems that they supposedly intend to address through cleanups, displacement, and dispossession.

There is reason to be skeptical about the success of these programs given their failures to transition people into permanent supportive housing (Roy et al., 2022), the under-capacitated

supply of these shelter spaces for all people experiencing unsheltered homelessness (LAHSA, 2023), the barriers to applying for and entering into these programs (e.g., Safe Parking requires a driver’s license, up-to-date registration, and that the vehicle is fully operational), and the stringent rules and hostile designs embedded within these spaces (D. Smith & Oreskes, 2020b), including early curfews, lack of privacy, inadequate provision of and early closure of restrooms and showers, police presence, and infrastructural and architectural design issues. In the case of the Echo Park Lake displacement, only 17 (10 percent) of the 183 people displaced were placed into housing—permanently supportive, affordable long-term housing like apartments or housing (Roy et al., 2022). For those lucky enough to be transitioned into permanent housing from Project Homekey—it is estimated that since 2020, 48 percent of residents were placed into permanent housing, while the interim housing program temporarily sheltered over 10,000 unhoused residents (LAHSA, 2022b). The program shut down in Fall 2022 with only two locations still open, which are the Grand Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles and the Cadillac Hotel in Venice (Klemack, 2022). Even while more than 37 locations were in operation, there were reports of discrimination against disabled people, sexual assault, and even death (Reyes et al., 2021; D. Smith & Oreskes, 2020a).

Within the city of LA, 13,522 people were sheltered in 2022 (32 percent of the total unhoused population). Looking at LAHSA’s Data Dashboard (2023) for short-term shelter programs, the ABH and Project Homekey programs are operating at almost full capacity. At the time of this writing, the number of ABH beds is 1,609 (at 90 percent capacity) and there are currently 2,032 clients actively enrolled in 1,049 contracted rooms^{xxx} in Project Homekey. The number of spots taken at Safe Parking is 327 out of 475 (68 percent) and the number of beds used in Tiny Homes are 60 out of 1,180 (5 percent). Considering the historic winter storm that

has brought torrential downpours to LA during the winter and spring of 2023, the Winter Shelter program only has a total of 350 beds with only 227 currently taken (65 percent). All in all, there are over 5,000 additional shelter beds and places to park safely for the nearly 30,000 unsheltered residents living in public spaces.

A recent report by scholars tracking housing placements for 26 houseless veterans in Los Angeles (Hunter et al., 2021) and survey research on shelter preferences for unhoused individuals in Sacramento during COVID-19 (Finnigan, 2022) found that individuals prefer shelter over living unprotected in public spaces for reasons like increased safety, better access to services, and mental healthcare. Yet, sporadic outreach and under-supply of interim housing solutions are not able to meet the demand for these forms of “unstable housing”(Hunter et al., 2021). Therefore, under *Martin v. Boise*, the city cannot constitutionally enforce encampment sweeps or move-along orders even if improper offers of housing are made. Nevertheless, the city during COVID-19 has expanded its anti-homeless zones and justified them through implementation of hostile rules and architecture that exist between shelter spaces and public spaces in the city.

Spatial shrinkage, neo-revanchist frontiers, and hostile designs

Well, when I was told to leave. ‘You can't be here,’ by whatever police officer or security person. I would always ask them, ‘**Well, where should I go? Where do you think I should go? Because every time I sit down, I'm told I need to leave.** But no one ever tells me where I can go. Can you just tell me where around here I can sit and do what I'm doing right now’. And the answer was never helpful. It's always, ‘I don't know, but you can't be here’. —Wallace

This is the frontier. A frontier is a frontier for a reason. Where are we going to go? —Joseph

In his everyday life, Wallace would seek out Metro stations to access power outlets to charge his phones and use benches for sitting down. While these spaces are underutilized, based on his appearance he is targeted for harassment and told to move along. “It’s not being utilized a lot of times like no one ever sits in this space that’s made for a person to sit. But as soon as I’m sitting there and I look homeless, they spring into action”.² Additionally, he sees hostile architecture as a policy strategy to criminalize being unhoused. “The bars on benches so you can’t sleep on it. Just putting rocks where people are sleeping. That just shows you where their mind is.”

Joseph,³ who became unemployed during COVID-19 and lives in his Prius in Venice, is not mapping new frontiers of real estate speculation and gentrification but rather describing the annihilation of space by law for unhoused residents (Mitchell, 1997; N. Smith, 1996). As he states, the anti-vehicular dwelling restrictions and anti-camping zones have pushed him, literally and figuratively, to the spatial precipice—away from public streets and toward the ocean; another place where sitting and sleeping are outlawed.

Unhoused residents under this new spatial regime of homelessness management have limited knowledge as to when and where they are allowed to exist. The city has justified the expansion and enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances through the hasty provision of short-term shelter spaces replete with hostile social and architectural designs. Moatasim (2023) argues that “new ‘architectures’” in Los Angeles like storage spaces and Safe Parking lots are materializations of anti-homeless laws and linked to ongoing criminalization strategies that stigmatize and dehumanize unhoused people through the production of new forms of socio-spatial exclusion. For those who have experienced hostile designs within these service spaces,

² personal communication, January 27, 2023

³ personal communication, February 11, 2023

they are often evicted for violating stringent rules. Then, they contend with “soft” and “hard” controls in public spaces before resorting to do-it-yourself urban design interventions that are criminalized instead of learned from to render a more compassionate post-revanchist landscape in LA. In this chapter, I trace the production of no-go zones, critique the hostile social and architectural designs between shelter spaces and public spaces that create spatial and dwelling-type fluidity for unhoused residents, and reflect on the false hope and contradictions that hostile designs engender for unhoused residents.

The expansion of anti-homeless zones

In previous work, Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and I (2023) have traced the expansion of Los Angeles’ anti-homeless landscape during COVID-19. We illustrated how temporary offers of shelter, hidden policing strategies, and enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances have produced a fragmented neo-revanchist city of no-go zones with little space for unhoused people to safely occupy public spaces for shelter. For the growing number of residents living in vehicles, anti-vehicular dwelling restrictions have pushed them to different parts of the City of LA, while failing to address the growth in vehicular homelessness through expanding services and safe places to park (Giamarino, Brozen, et al., 2023). Similar to Herring et al.'s (2020, p. 144) findings in San Francisco of the socio-spatial impacts of move-along orders, the spatial shrinkage experienced by unhoused residents represents “no unidirectional pattern of movement into a single or set of neighborhoods, but rather an even churning between district.” From my conversations with unhoused residents, I suggest that this ad hoc “spatial churning” effect shrink public spaces for unhoused residents by pushing them further and further away from services and opportunities for housing. This is evidenced by the displacement and fencing of Echo Park, arrests and sweeps in Harbor City and Van Nuys, and movement to avoid harassment and tickets

by residents in Venice to find safe places to park. Not only are people pushed further away from the services and shelter they need, but anti-homeless zones and the hostile designs within temporary shelter spaces and adjacent public spaces stretch the fluidity of one's dwelling type.

This socio-spatial fluidity is two-pronged. First, it is the product of hostile designs within shelters that create relational geographies of criminalization extending out into and across public spaces. In Van Nuys, people live between the large encampment and the ABH. "Some of the people in the shelters have encampments out here. It's full or they don't want to get transferred nowhere or whatever, they'll just camp out here."⁴ Second, fluidity is stretched socially and spatially in a downward trajectory where individuals cannot afford to pay rent, move into their vehicle, lose their vehicle due to repossession, build semi-permanent structures that are then demolished, and end up living in a tent in a public space. Patrick,⁵ currently living between the Van Nuys ABH and the sidewalk, describes the dangerous impacts of losing one's vehicle as a more protective shelter after being arrested for sleeping in a park:

But how do I get back on my feet if I had a fall because the police took my van. You know that was my mobile work unit. Computer, everything. Once they took that I had no way to have anything. These people won't let you have a phone on the street. You go to sleep? Got him!

The fluidity of one's dwelling type indicates a broader process of the shrinking of unhoused residents' social and spatial rights to exist in urban space. As individuals experience this spatial shrinking through the enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances and hostile designs, they resort to DIY urban design tactics to provide themselves with the bare necessities and life-sustaining infrastructure.

⁴ Lincoln, personal communication, January 19, 2023

⁵ personal communication, January 8, 2023

The contemporary anti-homeless landscape is currently filled with 1000-foot no-go zones around facilities providing shelter, safe sleeping, safe parking, or serving as homeless navigation centers and 500-foot no-go zones around schools, parks, tunnels, underpasses, bridges, active railways, among other spaces (Chin, 2022; Eiteneer, 2023). Within these zones, individuals' personal property and possessions can be, and are often, discarded by LA Sanitation through force or coercion by LAPD officers. Presently, every census tract with an unhoused person counted by LA's annual homeless count is touched by an anti-homeless ordinance.^{xxxi} In this chapter, I zoom in on the hostile designs that exist within these zones between shelters and public spaces (Figure 4). Within each neighborhood, no-go zones have been set up around public spaces like parks, sidewalks, and streets adjacent to land uses like schools, libraries, and designate shelters like ABH, Tiny Home villages, hotels and motels, and Safe Parking locations. From previous mapping work (*cf.* Giamarino & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2023), all spaces where unhoused residents live are covered by a 500-foot or 1,000-foot criminalization zone that includes hostile regulations and designs. By zooming in to critique hostile designs stretching across shelters and into public spaces, I reveal how the enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances, justified through the false promise of transitions into housing through short-term shelter placements, brings unhoused residents into direct contact with hostile designs that dehumanize and criminalize them and inspire DIY urban design interventions. Figure 4 visually illustrates how LA's anti-homeless landscape spatializes Mitchell's (1997, p. 327) concept of the "annihilation of space by law" because:

These laws have as a goal—perhaps not explicit, but clear nonetheless—the redefinition of public rights so that only the housed may have access to them. They further have the goal of redefining the public space of the city as a landscape, as a privatized view suitable only for the passive gaze of the privileged as they go about the work of convincing themselves that what they are seeing is simply natural.

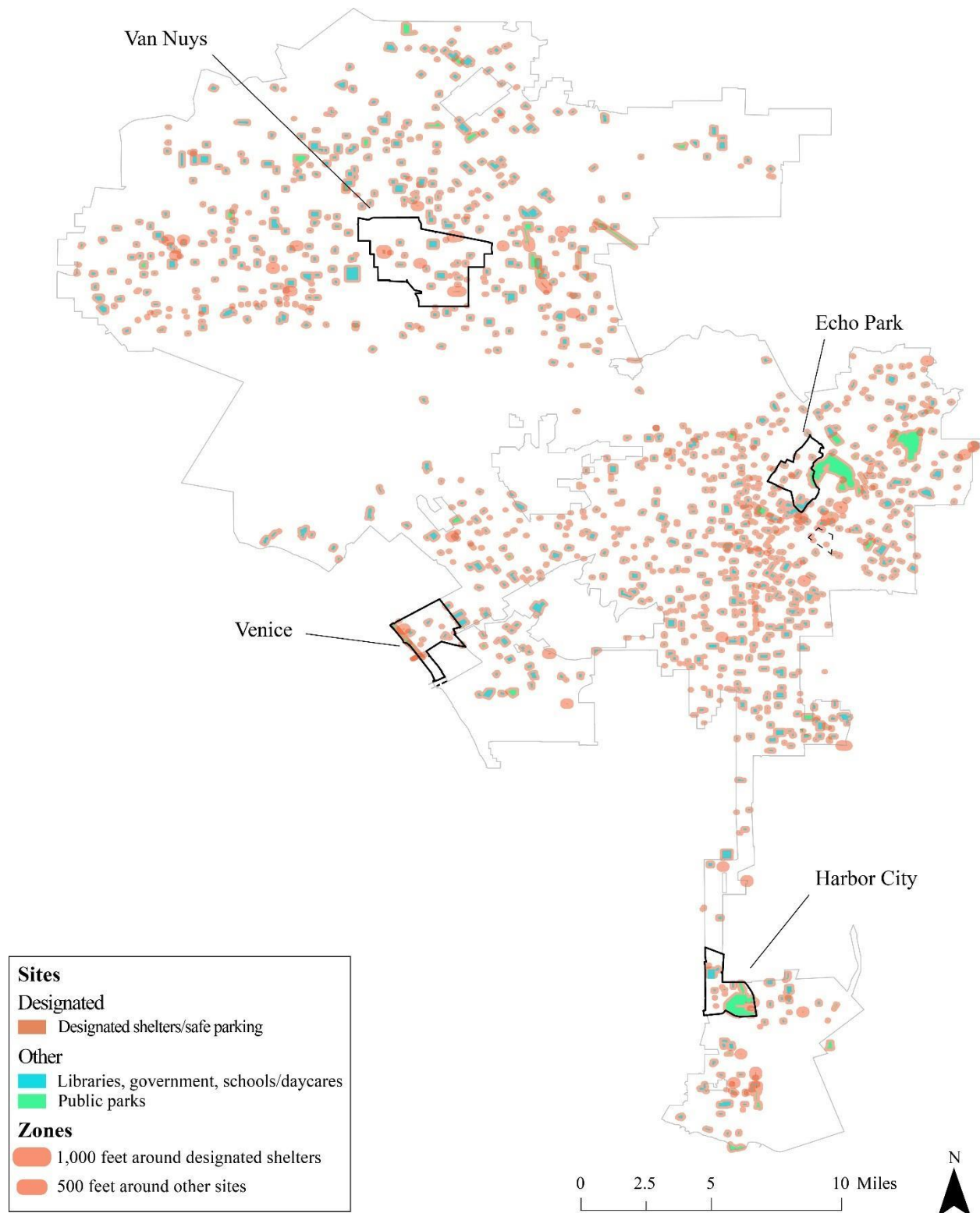


Figure 4. Quality-of-life ordinances, the annihilation of space by law, and hostile designs (Chin, 2022; Eiteneer, 2023).^{xxxii} Map designed by Christopher Giamarino.

In neo-revanchist LA, anti-homeless zones and hostile designs contract the socio-spatial rights of unhoused residents to exist in the city. Grounded in people’s experiences across shelters and public spaces, I present a broader definition of hostile designs, building off of Rosenberger’s (2017, 2020) prior work. In this research, I have expanded the definition of hostile designs as the relational quality-of-life ordinances, short-term service architectures (i.e., new shelters), and “soft” and “hard” controls in public spaces that dehumanize the dignity of unhoused residents and criminalize DIY urban design interventions through rules, policing, the push-and-pull of life-sustaining infrastructure, and demolition.

Hostile socio-spatial designs of shelters

Well, we learned a valuable lesson with these Bridge Homes. **Never go into a program that refuses to give you a written list of rules before you enter the program.** This is key because that is how they exclude a lot of people. They say, ‘Oh, you broke rules’. What rules did we break? If the rules aren't written down, they don't exist. —Tammy

I made it look like a prison because that's what it feels like. How am I supposed to be up in here? You feel me? It smells first of all. Fuck all that. This is breakfast? ‘Excuse me miss, my breakfast burrito isn't hot’. —Patrick

Tiny Homes are a really good example. I thought that was going to be the solve-all for us. The houses, the beds. The only thing I can complain about is it's not comfortable at all. It's kind of like a prison cell as far as comfort level goes. **If they had the services that they were supposed to provide intact, I think that would have been a success for us all.** —Jane

Tammy, her husband, her son, and her six chihuahuas were placed into Project Roomkey (PRK) and A Bridge Home (ABH) on separate occasions before being kicked out onto the streets and living in two tents in Van Nuys.⁶ Her husband and son both suffer from chronic health problems that require special treatment, which the short-term shelter program did not provide.

Additionally, her ferociously^{xxxiii} protective chihuahuas were placed into cages. Patrick, who

⁶ personal communication, January 6, 2023

lives between A Bridge Home and the sidewalk in Van Nuys, describes the jaillike designs of the A Bridge Home, as he represents the shelter in a rap music video that he wrote the lyrics for, directed, produced, and edited on his cracked tablet. As a formerly incarcerated individual, who was racially profiled and arrested for camping in a park in North Hollywood, Patrick knows prisonlike conditions when he sees them. These include shared bedroom spaces with strangers, unhealthy microwavable foods, broken or closed hygiene facilities, and consistent security presence. Jane, a resident of an encampment in Harbor City, relays a common false hope expressed by unhoused residents: that the short-term shelters promised to unhoused residents will be a housing solution.⁷ Living between a Tiny Home village and an encampment on a dirt road near a greenbelt, she critiques the comfort level of the beds, the “prison cell” nature of the compound contained within barbed wire fence, and the lack of comprehensive rehabilitative and mental health services in the village.

Many unhoused residents are either attracted to or coerced by sweeps to the public spaces near shelters because of promises or availability of services, shelter, and opportunities to transition into permanently affordable, supportive housing. Although I could not gain access to these facilities, unhoused residents detailed the hostile designs within them, which included stringent rules, harassment by employees, and inadequate designs that compromised their comfort, dignity, privacy, and safety. For residents who lived in vehicles, vehicle type, maintenance, proper documentation, and availability of Safe Parking spaces were significant barriers to entry.

⁷ personal communication, February 5, 2023

It is important to acknowledge that shelter is often preferred over living in a tent or makeshift structure that is built on a sidewalk or in a park because placement into this interim program provides a roof over one's head and a bed, mental health and hygiene benefits, increased access to services, and the possibility for a transition into permanently affordable housing (Finnigan, 2022; Hunter et al., 2021). For example, surveys from unhoused individuals in Sacramento found that 75 percent preferred living in shelters because they perceived them to be safer than living in encampment communities during the height of COVID-19 (Finnigan, 2022; Rodriguez & Eidelman, 2016). They are particularly beneficial spaces for vulnerable unhoused populations like veterans who experience higher rates of mental health issues (Hunter et al., 2021). Individuals I spoke with often preferred shelters to living unsheltered in public spaces for protection from harsh conditions like the weather, violence, and precarious access to food and hygiene infrastructure. This was especially true for people who had been unhoused for longer periods of time and female individuals. Like previous research on compassionate revanchist regimes, individuals have experienced “therapeutic policing” where the police attempt to spatially coerce individuals into “unstable housing” (i.e., the shelters that will be described below) in order to “correct the attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyle choices of the urban poor” (Stuart, 2016, p. 39). Under the promise that they would be transitioned into permanent housing, individuals experienced dehumanizing rules and subpar architectural designs in shelters before being evicted or choosing to live unsheltered to provide themselves with more autonomy and control over their private residential space. It's not that the shelters were complete failures, but the hostility of their rules and designs were.

In the next section, I describe the temporary programs implemented by the city of LA, what regulations they come with that extend out into public spaces, and outcomes from each

location. Importantly, I dispute specious submissions that unhoused residents are service and shelter resistant by highlighting the hostile designs and rules that lead to evictions from these spaces and reproduce visible homelessness.

A Bridge away from Home: Criminalized cubicle compounds

In 2018, former Mayor Eric Garcetti implemented the A Bridge Home (ABH) program as a citywide network of shelters that were ostensibly developed to transition unhoused residents from public spaces to permanently affordable and/or supportive housing. At the time of this writing, there are 22 locations within all 15 city council districts. In Echo Park's City Council District 13, there are three operating ABH sites. The closest to Echo Park Lake is the Casa Azul shelter located outside of the district in City Council District 1. In Harbor City's City Council District 15, there are 3 operating ABH sites. The closest ABH is the Eubanks location in Wilmington. In Van Nuys' City Council District 6, there is one ABH site. The AETNA ABH is the primary site in Van Nuys. In Venice's City Council District 11, there are two operating sites. In the Venice neighborhood, there is one location. Across LA, since 2018, only 17 percent of all unhoused residents entering ABH locations have transitioned into permanent housing. This is the second highest rate of permanent housing placement from interim shelter programs; Project Homekey has transitioned 35 percent of entered residents, while Tiny Homes has placed 14 percent and Safe Parking has placed 11 percent. Each ABH location comes with 1000-foot criminalization zones that extend arbitrarily into surrounding public spaces and outlaw sitting, sleeping, and building on sidewalks. Called SECZs, enforcing police sweeps redirects approximately \$8.4 million annually to the LAPD to conduct police sweeps in these zones due to implied ability to access services and housing (Friedman, 2020). SECZs have been mapped and enforced across the new short-term shelters throughout the city of LA, and include ABH sites,

Tiny Home villages, and Safe Parking Program lots. Sweeps are 9-to-5 operations and cost about \$30 million annually (Tinoco, 2019a).

ABH sites are funded through the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP). Both are state programs that aim to address homelessness. The ABH program is an interim housing program. Through the Department of Public Works, the city identifies underused public land—usually vacant land, grassy areas next to freeways, parkland, and parking lots near Metro bus stations. Then, design competitions are held with firms like Lehrer Architects, who was awarded the bid to build the Aetna Street Bridge Home (Van Nuys). The design took three weeks and construction took four months (Keh, 2022). All in all, the shelter provides 70 beds separated by partitions with limited privacy (Figure 5), a coed shower and bathroom facility, and 24/7 security. Of course, the interior design of ABH sites are an improvement compared to larger congregate shelters like those located in Skid Row where bunkbeds, floor mats, and cots are placed into a “warehouse atmosphere” with little to no privacy (DeVerteuil, 2006). Lehrer Architects’ (2021) ostentatious representation of the “campus” attempts to mask the hostile socio-spatial designs experienced by residents who have lived at this location. As Lehrer Architects’ (2021) blog contends:

Arrival at the Aetna Bridge Home is signaled by a ground plane that peels away from sidewalk in a grassy green stripe, spilling up the sides of the buildings. The project contains a brilliant golden-yellow dining canopy that hosts gatherings under bright lights and warm lamps. The raised deck between buildings creates a place for engagement and obtaining services and support. The solar reflective paving cools the campus microclimate.



Figure 5. Interior design of A Bridge Home. ^{xxxiv} Photograph by Matt Tinoco (2020)

For residents with lived experience^{xxxv} in the Aetna Street ABH like Patrick, Tammy, and Bridget or unhoused residents with knowledge about the regulatory and design conditions of the Aetna Street ABH like Tim and Ted, this representation of ABH sites as places “for engagement and obtaining services and support” couldn’t be further from the truth. Patrick, a rapper living with an ankle monitor after being swept out of a park in North Hollywood, lists his grievances with the ABH conditions. These include discriminatory staff, cops surveilling him within the shelter, lack of safety and privacy, unreasonable rules with check-in and using the bathroom, and dehumanizing community spaces like the “kitchen,” which is just a microwave where Patrick can heat up frozen Costco burritos for breakfast. As a Rastafarian, Patrick was told to take off his religious garb by a recently hired ABH employee with a teardrop tattoo, and he expressed his

feelings of terror, “I'm scared. I'm scared of teardrop motherfucker. ‘Take off your hat’. ‘Take off the teardrop face!’ What the fuck? I'm scared of this person. That's who you hire next?”

Unhoused residents like Patrick can file grievances, but they go directly to the staff that treat them like kindergartners and can lead to evictions back onto the street, or the person might get fired for not following suit. “You know, like I said, the smallest portions of food ever. They're like a gang themselves. If a staff person is not playing along, you'll see that staff person go.”⁸

According to Tammy, the person who runs the Aetna ABH was a former kindergarten teacher, so the adults living in the shelter, often older than the hired staff, are treated like kindergartners. She describes an instance where the microwave was taken away from residents, preventing them from having access to a hot meal, as well as the lack of opportunities for engagement or fostering of community:

‘Oh, you leave the microwave dirty. No, we can't have a dirty microwave. We're going to take the microwave away from you because no one seems to know how to clean it. So, we're going to take that privilege away from you and you can only have it at mealtimes’. The microwave was there to provide people who couldn't be there at mealtimes with a hot meal. How's that going to work now? There is nothing fun to do. There are no games. They have coloring books.

Bridget has been living between the Aetna ABH and her car with her chihuahua since April 2022. The women’s side of the shelter is all full. When she first arrived at the ABH, she felt comfortable and was being left alone, especially with her fears of violence in the streets. “If you're in the streets, it's a man's world. People get stabbed, killed. But there's no help out here for people. And being a female, they're always trying to fuck you.”⁹ However, life-sustaining infrastructural conditions like shared bathrooms and the lack of full-time security for women led

⁸ Patrick, personal communication, January 8, 2023

⁹ personal communication, January 12, 2023

her to spend more time in her car than in the ABH. She describes the filthy conditions for women:

People that are ill and they need help using the bathroom. Sharing the bathrooms with men and in showers. It's so uncomfortable. Because when you have to use the bathroom there's all kinds of bad stuff on the ground in the bathroom. It's bad even sometimes I had to clean it myself so I wouldn't get sick or infected by other people's germs. I did my best. I tried to do my best and then I turned around and didn't want to hang in there because people started fighting. There's no respect.

Additionally, due to the co-ed nature of the ABH site, women are exposed to gender-based violence within these shelters:

And then another thing too, our security is supposed to be in there every 30 minutes to watch our stuff. One girl almost got raped in there. There was a bunch of women in there. She screamed and nobody helped her. And then I don't know if the guy went to jail and came back and got his belongings. That is unfair. The security's not doing their job.

For unhoused residents living in their tents on pallets further away from the ABH site like Ted and Tim, they are skeptical about even entering into one of these programs. “Everything they're going to put us into, it's a control thing. It's a concentration camp.”¹⁰ “I don't like it because it's like prison. They go into your little house. They search it. Same with the hotels. They treat you like a criminal.”¹¹ Tim had been asked at the beginning of COVID-19 when the Aetna ABH site first opened, if he wanted to be placed into the shelter. He refused because of the prison-like conditions. As Tim has noticed with the outcomes of the ABH, “it's just brought more homeless people to the area. They just get kicked out.”

The other ABH location that residents I spoke to had experiences with was the Pacific Sunset Bridge Home in Venice. This facility cost \$8.6 million for upfront development, the 154

¹⁰ Tim, personal communication, February 2, 2023

¹¹ Ted, personal communication, February 2, 2023

beds cost \$56,000, annual operating costs are \$3.4 million, and the cost per bed per person is \$22,000 per year (Housing Innovation Collaborative, 2022). The Pacific Sunset ABH was built with a tension fabric building for “total design flexibility, all-weather performance and strength, long-term quality, and cost-effectiveness” (Sprung Structures, 2022). These structures are 60 feet wide by 120 feet long and can house up to 100 beds, with beds often placed into office cubicle spaces.

Like the AETNA ABH, the infrastructure was poorly maintained. There were contradictions between lack of oversight and enforcement of rules that then led to property damage and eviction of residents placed into these short-term shelters. Dexter left the Pacific Sunset ABH after one year. “I didn't like it. It was a brand-new facility, and we had lots of vandalism and damage to the facility itself. I didn't like seeing that happening.”¹² He was placed into it as a priority placement because he is a senior that was living unsheltered between Santa Monica and Venice. Like Fiona’s and Bridget’s experiences in ABH shelters in Van Nuys, Dexter describes the dangerous conditions for women in these open floor plans and thinks that if more women were placed into ABH sites, there would be less damage to the infrastructure. As he regaled:

I always felt like women should have been treated better. There is a larger men's side in the housing, and I always felt that it should have been the other way around. Maybe there wouldn't have been so much damage to the infrastructure there. But I am happy because they did take a lot of women out of their cars into the housing, and I always felt that it should have been a larger percentage of women than men.

Both ABH locations were located where known encampments were; SECZ criminalization zones were established around each site to ensure that no encampments could

¹² personal communication, January 22, 2023

return, and tall fences (sometimes with barbed wire) are erected around the perimeter of each space. SECZ zones are often established to garner political support from housed residents and businesses in establishing an interim shelter in their neighborhood. In previous research on the placement of Safe Parking sites (Giamarino, Brozen, et al., 2023), city councilmembers in LA have articulated to residents in public hearings that the placement of a site will expand anti-homeless zones in public spaces nearby in an effort to decrease visibility of homelessness.

'Gimme shelter': Tiny Home Villages shed light on insufficient social space

In a newspaper article incongruously entitled “Gimme Shelter: In L.A., new tiny home villages offer a temporary solution in the city’s struggle with homelessness,” Luke Studebaker (2022) presents a “controversial new urban type” that the city is using to temporarily shelter unhoused residents. To its credit, the article does not idealize this new design typology or “the city’s struggle with homelessness.” It also considers advocates’ concerns with the city’s implementation of these villages as a way to expand criminalization strategies in public spaces that outlaw sitting and sleeping. Tiny Home villages, like the one in North Hollywood’s Alexandria Park featured in the article, are fenced, securitized compounds filled with 8 feet by 8 feet sheds that can house up to two people each. These villages are run by nonprofit service providers like Hope the Mission; the prefabricated structures can be built in a day and are provided by private organizations like Pallet (2023), and the shared social spaces (e.g., outdoor dining areas, recreational areas) are contracted out to architecture firms (in the case of Alexandria Park, Lehrer Architects). At a whopping 64 square feet of living space, these tiny sheds indicate how the city views what type of shelter unhoused residents deserve. Nevertheless, most residents that I spoke to did think that Tiny Homes were the best model of interim housing being offered by the city. However, most with lived experience in these villages were either

never approached to be placed into a site, kicked out for violating a curfew rule, or had issues based on their statures with comfortably dwelling in a shed. Cassandra,¹³ an RV resident in Van Nuys, while critiquing the North Hollywood Tiny Home village design stated that:

Design tells us everything. People are not stupid. People are very aware of how something is designed for them. And I think creating this idea of creating tinier houses for people, tells us a lot about what we think of them: they deserve less than others, right, if you can afford to pay for it.

For residents with lived experience at the Tiny Home in Harbor City, the planning and design of this site has run roughshod over their basic needs, like going to the restroom late at night, being able to use a functioning laundry facility, or having access to adequate storage space for their personal property. Paul, who lives in a Tiny Home village and frequently visits his old encampment community in Harbor City to use the restroom, shower, and help older or disabled residents build structures, describes the conditions of sanitation infrastructure in his village. “They flood because of the sewer system over there. It just gets clogged, and they don't ever clean it.”¹⁴ He visits the encampment in Harbor City to assist other structure builders in constructing semi-permanent housing to create a sense of privacy and protection for his old neighbors who are waiting for their chance to be placed in an interim program or transition into permanent housing. “Before tiny homes. I always built my place. It's better that way. You know how big it's going to be, what's in there, and where everything goes. I can't be just secluded to one big space.”¹⁵ It was important for unhoused residents to have the freedom to choose what size their bedroom was, especially for tall, heavier-set people like Paul, as well as being able to hang with your neighbors, use the restroom, and cook your own meals. Patrick, a towering

¹³ personal communication, January 6, 2023

¹⁴ personal communication, February 5, 2023

¹⁵ Paul, personal communication, February 5, 2023

African American man, was placed into a Tiny Home shed with another stranger just four feet away from him in another bunk. If they both stood up, they “were touching bellies” and it was difficult to do things like change their clothes with privacy. He describes the hostile designs in placing strangers into 64-square-foot tiny sheds and the unreasonable rules in place for using the bathroom or going to the shower:

I don't feel comfortable with this guy. I had to record the man sleeping to ask them, ‘How am I supposed to sleep, if this is happening?’ This is real life and I'm not making fun of the man. You know? He snores! He was fucking loud. Why do I have to live with that? How can I stand up if he's standing up? I can't even leave out of here if he's standing up. Where am I supposed to wash my things? Because guess what? They say, ‘Oh, the bathroom is closed from ...’ Oh, so people are supposed to not shit or piss till 6am? I'll just stand right here then. Is this reasonable or rational to anyone? The showers are closed at fucking midnight.

For unhoused residents like Camille, who moved into an RV near the encampment in Van Nuys because she was recently evicted from an apartment for sharing the space with other unhoused residents to shower even though her vouchers were being cashed, the rules within Tiny Home villages are irrational. While she wants to see more Tiny Home villages pop up in underutilized lots like the one she currently lives in, the rules are unfair to houseless residents:

They could do more out here for the homeless. They could do a lot more. I don't know why they haven't put tiny homes over here. The tiny home rules are crazy. I know you got rules everywhere you go, but they should at least have a little time you could check in and check out. It's like a concentration camp. That shouldn't be because this is supposed to be ‘Land of the Free, Home of the Brave’. Their ain't no land of the free when you're homeless, and you need help and they're giving you rules. Like, ‘You got to be in by this time’. If you're not here by this time, they'll kick you out. It's like three times or something.¹⁶

Belinda, a mutual aid organizer and formerly unhoused woman in Harbor City, notes similar hostile conditions at the Tiny Home village near their encampment. “Only one shower

¹⁶ personal communication, February 9, 2023

works for 75 units over at the tiny homes at a time. One shower, one bathroom, and they're in the same unit.”¹⁷ At the same Tiny Home village, Nydia was not able to dry her clothes after the storm because the washer was not working, and she was fearful that if she used the dryer, she would be evicted:

Tiny Homes has a washer and dryer, and none of our washers are working, but yet we're not allowed to use the dryers to dry our clothes, which kind of gets us. Usually, I don't stay in a tent, but Danny¹⁸ was kind enough to give me a tent. I appreciate that because my tent is for when I'm not sleeping in there. The reason I have a tent and don't stay at the tiny homes is when I said they were very cliquish, I don't cause trouble. So, I don't want to be singled out. I'm so close to being housed that I don't want to risk any way of getting kicked out either. So, I stay down here so that people can't pick a fight with you so that I can't get kicked out.

Another reason Nydia has her tent is because “people don't have a place to store stuff in Tiny Homes. I keep stuff for my soon-to-be-house here because you're only allowed to bring in two bags.”¹⁹

As a designated facility, the sidewalks abutting the securitized fences of Tiny Home villages become enforcement zones, like public spaces around ABH sites. “The consequence of having these zones that are over-policed, where the goal is to try to harass unhoused people out, is you dehumanize everybody that lives within this area, to the point where you don't see them as human.”²⁰

Where is Inside Safe? The dangerous designs of Project Homekey

In April 2020, the city of LA placed 10,000 people into hotel and motel rooms under Project Roomkey (PRK). The goal of this program was to address immediate shelter needs. In July of

¹⁷ personal communication, January 27, 2023

¹⁸ pseudonym

¹⁹ personal communication, February 5, 2023

²⁰ Cassandra, personal communication, January 6, 2023

2020, Governor Gavin Newsom acquired additional federal funds and allocated state funds to Project Homekey (a renaming and continuation of PRK to PHK), which was initially implemented to transition people from the streets into temporary hotel and motel rooms to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus. There were also desires to seize these hotels and transform them into permanently affordable and/or supportive housing solutions. LA County was allocated over \$161 million from Federal Coronavirus Relief funds to acquire and maintain hotel and motel locations, while receiving approximately \$15 million in State funds for Roomkey and Homekey. According to LAHSA (2022b), 4,800 out of 10,000 residents placed into this program and received permanent housing placements. Despite the success of this program compared to its other short-term contemporaries, PHK was ramped down in November 2022, closing all but two locations: the Grand Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles and the Cadillac Hotel in Venice. Yet, ten days after newly elected Mayor Karen Bass' inauguration on December 11, 2022, she signed an "Executive Directive" to reinvigorate and rebrand PHK as "Inside Safe" (Mayor Karen Bass, 2022). Looking closer at the initiative's five goals and additional outcomes, the Directive is couched in similar nuisance, general welfare, sanitation, and public health terms like quality-of-life ordinances that prioritize "the safety and hygiene of neighborhoods for all residents, businesses, and neighbors" and decreasing "the number and size of encampments across the city." Additionally, Bass stated that the city is "shifting the way the city approaches homelessness" based on "which locations are most chronic and where people are most in crisis."

For unhoused residents with prior experiences being placed into shelters through PRK, this approach is viewed as a continuation of prior strategies where the city attempts to clear problematic encampments through police force and place them into short-term shelters before many participants end up back on the streets (Matthew, 2023). By providing "complaint-oriented

services,” the city is weaponizing shelter to justify street cleanups and police sweeps (Herring, 2021). Tellingly, the first politician that Bass collaborated with on this initiative was Councilmember Traci Park of City Council District 11, where housed residents celebrated an encampment clearance in Venice. Park, referred to as “the opposition” by unhoused RV dwellers like Dexter in Venice, has introduced legislation to criminalize encampments that return to public spaces near shelters and sought to re-codify and enforce L.A.M.C. § 85.02 (anti-vehicular dwelling ban) by enlisting the LAPD to falsely equate the presence of RV encampments with increased crime.

June, a former resident of Echo Park Lake, and Austen, a current resident in Van Nuys, had experience staying short-term at hotels. For women like June, personal security and privacy in taking a shower was limited when she was in PRK. As she recalls from her time in PRK before moving to Echo Park Lake:

As a woman, I'm going to say even though being in Project Roomkey, I would rather have taken a shower here because literally what Project Roomkey sold people on was 'privacy'. Privacy of a shower, privacy of a room, privacy of having your own house or your own space. Weirdly enough, I had more privacy in the street, living in the street, and showering and doing things here than in that hotel room. They could barge in on you whenever they wanted to, and as a female it's like 10 times harder to be houseless than a male. It's just harder. You need different things.²¹

Fiona became unhoused when she lost her job due to a cancer diagnosis. After living in her car and losing it due to impoundment, she wound up in the Valley Haven Hotel in Van Nuys through PRK. She spends two days with her partner in a tent near the Aetna ABH because of her experience with sexual violence at Valley Haven. The police did nothing to investigate the act, as she explains:

²¹ personal communication, January 28, 2023

Something happened to me when I was over here at Valley Haven, and I went to the hospital to report it. Then had to file a police report. I didn't get any kind of contact from the police, from Van Nuys police. Okay. Which to me was like a kick in the ass. Because it was something very serious. And I believe that they think that 'Oh, they're homeless or they're drug addicts. They could be just pretending that that happened'. No. It really happens. There's a lot of rapes in shelters and things like that that happen every day to women.²²

Privacy and safety for women were key concerns in motels and hotels, while experiences with evictions or being shuffled between interim shelters, public spaces, and incarceration were more prevalent for men.

Austin had been shuffled, where eight people die due to preexisting health conditions and drug overdoses. Currently living in a 12-person tent furnished with a bed, couch, cooking area, and electricity, he recounts the shuffling that he experienced:

I've been into Bridge. I've been into Valley Haven. I've been into Econo lodge. I've been at the Airtel, and every last one of them is just, it's not something that I would tell somebody to go do. I wouldn't refer them to go to Bridge, 'They're cool!' Or, 'Hey, go to Airtel, they're cool!' Because every last one of them had, whether it'd be the security just being cops, or whether it was the staff wanting to know everything, but not really doing much. As you can see. I mean, what the fuck, it's like a merry go round.²³

Fiona spends time with her future husband to cook hot meals on the sidewalk because of her experiences eating cold meals. "You come downstairs, you get your four chicken nuggets, your cold macaroni, you go back upstairs to your room, and you eat it with your roommate. There's no love." As she describes, shelters like PRK sites and ABH locations have lockers outside with little storage, residents go through security, and there's usually a 10 PM curfew, while you must leave at 6AM unless you bring paperwork showing that you work alternative

²² personal communication, February 2, 2023

²³ personal communication, February 2, 2023

hours. People who were in violation of these rules, would get kicked out and their property would be discarded with no explanation:

People were getting kicked out of the shelter where I'm at, which is Valley Haven, left and right with no proper explanation. You wouldn't even get a warning. You'd go to 7-Eleven to go pick up some milk for instance, and you would come back and all your shit was downstairs already.

Of course, complaints by structure builders come from a more privileged position of people experiencing homelessness because they possess the wherewithal to construct fully functioning showers and protective residential infrastructure in public spaces. More vulnerable people experiencing homelessness like those living with physical disabilities or mental health issues likely would prefer a hotel or motel room with dependable access to services and hygiene amenities. Unhoused residents with lived experience in the PRK/PHK program were subjected to stringent rules and ultimately shuffled through and kicked out of these programs back onto the street. To gain entrance to larger hotels like The Grand in downtown Los Angeles, which can be shared with a complete stranger^{xxxvi}, one must first go through airport-level security. Similar to experiences at ABH sites, these locations, particularly showers and bathrooms, are particularly unsafe for women because security is lax, as men try to sneak into showers while they attempt to use them.

Cruising for safe parking spaces: Controlling access to limited Safe Parking Program lots

A growing number of unhoused residents are living in and working out of their cars, vans, campers, and RVs on LA's public streets. Since 2016, there has been a 42 percent increase in vehicular homelessness in LA, which now represents approximately half of all individuals and households living unhoused (Giamarino, Brozen, et al., 2023). Safe Parking (SPP) LA was founded in 2017. It was modeled after Santa Barbara's successful New Beginnings Safe Parking

Program (SPP). New Beginnings has demonstrated how cities can quickly transform underused lots into safe spaces with no incidents in adjacent neighborhoods, while providing life-sustaining services and successfully transitioning people into permanent housing (New Beginnings, 2021; Wakin, 2014b). LA's SPP relies on partnerships with churches and other local institutions to transform and adaptively reuse underutilized parking lots to provide safe spaces overnight for vehicles to park, access services, use the restroom and shower, and hopefully transition into permanently affordable housing. At the time of writing, LA's SPP locations number 32 and there are currently 324 people registered at 475 spots. Given that over 21,000 residents are living in vehicles (based on the last available dataset provided by LAHSA in 2020), the supply is clearly deficient in its ability to accommodate this growing population. The city's renewed efforts to criminalize sleeping in a vehicle on public streets overnight, the lack of safe places to park, and the requirements to enter these programs embody hostile designs for vehicular residents.

On SPP's "Need help?" page (2021), there are six requirements for eligibility to apply for one of 475 spots. First, one's vehicle must be operational. Second, an individual must possess a valid driver's license. Third, an individual must demonstrate proof of ownership through a title. Fourth, an individual must be referred by a case worker to apply for an SPP space. Fifth, an individual must have access to digital copies of their license, insurance, and registration to print them for compliance. Lastly, they must complete a "Welcome Packet" and be issued an SPP parking permit.

My conversations with unhoused residents revealed that the unaffordable housing market, the unemployment caused by COVID-19, and hostile rules and designs within shelters and across public spaces have increased the fluidity of one's dwelling type. Of the 36 individuals that I conversed with, 20 individuals were either living in their car, van, camper, or RV, or had been at

some point while experiencing homelessness. Of the 20, four had lost their car through impoundment, while seven were living between their vehicle and either an ABH shelter, Tiny Home village, or public space. For vehicular residents, finding a safe place to park it overnight to avoid tickets and towing, holding a valid driver's license to pay for insurance and registration to prevent repossession, and saving money to keep the vehicle operational are ongoing challenges.

No vehicular dwelling residents had utilized a SPP location. There are only 8 locations that accommodate RVs, and availability of spaces depends on what other vehicles and populations currently live at sites. Citations and lack of proper documentation were key barriers to entering these locations. Philip, Elmer, Dexter, and Joseph all faced repossession and financial blocks to maintaining an operational vehicle with proper documentation to access SPP sites. More importantly, maintaining ownership of their vehicle meant not living in a tent. "I've got some lost paperwork that has made it really hard for me to get ID. So that's been one of the things that stands as a roadblock for me in having normal access to life in America."²⁴ The truck that Elmer lives out of in Harbor City has not been able to pass smog checks, and he describes the costly impacts of vehicle impoundment six months after his registration has expired:

Since we don't have bank accounts with savings, with an abundant amount of money to draw from, impounding our vehicles for expired registrations when we're trying to sleep. Expired registration isn't just go down to the DMV and pay the money and get your tags anymore because of the smog rules. Trying to get your car to pass smog when it won't pass, it's kind of a difficult thing and costly. If you're having trouble trying to get it to get smogged, time doesn't stop. The time keeps going. It keeps increasing, the amount of time that your registration expired. As soon as it hits six months, they automatically impound your vehicle. Which they just impounded my truck again two days ago, and it cost me \$405 to get it out. With that money I could have actually used to buy a new catalytic converter to put on my truck to get it to pass smog.²⁵

²⁴ Philip, personal communication, January 22, 2023

²⁵ personal communication, February 12, 2023

For RV dwellers like Dwight in Venice, a 62-year-old man who lives with his partner and their Jack Russell Chihuahua, even having a clean title, driver's license, and proper registration does not guarantee that they can access a SPP site. After being asked by an outreach worker if he was houseless, he said:

'Yeah!' Well, they said, 'Okay'. They said they were going to put me on some kind of list to get a home and I've been on a list for two years, three years now and I still haven't gotten a home. I would change that they would actually provide a place for somebody to go stay with water and power.²⁶

The closest SPP location to where Dwight lives in Venice is the Sawtelle SPP in West Los Angeles, near the West LA Civic Center. It operates from 7:30 PM to 7:30 AM and does not accept RVs. Dwight relies on recycling to make extra money and ensure that his vehicle stays operational so that he can move to avoid parking enforcement or to meet the requirements to enter a SPP that allows RVs, which must be operational. His current location has not been targeted, as "parking enforcement has not harassed us, told us to move every couple of days. So, we've been allowed to park here."

Relational hostile designs: From shelters to public spaces

Based on the hostile designs embedded into shelter rules and spaces, blanket statements that unhoused residents are service resistant and that they enjoy living unsheltered out in public spaces are fallacious. ABH sites, Tiny Home villages, and PRK/PHK locations come with dehumanizing rules that strip the dignity and agency of unhoused residents and place them into places with no privacy, no room, and, often, no hope for transition into permanently supportive and/or affordable housing. To reiterate, no residents I spoke to had experience accessing a SPP

²⁶ personal communication, February 4, 2023

lot. Lack of knowledge about how to apply to these under-capacity locations, lackadaisical security, untrained staff, stringent regulations, gender-based violence, prison-like sleeping arrangements, and broken or poorly maintained life-sustaining infrastructure like restrooms, laundry rooms, and showers lead to dwelling-type fluidity. This fluidity is aggravated by evictions in violation of short-term shelter rules and by one's ability to access and live with friends and/or partners in public spaces two out of every three days. For example, Patrick lived in his van, which was confiscated, erected a tent in a park and was arrested and brought into a Tiny Home and ABH before ending up on the street. Similarly, Fiona lived in her vehicle in a park, lost her car to repossession, ended up in a PRK site where she was subjected to sexual assault, and now spends her time between ABH site and her future husband's tent. Relationally, hostile socio-spatial designs in public spaces are tied to hostile designs within shelter spaces.

A recent longitudinal study of more than 200 people experiencing homelessness found that 90 percent of residents desired housing, including 30 percent who would want to move into an interim shelter like the ABH program and 80 percent that would want to move into a hotel or motel room or Tiny Home village (Hunter & Ward, 2022). There is a general demand by unhoused individuals for shelter that attracts them to these designated shelter spaces under the promise of services and opportunities for housing. However, due to the lack of supply of beds, they end up living in adjacent public spaces, and quality-of-life ordinances, police sweeps, ad hoc harassment, and soft and hard controls shrink the socio-spatial rights of unhoused residents to access bare necessities and partake in life-sustaining activities.

Hostile socio-spatial designs in public spaces

On February 2nd, 2023, I parked at a Metro bus line parking lot in Van Nuys to meet with Cassandra and conduct more interviews with unhoused residents. We both had to use the restroom; the last few times we had to, we went between our car doors in the parking lot because there were no public toilets, and the ABH shelter was closed off to non-residents, including the community living nearby on the sidewalk. However, on this day, we both noticed a new public restroom on the sidewalk facing a busy six-lane boulevard. Shaped like a sardine can, it was a dark grey structure with a handwashing station and slats at the bottom and top for air flow (Figure 6). While air flow is important, the slats at the bottom of the structure were about two feet tall and could easily expose one's privacy if they had to sit down. Mother nature called and we both walked hurriedly to use it. After trying to open the door, we could not access this (public) restroom because it was locked. Additionally, the external hand washing station was inoperable. Austin critiqued the design of the restroom:

That right there is in shambles. How are they going to go ahead and have the bathroom where you can actually see the person squatting down to take a shit? Especially at nighttime. All you got to do is stand to a certain spot and you can see. Where's your vanity at? There's no privacy there. They took it completely away. Why did they take it away?²⁷

²⁷ personal communication, February 2, 2023



Figure 6. Closed (public) bathroom near Van Nuys encampment. Photograph by Christopher Giamarino.

For unhoused residents who live in between shelters and public spaces like sidewalks near Metro stations, public streets near grocery stores, public parks with restrooms near public institutions, and interstitial spaces near recently fenced off parks, access to restrooms, sanitation infrastructure, water, power, and some form of sheltered protection (i.e., tent, protected awning, or semi-permanent structure) from the elements are vital. In this section, I chart the hostile

designs that unhoused residents have to contend with in public spaces. Together, these “legally hybrid tools”—quality-of-life ordinances, hostile architecture and designs, and spatial policing and displacement, in tandem with hostile designs in shelter spaces, generate the conditions that require responsive DIY urban designs and everyday socio-spatial tactics from the part of unhoused residents in LA.

Near the ABH in Van Nuys and the Tiny Home village in Van Nuys, 1000-foot no-go zones have been set up; they subject communities living nearby to regular sweeps where their personal property and documentation are being discarded. In Venice and Echo Park, 500-foot no-go zones around parks, libraries, and schools criminalize residents’ abilities to feel protected, go to the bathroom, and safely access electricity. These no-go zones are legitimated by quality-of-life ordinances, including L.A.M.C. § 41.18, L.A.M.C. § 56.11, and L.A.M.C. § 63.44. Sweeps in Van Nuys were ad hoc and directly targeted individuals who were in violation of L.A.M.C. § 56.11. In Harbor City, sweeps were more frequent (every week or every other week) and were enforced because the encampment fell within a 41.18 zone, and residents with bulky items were targeted for displacement and dispossession. While L.A.M.C. § 85.02 is unenforceable, vehicular residents contend with parking enforcement and NIMBY vigilantism. Like the contained design of shelters, parks and other public spaces, such as Echo Park, are fenced off to control who has access to public spaces and for what purposes. In some cases, such as at the public library in Venice and the greenbelt in Harbor City, the fence closes off access to park space for housed and unhoused residents. The enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances and “soft” and “hard” controls of hostile designs shrink public space and close off access to life-sustaining infrastructure like public restrooms.

Jake and Justine frequent a sidewalk near a public library in Venice because it was the only place with a restroom, lights, security cameras, and a place to charge their devices (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Free mobile charging station at public library in Venice. Photograph by Christopher Giamarino.

After recently becoming unhoused, Jake has experienced police harassment, been jumped, and had his stuff stolen, so the library gives him a more secure place to stay, although the library employees and security recently barred him from using the facilities for sitting outside

on the sidewalk. “I got here, and everything’s lit all night long. There are cameras. Nobody’s going to come and screw with your shit.”²⁸ He had been approached by outreach workers, but they wanted him to relocate from Venice to a shelter in Long Beach:

They want to get you in any short-term shelters. ‘We can get you off right now, but next week you’ll be out on the street’, and you have to give up all your shit, which is just ridiculous. I mean what kind of rational person would give up their shelter; a tent or tarp to stay out of the elements for a week when they know they’re just going to be right back out in a different town 30 to 40 miles from where they want to be. That’s just ridiculous.

Justine, who experienced sexual violence and gang stalking, came to this criminalized space because the roof provided shelter from the rain and, more importantly, light and surveillance from street violence. “This is all under camera. So really what we need is more coverage, more security. I mean security for the individuals that find themselves down here. A girl can get raped.”²⁹ For unhoused residents in Venice, the public restrooms by the beach are closed overnight due to their usage as places to do drugs like meth and to sleep in. Therefore, the public library provides Justine a well-lit area with access to bathrooms, although she notes that the library does not allow 24/7 access to restrooms. While unhoused individuals may be barred from public library restrooms, they seek life-sustaining amenities in public spaces.

Restroom pitstops and food giveaways are being provided and taken away. Dexter, a 67-year-old man who lives with his girlfriend in a van in Venice, describes his concerns with the provision and then taking away of public restrooms:

They’re given and then they’re withdrawn like the pitstop, the bathroom on Third Street. I often wonder, am I going to have an accident because that’s gone now? Or what am I going to have to do? Am I going to have to pee in the alley with everybody else?³⁰

²⁸ Jake, personal communication, February 4, 2023

²⁹ Justine, personal communication, February 4, 2023

³⁰ personal communication, January 22, 2023

(In)frequent porta-potties, mobile showers, and trash service were provided in Van Nuys and Harbor City by the city’s CARE + (Comprehensive Cleaning and Rapid Engagement) program through LA Sanitation’s (2023) “Livability Services Division.” The goal of the CARE + program model is to “address and remove health hazards and/or safety hazards and solid waste from the public right-of-way.” In Van Nuys, after a contract expired, porta-potties were taken away. As Pierce recalls:

Because I also think that to the point of the city not only not providing, but they are also taking away things they've already provided. For instance, the toilets on Aetna. A friend was describing basically they had a contract and the contract expired, so the company that put those public toilets in took them out. This bureaucratic bullshit that ends up taking away dumpsters, taking away much-needed resources. They take it away, they also don't provide it, but then they also will actively destroy what communities built.³¹

In Harbor City, the city had provided porta-potties across a six-lane boulevard with a crosswalk without a traffic light after displacing residents from a vacant grass field to a dirt industrial road. Belinda points to the cruel and dangerous designs that make:

them play Frogger to go to the porta potties that we used to have across this major boulevard that has no crosswalks nearby. I know people have gotten hit going to the bathroom in the middle of night. I know people have gotten hit during sweeps moving their stuff across a busy avenue that has a crosswalk but no lights.³²

Similarly, hostile designs were enforced during the tenure of the Echo Park Lake encampment making it difficult for unhoused residents to use the restroom. “They would lock the bathroom. They wouldn't put toilet paper in there. They would keep the floor wet on purpose. Some of us didn't have socks.”³³ Additionally, the city did not provide frequent sanitation

³¹ personal communication, January 30, 2023

³² personal communication, January 27, 2023

³³ June, personal communication, January 28, 2023

services so that it could justify sweeps under the guise of public health and sanitation for the general welfare of the public.

Unhoused residents are well-aware that trash is a frequently cited reason why they are subjected to ad hoc policing, citations, and formal police sweeps. Chase, a longtime resident, and skateboarder in an encampment in Harbor City, recognizes that it may be okay to be out of public view, but also reveals that the city took away dumpsters that kept his community clean:

It's a good idea to move us there out of the public view. I think it's hideous when Lomita is all full of trash because we don't have the dumpsters. We have to put it over there or we get a notice. It becomes a giant dump here.³⁴

The dumpsters had initially been provided due to complaints of trash piling up near the community, but also as an olive branch because the community had been displaced from a vacant field across the street.

Unless receptacles are provided, LA Sanitation will not pick up trash within encampments. Fiona, who was visiting from a nearby shelter and cooking a meal with her partner on a sidewalk in Van Nuys, notes that the accumulation of trash attracts more policing and citations:

The sanitation truck only comes and picks up those trash bins. You could have your own plastic trash, but they won't pick it up. They won't pick it up. It has to be provided from them. So, I had somebody move out from right here and left all their bags right there. It's like, 'Why are you causing more attention here?' Why would somebody do that? We're all trying to stay clear from the police, the harassment of tickets.³⁵

³⁴ personal communication, February 5, 2023

³⁵ personal communication, January 26, 2023

For those living in vehicles, they make sure to clean the adjacent sidewalk and street to avoid citations. Pierce, an artist and musician who lives in an RV on the street where his wife grew up, noticed that it attracts litter in the gutter and trash by housed residents:

I noticed that the RV, it attracts trash. Physically it catches trash on the tires when it rains, which is one thing because it's a big vehicle. My theory is that because people might think you are trash, or that it looks like trash, whether conscious or unconscious, people just throw their shit all over and around the RV all the time. I'm constantly picking up trash just around. I put a trash bag out there so that I can just easily throw it out.³⁶

Trash attracts unwanted police attention, and accumulating personal items attract sweeps because of Municipal Code 56.11 for people living in tents, and citations and towing for people living in vehicles. Presently, Municipal Code 41.18 is unconstitutional under *Martin*, but the city can conduct cleanups under 56.11. At the Van Nuys encampment, Lincoln has knowledge of this law and understands that “there’s certain stuff they can throw away like big bulky stuff that you’re really not supposed to have. That’s totally useless for your lifestyle.” He does not understand why the city throws away everything and makes people “start from scratch. I’m talking about personal items, their IDs, their wallets, their backpack.”³⁷ Affixing one’s structure to private or public property (i.e., tying your tent to a fence), not leaving 2-3 feet of space for the passing of pedestrians and people with disabilities, and locating one’s structure or vehicle in a no-go zone attract police harassment, citations, and dispossession. Lincoln critiques the city’s strategy to sweep during storms and questions the expansion of these no-go zones:

You got to be certain feet away from. You can't be 500 feet from a school. That's reasonable. Okay, what about 501? I'm still in a school zone. Like, 'I'm going to give you a citation'. Okay, cite me all you all you want to. It doesn't matter. I'm going to stand up for what I think is right for me. We have our own rights. Stop bothering us.

³⁶ personal communication, January 30, 2023

³⁷ personal communication, January 19, 2023

Prior to the ad hoc policing that currently takes place in Van Nuys, sweeps required individuals to pack up and move their property within 15-minutes or see them thrown away by Sanitation services. The same strategy is used today in Harbor City. Lincoln ended up going to jail for trying to help one of his neighbors move his stuff. His neighbor is disabled and in a wheelchair. As he comments on the cruelty of sweeps:

You got to look not just from your point of view, but from all points of view. If I was homeless and I was handicapped, and they told me he has 15 minutes to move his stuff. He will not move it in 15 minutes. He cannot do it.

Regular sweeps stopped occurring after resistance against them took place in Van Nuys. Now, there is ad hoc policing and harassment that targets individuals. As I spoke with Austin and Fiona, police motorcycles drove up and down the street where their main encampment was and into and out of the adjacent Metro parking lot. According to my interviewees, these intend to harass and rouse unhoused residents. Lincoln also said that the police would come at the crack of dawn to wake people up on their intercom:

We still have one officer to this day tell us on the intercom, 'Wakey, wakey. Good morning people! Everybody up!' We don't need a rooster. We don't need a wakeup call. This is not a jail. It just irritates me.

Recently, Warren, an unhoused African American man in Van Nuys, was targeted and arrested for creating a social space with a couch and basketball court for recreation. The police told him when he went to jail that they'd be "taking that stuff away." He describes the harassment and arrest as racial discrimination as follows:

Yeah, I was targeted like this when I left the basketball court. When I went to jail, the officer was right here just looking at me, staring at me the whole time. I didn't think he was going to do anything, but yeah. That's because I'm a young black dude.³⁸

For unhoused black men, hostile designs in public spaces were disproportionately race-based and included policing, unwanted harassment, and displacement. Percy, a 58-year-old African American man, was occupying a leftover grassy triangle—a triangular patch of grass leftover by a roadway intersection—in Venice where he was told by the adjacent property owner that he could build a structure for himself.³⁹ As he recounts:

Guess what? He came back with the police and sanitation and took the island and all my stuff. They messed me up and tossed me up, and I'm out of there. Now, there's a fence up around it. It's crazy.

For Patrick, he sees racial policing and displacement as part of a bigger process of how the city treats unhoused residents. As he reckons, “Something bigger is going on because they're keeping me in this fucking loop. And every fucking month and a half, here come the police.”⁴⁰

NIMBY harassment and vigilantism exacerbate and enact hostile designs. They include unwanted filming of encampment communities to stoke fear on social media,^{xxxvii} verbal persecution by housed residents, calling the police to give tickets, and even vandalism of personal property. Unhoused residents are vigilant and become annoyed when people come to film them. “People like to come and make videos of us, or they'll drive by with their phone recordings and that right there is irritating. Why do you want to record us?”⁴¹ For tents tied to property, police come to cut the ties and slash open their fabric. Without a tent, unhoused residents are subjected to harsh conditions in public spaces; it is difficult for them to maintain

³⁸ personal communication, February 9, 2023

³⁹ personal communication, February 11, 2023

⁴⁰ personal communication, January 8, 2023

⁴¹ Lincoln, personal communication, January 19, 2023

basic hygiene, and they become targets for verbal haranguing. “We get dirty and pretty soon the streets change a person. People drive by, throw shit at you, yell at you. Walk up on you and tell you that you're subhuman.”⁴² Damon, who lives with his partner in a camper near Echo Park Lake, does not understand why housed people are bothered by people just minding their own business, living in an alternative type of dwelling. As he argues:

There's a lot of people who, I don't know why they don't like it, but they just don't like the fact that there's a guy in front of their house on the side of the road just kind of living. I couldn't really give an explanation on why it happened or why people would dislike it. I'm not bothering anybody, but some people are just like, not cool with it.⁴³

For residents who are not cool with a “house on the side of the road just kind of living,” NIMBY vigilantism is ramped up. Before L.A.M.C. § 85.02 stopped being “enforced,” there were red (no vehicular dwelling allowed), yellow (no overnight sleeping in vehicles allowed), and green (sleeping in vehicles allowed) streets. Dexter told Philip that that program was called “Safe Parking” and Philip said that:

In the places where it was yellow, you could be there all the way till 10 o'clock, and at 10 o'clock, the neighbors could come and harass you. And they knew where you lived. So that was my experience. My experience was people would know where I can and can't be and then use that information to press the issue on me.⁴⁴

Now, residents living in vehicles must pay attention to vehicular regulations and street sweeping signage to avoid citations. As Pierce notes:

Where can we live and park without moving or getting harassed? Besides the 72-hour ordinance, you're dealing with street cleaning. I do park on the street that you have to move once a week. I've had some mechanical problems where I couldn't move.⁴⁵

⁴² Jake, personal communication, February 4, 2023

⁴³ Damon, personal communication, February 8, 2023

⁴⁴ personal communication, January 22, 2023

⁴⁵ personal communication, January 30, 2023

Residential zones are still off-limits, and knowledge of vehicular dwelling restrictions is important. As Joseph notes from his experiences in Venice:

Stay away from residential zones. I mean at least 500 feet from a house. That's just for courtesy. You got to read the signs because they are not kidding. I've overslept by 20 minutes in a zone and that was all the time it took for them to come around and the ticket fairy left a little ticket. I'm always there. I'm in the car asleep. They could very easily tap on the glass and say you need to leave but instead they collect funds from someone who clearly doesn't have them living in a car here. What about that shouts extraneous money for the city's coffers. Get fucking real here. This is a compassionless policy being executed by people just following orders.⁴⁶

Damon and Josephine did some research on restrictions and hostile designs targeted at vehicular dwellings to gain tacit planning knowledge so they could legally dwell in their vehicle. Having lived at the perimeter of Echo Park Lake for over a year now, they view displacement and citations as harassment. As Damon recounts:

Getting the boot, the piling up of tickets feels like harassment. Before we moved to California, we looked up the laws on the California Classic because my van is a classic. The law said that if you live in it, that they can't tow it. He knew he couldn't do anything.⁴⁷

Beyond anti-homeless zones, police harassment, and citations, NIMBY vigilantism also has resulted in vandalism of personal property. The last thing that Philip wanted to put on the record before our conversation ended was that in the last two weeks, he had two flat tires. "I've had this vehicle for almost two years. So, I'm worried that I'm running into a vigilante situation."⁴⁸ I prompted him further asking, "Oh, you mean, slashing tires?" Dexter, who also participated in this mini-focus group chimed in, saying, "Yeah, that is one of their tactics." Philip is fearful of losing his \$5,000 RV and ending up unsheltered living in a tent in Venice.

⁴⁶ personal communication, February 11, 2023

⁴⁷ personal communication, February 8, 2023

⁴⁸ personal communication, January 22, 2023

“They over-promise and under-deliver”: The contradictions of hope and hostility in shelter and public space designs

The expansion of anti-homeless ordinances has pulled people toward designated shelters despite the under-supply of beds, which results in the growth of unhoused populations in the public spaces nearby. These public spaces are filled with hostile designs, as they are no-go zones that criminalize sitting, sleeping, panhandling, cooking, and constructing private residential and community infrastructure. The fragmented nature of hostile designs produces myriad contradictions related to what the function of shelter spaces are, who prefers living in shelters versus living in public spaces, who likes and dislikes the role of street cleanups and policing and why, which public spaces can and cannot be occupied, and where life-sustaining amenities can be accessed. In this section, I detail how these architectural, regulatory, social, and spatial contradictions produce shifting feelings of hope and despair before encouraging DIY urban design interventions in public spaces.

Philip, an RV resident in Venice, shrewdly summarized the dynamics of spatial shrinking after false promises are issued to people, and they experience regulatory and architectural hostilities in shelters and public spaces. Many residents echoed this sentiment of the city over-promising services and opportunities for housing and under-delivering across shelters, while shrinking their ability to occupy public spaces for life-sustaining practices. The expansion of anti-homeless zones in LA, justified through promises of services and opportunities for housing, contains hostile designs that dehumanize one’s dignity, instill false hope, and shrink capabilities to realize basic rights to services, shelter, and public space.

For some, the shelters are doing the best they can: “They give you what they can, and you accept what they have there. Food, shelter, shower, bathrooms. You can't ask for anymore.”⁴⁹ Even some short-term shelter designs are preferable to life on the street and police harassment. As a shorter, 63-year-old woman, Bridget would rather live in between the Aetna ABH and her car than end up unsheltered on the sidewalk. Even for women who had previous access to a vehicle like Fiona, sleeping outside was scary. As she recalls:

Well, being a single woman at that time, living out of my vehicle was very scary. It was my first experience being out. I had never slept in a tent until recently when I came just to spend the night with my husband. I think that there are probably many women out there who sleep in their vehicles, and speaking for all of them, I know that our biggest problem was restrooms, and you didn't want anybody to see you run out of your car because they'll see that you're alone. There's just the whole being safe issue. The safety is really important.⁵⁰

For many, the Tiny Homes are a step in the right direction in terms of more compassionate design. “The best idea they came up with so far was the tiny homes, which is all right, okay? Now, that's a good idea.”⁵¹ While Nydia could not dry her clothes at the Tiny Home village in Harbor City, Paul appreciated the shelter because it protects him and his significant other from the rain. “The tiny homes are nice because you don't have to worry about the rain because it's got a real roof. It took them 18 months for them to convince me to move into a tiny home.”⁵² However, as Nydia elucidates, “The services and programs that you say you provide. They're not given. They're not there. It's all empty promises.”⁵³ Paul, whose fellow unhoused neighbors remain unsheltered, states, “Everybody down here is supposed to be housed. They

⁴⁹ Bridget, personal communication, January 12, 2023

⁵⁰ personal communication, January 26, 2023

⁵¹ Lincoln, personal communication, January 19, 2023

⁵² personal communication, February 5, 2023

⁵³ personal communication, February 5, 2023

don't come here to talk to us. I was already in the system for four years.”⁵⁴ Here, he does not consider his placement into a Tiny Home village shed as housing.

Residents with long-term experience of unsheltered homelessness recognize why street cleanups might be beneficial in their community. “I do see benefits to sanitation making people move because there are a lot of people for whatever reasons that hoard trash and junk.”⁵⁵ However, younger residents often hoard trash in front of their tents to prevent sweeps.⁵⁶ Chase acknowledged why the city might take away porta potties, so as to not incentivize people to live in the community he lives in:

We used to have porta potties right here, but they took them away. The owners of this land here. They were providing the porta potties and water stations. But they took them off because they felt like that was encouraging us to be here. And by having that here, we're not going to put our foot forward.⁵⁷

For others like Austin, who was evicted from the Valley Haven PRK before being swept out of an encampment community known as “The Lot” in Van Nuys, coming to live near the Aetna ABH in a tent was life-saving due to the fentanyl crisis:

There was a little bit of jurisdictional battle going on. So, in a roundabout way, I was glad it did shut down because that could have started a whole lot more just based on that notion alone. There was a lot of good people there. But then there wasn't. That fentanyl was kicking in over there like it was fucking wildfire.

Notwithstanding the positives of the encampment clearance for Austin, his 10-man tent, generator for electricity, couches and bed, and personal effects were discarded into the dumpster. “At what point did I do something wrong? And what warning did we get? We got no warning.

⁵⁴ personal communication, February 5, 2023

⁵⁵ Tammy, personal communication, January 6, 2023

⁵⁶ Patrick, personal communication, January 8, 2023

⁵⁷ personal communication, February 5, 2023

No warning!”⁵⁸ Austin’s socio-spatial trajectory is emblematic of the broader hostile designs that unhoused residents deal with. They are offered short-term shelter, evicted for violating rules, swept away from public spaces, their personal property is discarded, and they are pushed around.

For individuals like Lincoln, the construction of the Aetna ABH did not bring frequent sweeps like his previous experiences.⁵⁹ As he stated:

Since the shelter got here, the law enforcement, the sanitation, they don't bother us at all. That was a big thank you because they used to come every week. Every Friday they used to come and tear us apart. All the stuff we worked on. All the stuff we built. They would come tear it down.

This particular community has been described as the “Skid Row of the Valley.” Its continued presence on the sidewalks near the Aetna ABH is a result of political and spatial resistance to police sweeps. There is more ad hoc police harassment, but as long as you keep to yourself, follow the quality-of-life ordinances, and maintain a clean space, you are likely not going to attract attention. Damon and Josephine, along with other vehicular dwelling residents along the perimeter of Echo Park acknowledged that laws will always be in place, but that maintaining a cleanly vehicle inside and outside and acting respectfully to other park goers is not in violation of any law. As Josephine indicates:

There's always going to be laws, there's always going to be things that need to be abided by. If you look at any of the other vans and rigs that are parked up and down here, for the most part, everyone's really clean and everyone's really respectful. No one's really causing any problems. So, I don't think that they're necessarily needs to be laws as long as people are doing their part and being respectful to their neighbors.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ personal communication, February 2, 2023

⁵⁹ personal communication, January 19, 2023

⁶⁰ personal communication, February 8, 2023

Kelsey, and most other residents I spoke to,^{xxxviii} are anti-drug, specifically meth and fentanyl. Despite the city closing the boardwalk restrooms and taking away porta-potties at other encampments, Kelsey was understanding and even advocated for the restrooms to be torn down and redesigned.

As he proclaimed:

Tear these bathrooms down and make them something inviting that a child will be comfortable going potty in instead of these dark crypts, these meth head bathrooms. If they just came and blew them all up tomorrow, I'd be so fucking happy. They could put porta potties out there. That would be better than those bathrooms. See because tweakers and meth addicts and drunks and all kinds of fucking people live in those bathrooms. So, if a little kid comes down to the boardwalk, for them to go pee-pee, they have to go in there and walk around them meth dealers and drunks and disgusting animals that live in there. Just tearing them fucking down and designing a bathroom where nobody can live in. It's better in a clean environment where a child is welcome in. Where a mom can actually let the girl, their child, go potty by themselves and not be worried. That kind of bathroom. Give us those. That would change Venice Beach 10,000%.⁶¹

Harbor City residents who have not been housed or placed in one of the city's interim shelters were forced to relocate on a dusty industrial road that became muddied during the ongoing rainstorms of 2023. Next to this site, a greenbelt park and an underused lot were fenced off; porta-potties and trash services were provided and taken away. At a certain point, the city had given people allotted plots in a vacant lot to set up their tents. As Chase recalls:

Everywhere else, they've kicked us out. We used to be all the way in the fields across the street. That was cool to stay right there because it was its own little, small group, inside of a little city, inside of a little town. Incognito. All the dogs were roaming free. Nobody could go in there without being noticed. The dogs know everybody there, so it was a small community. But they kicked us out of everywhere until they pushed us here. For a while, we had assigned spots at 253rd, but that didn't last long because of the police. It only lasted a couple of months. They didn't keep pushing that project.⁶²

⁶¹ personal communication, February 11, 2023

⁶² personal communication, February 5, 2023

Similarly, the Van Nuys encampment near the Aetna ABH experienced sweeps, growth in the encampment community from evictions from the ABH, and had to contend with infrequent services, closed restrooms, and ad hoc policing. Meanwhile, two Metro parking lots nearby remain underutilized,^{xxxix} while another is completely fenced off. In Venice, as unhoused residents are pushed from the boardwalk to public institutions such as libraries, and people living in vehicles struggle to find safe streets to park on without being ticketed or harassed, parks are fenced off and access to power and public restrooms is constrained. This process is still evidenced in the privatization and securitization of Echo Park Lake, and this park's fencing. As Alex, a man displaced from Echo Park Lake in March 2021, contends, "A park that is fenced up is not welcoming. It's not a park. That's a private park."⁶³ For most residents, the city posting an ad hoc sweep is too little too late. The frequent sweeps in Harbor City give residents a two-day notice. In Van Nuys, residents were never notified that they were located in a no-go zone. Patrick critiqued the direction that the SECZ signs face: "They put up signs. They put it facing the street. I'm not part of the city planning commission, but visually, aesthetically, who the fuck is supposed to see that sign?"⁶⁴

Under L.A.M.C. § 56.11, regardless of the location where a sweep takes place (i.e., Echo Park, Harbor City, Van Nuys, or Venice), any property such as clothes, medications, documentation, and other valuables retained during CARE + cleanups are taken to "The BIN" in Skid Row where they are placed into 60-gallon trash bins (Figure 8). For residents without a vehicle in Harbor City, Van Nuys, and Venice, collecting items at The BIN takes a day.

⁶³ personal communication, January 28, 2023

⁶⁴ personal communication, January 8, 2023



Figure 8. Property swept from Harbor City encampment may be collected at The BIN.

Photograph by Christopher Giamarino.

The storage lockers at ABH sites and Tiny Home villages only allow two personal bags to be stored, and the lack of security inside leads to residents’ property and valuables being stolen. At the Aetna ABH, Bridget and Patrick have had their valuables stolen. At the Tiny Home village near the Harbor City encampment, Nydia’s laundry has been discarded. “They can

have people steal your clothes, your jewelry, everything, and they don't do nothing about it. All they do is just write a grievance note and you've got a grievance note, and that's it.”⁶⁵ Hostile shelter designs and hostile public space designs (i.e., ad hoc enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances, discriminatory policing, and spatial banishment) shrink unhoused residents’ socio-spatial rights to the city, including access to public space, ability to store personal property and valuables, and capabilities to have dignity and partake in life-sustaining practices.

Under the guise of more compassionate services, new homeless service architecture and carceral design dehumanize unhoused people and segregate them into fenced off areas referred to as “concentration camps”⁶⁶ or “prisons”.⁶⁷ I have extended Moatasim’s contention by arguing that hostile socio-spatial designs within and across “new ‘architectures’” (i.e., shelters) and public spaces have produced an ad hoc anti-homeless neo-revanchist landscape. I claim that the stringent rules and insufficient interior designs of short-term interim shelters (i.e., ABH, PRK/PHK, and Tiny Homes), coupled with the hostile designs and policing experienced on sidewalks, in parks, and on public streets, effectively force unhoused residents to participate in DIY urban design tactics in their everyday lives (Table 2). While individuals would prefer to live under a roof in one of these sites, the hostile rules and designs lead to evictions or exits into public spaces. Hostile designs in public spaces are experienced, and DIY urban design interventions are practiced to cope and survive.

⁶⁵ Bridget, personal communication, January 12, 2023

⁶⁶ Tim, personal communication, February 2, 2023

⁶⁷ Jane, personal communication, February 5, 2023

Ordinance/Policy	Outcome
LAMC § 41.18 (“sit-lie” law)	Currently “unenforceable” under <i>Martin</i> . Parks’ ordinances and CARE + Cleanups are “constitutionally permissible.” ^{xl} No-go zones are enforced through meaningless “offers” or “placements” into short-term shelters.
LAMC § 56.11 (bulky items)	“The City enacts this section to balance the needs of the residents and public at large to access clean and sanitary public areas consistent with the intended uses for the public areas with the needs of the individuals, who have no other alternatives for the storage of personal property, to retain access to a limited amount of personal property in public areas.” Semi-permanent structures, personal property, and community infrastructure are targeted for demolition and dispossession.
LAMC § 63.44 (camping in parks)	“The purpose of this section is to maintain parks in clean, sanitary and accessible condition, to prevent harm to the health or safety of the public, to prevent the misappropriation of parks for personal use, and to promote the public health and safety by ensuring that parks remain readily accessible for their intended recreational uses.” 63.44 B.14 bans overnight camping and sleeping from 10:30 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. 63.44 B.26 bans bulky items storage in parks that target tents. ^{xli} This ordinance has been enforced in large city parks like Echo Park Lake, the boardwalk in Venice, and smaller parks near libraries.
LAMC § 85.02 (dwelling in vehicles)	No person shall use a vehicle for dwelling on residential streets between 9:00 PM and 6:00 AM or within one block of a school, pre-school or daycare facility. Currently unenforceable. However, LAPD, parking enforcement, and NIMBYs utilize crime data to map RV hotspots, enforce parking restrictions through citations and impoundment, and resort to vigilantism, respectively.
CARE + Cleanups	Creates SECZ around temporary A Bridge Home shelters and Tiny Home villages. These cleanups involve sanitation, LAPD, and LAHSA. Sanitation throws away people’s property who cannot move their belongings within 15-minutes and beyond police lines.
Soft incarceration	Short-term solutions like shelters and enforcement of anti-camping ordinances to create unhoused containment camps, place them into housing, jail them, or push them out of the city.

Hidden policing	Police conduct warrant searches of unhoused folks to find “quality-of-life” citations. This results in displacement and jail time.
No-go zones and hostile designs	Anti-homeless zones are enforced, bring unsheltered people toward shelter spaces covered by SECZs, and implement hostile designs within shelters and across public spaces.

Table 2. Laws, cleanups, harassment, and hostile designs.

This process of shrinking the socio-spatial rights to the city and public space are imposed through relational hostile designs between shelters and public spaces. Anti-homeless zones are codified through quality-of-life ordinances and construction of shoddy temporary shelters and programs, stringent rules and dehumanizing designs are put in place inside and outside of these shelters, and public spaces fence off the capabilities for unhoused residents to access basic necessities and life-sustaining amenities through soft and hard controls. Zooming in from LA’s no-go zones, the hostile designs of designated shelter facilities and the erratic soft and hard controls within public spaces include sweeps, spatial policing, and NIMBY harassment. This built environment results in the spatial shrinking of capabilities for those unhoused to practice life-sustaining activities and rights to occupy city space (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Spatial shrinkage process represented. Photographs by Christopher Giamarino.

For example, some unhoused communities have constructed toilets after the city had provided porta-potties, moved them, locked them, and ultimately took them away. CARE+ Cleanups placed porta-potties next to the locations where these communities were pushed to, and then complaints from housed residents and nearby businesses encouraged them to be taken away. Yet, even after creating this life-sustaining infrastructure, the people I spoke to stated that any sort of grassroots construction becomes a target for criminalization and demolition. This process of shrinking socio-spatial rights to public space through the production of no-go zones and hostile designs is neo-revanchist because it exacerbates the spatial churn effect advanced by Herring et al. (2020),^{xlii} collapses the fluidity of dwelling types for unhoused residents,^{xliii} makes unhoused people difficult to locate and provide them services and opportunities for housing, and encourages DIY responses to access life-sustaining infrastructure that then becomes criminalized. Next, I catalog the provision of do-it-yourself urban designs as necessary life-sustaining infrastructural responses to hostile designs, deromanticize accounts of DIY urban designs as architectural stopgaps to cope with hostile designs, and reflect on their political, social, and spatial potential in improving public space quality if city planners, urban designers, policymakers, and housed residents are willing to learn from these everyday design strategies and socio-spatial tactics.

CHAPTER 6

The production of do-it-yourself urban designs

Red tape is your enemy—Justine

I've always been a **DIY girl**—Nydia

Justine and I sat out on a sidewalk in Venice between a public library and a fenced off park where she beseeched me, “You should really do something. Try to suggest that they have more immediate action.”⁶⁸ She wanted the city to cut through the red tape, take down the fence surrounding the park outside the public library, and place porta-potties next to the park. The urgency with which she spoke about this bare necessity points to a broader citywide issue: the shrinking of public space access and the criminalization of life-sustaining activities for the unhoused, such as going to the bathroom, maintaining basic hygiene, cooking hot meals, and constructing shelter.

Another unhoused woman, Nydia, has always done things herself. Her DIY construction knowledge was impressive, but also revealed the targeted nature of demolishing DIY and shrinking public space in LA. Originally, her community built a platform structure with pylons and wood that enabled storage under a bridge, and even had a parking space and a fully functioning toilet. She describes the laborious, inventive, and resourceful process for fastening the platform to the underside of the bridge:

⁶⁸ personal communication, February 4, 2023

I had to get pylons. When I say that I get, I'm a little different than a lot of homeless people. I will go out and hustle to be able to walk into Home Depot to pay for my materials. Some people they go wait for them to hit the trash. I've done that many times too. We don't steal in our group. That's just not an option. But we had to use pylons, two by fours, we had to map it out. A lot of screws and bolts, big bolts. It took them two days and big heavy machinery to destroy that. They were mad. It even had storage underneath because the pylons were holding up the deck. There was that. I was under a bridge at Sepulveda and Alameda, and we built a little section with office dividers. Okay. Yeah, we sectioned areas for certain people to store their stuff.⁶⁹

This DIY structure was targeted for destruction, and her community was pushed to a vacant grass field across from a greenbelt park. After the city targeted their site, known as “The Field,” they were pushed across the street to the greenbelt park. Then, they were swept out of the park after complaints by dogwalkers and other housed residents. The city erected a fence closing off the park, and the community was forced to live on a dusty, dirt industrial road.

In response to this process of spatial shrinkage—operationalized through anti-homeless zones, enforced through ad hoc policing, and buttressed by hostile designs and the provision of inadequate services and shelter architectures, unhoused residents are mobilized to participate in grassroots do-it-yourself urban design tactics. They build infrastructure for themselves (semi-permanent shelter structures) to get a sense of privacy, protection, and safety, and for their community—restrooms, showers, cooking areas, recreational spaces, and workshops—to deliver accessible basic amenities to residents. The redesign and reuse of public spaces affords life-sustaining practices like going to the bathroom, maintaining hygiene, eating more healthily, engaging in physical activity, and making money to provide sustenance.^{xliv} I posit that DIY urban designs and everyday spatial tactics are a direct coping and survival response to the hostile designs present in formal shelter spaces and public spaces. Additionally, DIY urban designs

⁶⁹ personal communication, February 5, 2023

provide unhoused residents with a greater sense of personal autonomy, dignity, and socio-spatial mobility.

In this chapter, I catalog myriad DIY design responses to socio-spatial hostilities, including the key actors involved, design processes, and infrastructure constructed; the targeting and criminalization of precarious DIY interventions; and how cities can better learn from and accommodate DIY urban design knowledge and outcomes to improve public space quality and enhance social and spatial rights to the city for unhoused residents.

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, I look at the relational DIY urban design processes and outcomes by unhoused residents and the life-sustaining infrastructure that is assembled in response to hostile designs. For unhoused residents, I find that DIY urban designs are architectural reprieves from hostilities across shelter spaces and public spaces. I advance that these incremental interventions function as coping and survival strategies to improve one's capabilities to partake in life-sustaining activities, as well as enhance feelings of dignity, protection, and safety. They also reappropriate public space for private uses and quasi-public community activities. Second, I concede why DIY urban designs should be deromanticized by describing the dangers of makeshift construction and the hacking of formal infrastructure, the harsh conditions experienced by people living in public spaces, and the inevitable targeting and demolition of DIY designs by the city. Lastly, I advocate for city planners and urban designers to learn from these tactics and accommodate them into public spaces to address hostile designs.

Constructing relational capabilities from the ground-up

Necessity created demand, demand created production, which was how can we utilize our space, keeping in mind that we already knew that we were going to be targeted because we are an encampment. —June

You have to **be someone like an architect**, you know? You have to **envision what you want with the space you have**. See now, if you have a certain space and you're next to a light pole, you can use a light pole with anchors for some of your ropes to hold up your tarp or whatever you want to build. Me? I'll put a tent up. I'll put an awning over the tent just in case it rains. I lift up the tent. I'll put pallets under the tent so I can stay off the ground, so it won't get wet from the bottom. I put tarps at the bottom. I put tarps, pallets, and then cardboard, so you won't step in the holes. Then I put my tent so I can stay off the ground. Heating wise? I use hand sanitizer because it's flammable. You put it into a bucket, and you just light it if you put wax on it or something. No smoke, so we're about that. —Lincoln

June, a former Echo Park Lake resident, recounted her experiences and the motivations for living in a park and building community infrastructure during COVID-19 up until the March 24th, 2021, displacement. After being struck by a vehicle becoming unable to work, she became unhoused and found herself living in Echo Park Lake. Like many others, COVID-19 led to unemployment, eviction, and homelessness. As the encampment in Echo Park Lake grew in tandem with the stay-at-home order and absence of access to formal service provision, there was a demand created for hygiene infrastructure, community infrastructure, and a safe place to sleep. As the unhoused community produced autonomous, self-sufficient places like a community garden, working kitchen, heated shower, and designated places to sleep with community policing, these DIY urban designs became targeted for demolition.⁷⁰ Lincoln, an unhoused resident in Van Nuys who makes his money refurbishing and selling bicycles to increase mobility for his neighbors, responds to the hostile designs within the nearby ABH shelter and on the sidewalks, by thinking like an architect and envisioning the type of space he needs to

⁷⁰ personal communication, January 28, 2023

creatively construct a sense of dignity, protection, and safety. He constructs his sense of dignity and protection from policing, as a recently incarcerated African American man, by keeping himself busy with bike repairs, hacking a nearby fire hydrant for showers, staying within his tent, and not looking homeless. “I will not look like the situation I’m in. I will never ever look homeless.”⁷¹

During the historic 2023 winter storms in LA, unhoused residents—without access to a vehicle or shelter—elevated their semi-permanent structures onto pallets to avoid flooding and reappropriated COVID-19 hygiene supplies for heat. In rare cases, structure builders relied on nearby businesses, but often they collaborated with mutual aid organizers to acquire the materials necessary. Through this process, they accumulated grassroots planning and design knowledge and, more importantly, cultivated capabilities to realize rights to bare necessities and life-sustaining infrastructure. Access to basic necessities like water, hygiene infrastructure, restrooms, electricity, hot meals, and shelters were built and provided from the ground up and shared outward within communities and across through shared knowledge and organizing networks. For those living in between vehicles and public spaces, vehicles served as “housing solutions”⁷² to live more securely, have greater spatial mobility, avoid the police, and expand access to power, bathrooms, hot meals, and water. For vehicular dwellers, everyday knowledge of parking enforcement signs, vehicle dwelling regulations, and friendly land uses constituted everyday socio-spatial tactics to realize basic capabilities. Similarly, unhoused residents living in semi-permanent structures and makeshift tents relied on everyday knowledge of quality-of-life ordinances, donations and assistance from mutual aid organizers and nearby businesses, scrappy

⁷¹ personal communication, January 19, 2023

⁷² Philip, personal communication, January 22, 2023

resourcefulness to access materials and supplies, and tactical planning and design knowledge to design DIY solutions in response to hostile designs.

Do-it-relationally: Key actors, grassroots knowledge, and design processes

This just occurred. I had a friend of mine that got a hold of a table. A folding table. So, I put it out. And then somebody said, ‘Oh, well, I got a tent. You want to use it?’ I said, ‘Yes’. They gave it to me, and it just went boom. It exploded. This was put together by the people that live here. This was given to me by residents. This is given to me by a friend. This was given to me by one of the other vendors, the tent. One of the tables I picked out of the trash. One I bought and then somebody came and gave me another one. So, I’ve gotten help by the people to build this. So, there was **no plan or design, it’s just ground up**. —Kelsey

Kelsey, a vendor on the Venice Boardwalk, details the unplanned ground-up design of his tent and vending infrastructure, which relies on the assistance of friends, housed residents, and dumpster diving.⁷³ Before cataloguing the various tactical responses to hostile designs by unhoused communities, it is essential to map out the networked actors, knowledge, and design processes that inform grassroots interventions. DIY urban designs and everyday socio-spatial tactics are possible because of the assistance of nearby businesses, volunteers from mutual aid organizations, the presence of alleyways and dumpsters, as well as the economic ingenuity of unhoused residents who purchase supplies from hardware stores and from other unhoused residents. Therefore, DIY is carried out relationally, across socially and spatially networked places, with shared local planning and design knowledge. In this section, I detail how DIY urban design tactics range from small things like ad-hoc construction of cooking areas and personal heaters to larger infrastructure like private residential construction based on knowledge acquired from mutual aid organizers, other unhoused individuals, and self-learned architectural skills.

⁷³ personal communication, February 11, 2023

Across each neighborhood, DIY urban design tactics and local planning knowledge are shared through formerly and currently unhoused volunteers working within the citywide Services Not Sweeps coalition. They included Alex, June, and Wallace (Echo Park Lake), Belinda (Harbor City), Cassandra and Pierce (Van Nuys), and Dexter and Philip (Venice). They served as my key informants for each community and connected me with DIY builders. Cassandra, Pierce, Dexter, and Philip all live in campers or RVs, which enhances their capacity to participate in volunteerism, while Alex, June, Wallace, and Belinda are all presently housed but have prior experience living unhoused in their communities.^{xlv}

For example, at Pierce's birthday party and record release show, unhoused residents and organizers joined together for a night of art, celebration, and DIY urban design at a community space near Echo Park. In addition to celebrating Pierce's birthday, the overarching purpose of the record release party was to showcase the creative, artistic talents of unhoused people in LA. Therefore, the event included unhoused residents from Van Nuys like Patrick who did a live rap performance during the event. On the event flyer, there was an advertised "community skill-share: learn to build DIY heaters." As I arrived, there was a table set up with mason jars, ceramic pots, hand sanitizer, copper coils, epoxy, and an instruction manual entitled "Heater Bloc's Guide to Building a Tent-Safe Copper Coil Alcohol Heater" (Figure 10). Heater Bloc describes themselves as a "Portland-based anarchist collective" that has worked on this "iterative design ... for years to help keep houseless people warm" (Cortes, 2022). Patrick and another unhoused resident from Van Nuys picked up the manual and supplies and brought them back to their homes on the sidewalk near the Aetna ABH shelter.

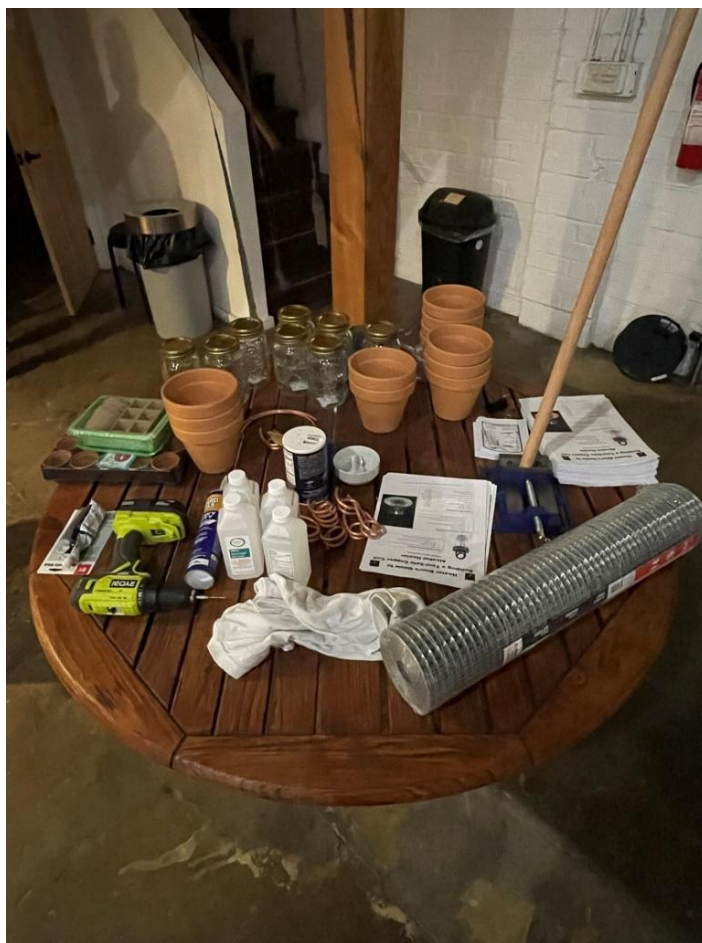


Figure 10. Learning relationally from Heater Bloc in Portland: DIY Heaters as knowledge sharing and survival response to winter storms. Photograph by Christopher Giamarino.

Pierce, who lives in his RV near the Aetna ABH shelter, uses the interior of his RV for art and music and has driven his RV to the encampment to block police sweeps. As a more impervious encampment community, Pierce is “just very much listening and absorbing from those who have lived and live there.” He is “coming in and seeing what [he] can add, what [he] can bring, what [he] can contribute, as a new community member as opposed to coming in with any kind of vision or a specific vision or plan to execute.” The DIY heater idea was unearthed during a community movie night in the encampment community when everyone was cold, and people used hand sanitizer to create a source of heat. As he recalls:

I didn't realize that hand sanitizer just burned the way it did and on Aetna, we were just cold one time and so the people just poured out hand sanitizer and lit it on fire in the parking lot and then got an umbrella so that you can catch the heat and bring it back down. That was the precursor to me with learning about how to make DIY heaters.⁷⁴

This sort of DIY relational knowledge sharing is commonplace in unhoused encampment communities. In response to harsh conditions like cold weather or rain, or hostile designs like the city taking away porta-potties in Van Nuys or Harbor City, a need is created for bare necessities and DIY urban design interventions are put in motion. For example, Pierce (Van Nuys) learned from Belinda (Harbor City) about DIY toilets that were built with five-gallon buckets, pool noodles, and trash bags. In the case of Echo Park Lake, social media, donations from activists, and crowdfunding through GoFundMe helped to build community amenities like the kitchen, community garden, and shower with a water heater. Alex describes the process of building the community shower and the convenience of having a shower onsite at Echo Park Lake:

We all raised money online for showers here. They got some funds, mobilized, got some help from housed community members to go get some materials and supplies from the store. I can tell the lead organizer had never grabbed a hammer. I was walking and they told me that we're building the showers and I was like, 'Yes, perfect. I don't have to go every morning at four in the morning to go take a shower downtown. Catch a bus and go'. Anyone can you use it. He was like, 'It'll even have hot water because we also we raised enough money to get a rechargeable water heater'.⁷⁵

For Harbor City and Van Nuys residents, donations and volunteerism, items found in nearby trash (or unhoused DIYers' treasure), supplies, or assistance from businesses, panhandling, and swaps or deeds between community members are key resources for engaging in DIY urban designs. Ted has located his tent near an ice factory in Van Nuys; his site has storage, and he relies on adjacent land uses to maintain hygiene: "They give me ice whenever I

⁷⁴ personal communication, January 30, 2023

⁷⁵ personal communication, January 28, 2023

want. I go to the recycling center for water. I shower here or in the church. Everybody that works there knows me and they're cool."⁷⁶ To evade police, Ted had a little storage area with a trash bin, office chair, and coffee table next to his tent. Before Camille ended up living in an RV near the Aetna ABH, after being evicted from her apartment where she was subsidizing rent with a Section 8 voucher, she, like others, would forage for discarded food at the back of grocery stores to cook hot meals for her and her friends. As we smoked cigarettes and her cuddly pitbull lounged in the sun outside, we talked about how she used to forage and provide hot meals for her neighbors:

Every night, they'd throw meats out on the top. So, me and my friend Frank, we would go get the meats. We would come back and have a little cookout for everybody the next day. We would cook it for everybody.

Christopher Giamarino: With the propane grill?

Yeah, or even a wood fire. We would make a wood fire.⁷⁷

Similar to other unhoused residents with experience in the hostile designs of shelters, Patrick, who earns royalties from his YouTube rap music videos, purchased a barbecue for his personal tent space and either relies on donations from individuals or goes to local grocery stores to buy meats and barbecue for himself, his son, and his neighbors. He does this as a direct response to the hostile designs within the adjacent ABH, which provides him with cold food and a microwave to heat up unhealthy frozen food.

Just waiting here for people to bring you food. Shit, that's my whole little thing right there. I got a barbecue pit up underneath there. I cook. I go to the 99 Cents Store, go get me some kielbasa sausage. I'm barbecuing. I know how to survive. You know what I'm saying? And if I stayed there and ate what they had there, I wouldn't be able to survive.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ personal communication, February 2, 2023

⁷⁷ personal communication, February 9, 2023

⁷⁸ personal communication, January 8, 2023

As he told me, he's just trying to survive on the streets. If he was still in the ABH site, just a couple hundred feet from his tent, he would still be eating things like pancakes with jelly and microwaveable foods. The hostile designs of the kitchen area and the discriminatory, dehumanizing treatment experienced in the ABH space have taken a mental toll on him. Other residents like Brooke in Harbor City, Camille in Van Nuys, and Wallace in Echo Park rely on alleyways and dumpsters to forage for the supplies they need to build their structures or cook their meals. As Brooke told me:

I once I had a fort. It was like a kid's fort with couches. It was a fort with a tarp around it. It helped because people can't see what you're doing.

Christopher Giamarino: And then how did you plan that? How did you access those resources in order to build?

I ran into them in the alley. All in the alley, so I just set this up. I did. They were already there.⁷⁹

For Venice residents, accruing street knowledge about vehicular regulations and adjacent resources and services, utilizing the boardwalk for sustenance, and maintaining internal appliances and amenities in vehicles are beneficial everyday socio-spatial tactics helping them co-exist in public streets with tourists and housed residents. Dexter and his partner and Dwight and his partner park behind grocery stores, relying on EBT and recycling, respectively, to purchase and cook food in their vehicles. The boardwalk also serves as a space of economic sustenance for Philip, who sold his art there, which helped pay for maintenance on his camper. His art helped him to process his experiences of being unhoused and his conversations with unhoused residents into a cohesive canvas:

⁷⁹ personal communication, February 12, 2023

I did an art installation called 'Infinite Reality'. This piece was developed right here in Venice, right? What this art installation allowed me to do, it allowed me to distill a whole bunch of conversations on canvas. It showed that you can go from infinity to scarcity, which is the dollar sign by first adding reward and punishment, which is the two line and then hoarding at the top and wasting at the bottom, which is the two openings that ends up making it an S.⁸⁰

For other residents like Damon and Josephine in Echo Park; Austin and Lincoln in Van Nuys; and Nydia, Chase, and Jane in Harbor City, planning and design knowledge from other unhoused individuals that they either saw online or in-person presented aspirational DIY urban designs ideas. Damon and Josephine, who live in a camper on the perimeter of Echo Park Lake, use their gym membership to take showers. As we sat on camping chairs on the slip of grass between their camper and the sidewalk abutting the park, Damon recalled a cool bus he saw:

A while back, we saw a guy on Facebook who had a six-jet shower in his bus. And I thought that was the most sickest, innovative thing. A six-jet shower in his bus and the water came from the sides. I think that that was the sickest thing ever.⁸¹

Austin and Lincoln talked about other communities that they had lived in, abutting the 405 Freeway known as “The Bamboos” in the Sepulveda Basin. As Austin details:

I've seen some homes that are underground, literally on the side of the 405 Freeway. You literally have to go down dirt stairs to get to them. And they go about a level underneath you and these guys got it shored up like if it's a bunker. It pretty much comes from that because the electrical outlets that they have inside there that carry all the panels and whatnot for the electricians are pretty much the starting point for some of those cubby holes. Those deep caves that they have. You better know somebody you're going into there you know.⁸²

⁸⁰ personal communication, January 22, 2023

⁸¹ personal communication, February 8, 2023

⁸² personal communication, February 2, 2023

Lincoln, who thinks of DIY urban design through an architectural and creative artistic lens, describes two inspirational examples from his friend Ron and another structure that was demolished back on January 9, 2020 (CBS Los Angeles, 2020):

I remember one of my good friends named, Ron. He has his house on wheels that he built. There was an upstairs. It was bad. I was like what in the fuck? This guy did this? You could pull it with a bike. He could pull it with a wagon. What the fuck is that? There are boards, right? When you get in there, you're like, 'Oh shit, this goes up!' The stairwells. Everything's sturdy. It's like, 'Hey man, can you make one like this? This is nice'. You got a living room and kitchen downstairs. If you go downstairs, it's his bedroom. It's a little loft. You can see all of it and it's crazy. This guy is amazing. And there was another one that was inside of Woodley Park. This spot made the magazines, the news. It was nothing except trees, but this guy made it to where he had a working bathroom, a working kitchen. The doors. He had five bedrooms are all built into the trees. I don't know how he did it. I don't know how he did. But that was in the magazines. That was probably the best home made by homeless people.⁸³

Chase, Nydia, and Brooke know firsthand about the things that are possible with DIY from their time living across the six-lane boulevard in a vacant grassy patch in Harbor City called "The Field." Nydia "had built a little seating area to eat because it gets windy over there. [She] was tired of eating dirt in [her] food. [They] built a little seating area and after that [they] got nothing but threats."⁸⁴ Chase knew of other communities like "Five Points" in Anaheim and "The Third World" that had built structures. He brought up these communities because residents in his community who would access water from a faucet near a church were being criminalized, and he felt that it was just a matter of time before the cops pushed them to one of these spaces. Brooke knew of an architect building livable Tiny Homes for unhoused communities. Other unhoused residents across LA had mentioned the same person. His name is Elvis Summers, and he crowdfunded over \$100,000 to build tiny homes and mobile shower units with solar panels, electrical power outlets, and compost toilets (Chiland, 2016). Elvis, according to prior

⁸³ personal communication, January 19, 2023

⁸⁴ personal communication, February 5, 2023

interviews, sees these Tiny Homes as places of stability for unhoused residents, as the city of LA figures out how to provide enough affordable housing. However, like the criminalization of Nydia's little seating area, these unsanctioned Tiny Homes have been subjected to the bulky items provision of L.A.M.C. § 56.11.

For unhoused residents, participation in DIY urban design interventions and everyday socio-spatial tactics are motivated by the socio-spatial shrinking of their rights to the city through hostile designs across shelters and public spaces. Doing-it-relationally, unhoused residents rely on donations from philanthropic individuals and mutual aid organizers, DIY knowledge from social media and other encampments, selling items like bicycles and drugs, bartering and trading supplies and tools with other neighbors, panhandling, and scrapping and foraging to build their private residential and community infrastructure.

DIY urban designs and everyday socio-spatial tactics are responses to hostile designs across shelters and public spaces in each community. They include individual (private residential) and community (public life-sustaining and social/cultural) infrastructure. Beyond some of the hostile designs described and documented in Chapter 5, it was not possible to catalog them because the processes of providing and taking away life-sustaining services happened ad hoc and took place over the course of COVID-19. Therefore, my conversations detailed what hostile designs DIY urban designs were responding to.

Structure builders, similar to "pro" recyclers" (cf. Gowan, 2009), are a distinct, oppositional, and creative subculture of unhoused individuals because they possess tacit city planning and urban design knowledge related to what regulations permit and how the formal infrastructure and public spaces of the city can be reconfigured for their unique needs. They build this DIY urban design knowledge the longer they stay unhoused. The more knowledgeable

they become of the city's socio-spatial management regime, the more they understand what they can get away with. They are not considered chronically unhoused because they do not have physical disabilities, mental health issues, and drug use problems (The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2019). Additionally, they build to provide themselves with life-sustaining amenities, but also in response to their experiences with the hostile rules and designs of shelters. They participate in DIY construction as an activity that distracts them from the harsh reality of living unsheltered in public spaces, provides them with a creative outlet that deters them from criminal activity or drug use, and develops vibrant private shelter and community spaces. Their private spaces are sanctuaries that function to protect them from crime and other unknown unhoused and housed residents, while the community spaces provide them and their (un)known neighbors places for respite. While the function of community spaces is inherent in their design, the design of private spaces are usually masked by tarps and tents.

In Van Nuys, I studied the networked ecosystem of private residential and community infrastructure that responds to hostile designs within the Aetna ABH and on the sidewalks of the community. Despite the exterior tentlike appearance, the inside of tents and semi-permanent structures creates a sense of privacy compared to shelters; it contains amenities like entertainment, living rooms, kitchens to cook hot meals, and, depending on dwelling type (i.e., vehicle vs. tent), bathrooms and showers. As Lincoln stated, don't judge a book by its cover:

You have to be an artist or artistic to have any creativity to do anything like that. You could take a small place and you can make it look immaculate. Some people's tents, they look like that on the outside. When you get inside. They have a carpet, they have a TV, they have a rug, and you be like, 'God this is amazing'.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ personal communication, January 19, 2023

Inside his structure, he has a refrigerator, a generator, a TV, but also hacks nearby amenities like a fire hydrant with pliers to connect a hose to a communal shower. Much like his neighbor Tim down the street, opening the fire hydrant reminds him of hot summer days when he was a child. Some residents in Van Nuys, without access to generators, which according to Austin cost anywhere from \$300 to \$400, rely on plugging into adjacent electrical infrastructure or befriending businesses to charge their phones and power banks. Tammy describes nearby businesses that are sympathetic to their situation and want to help house them, not having the finances to do that. Therefore, a technology company “has allowed [her family] the ability to charge power banks so that [they] can be able to charge [their] cell phones and [they're] not relying on information from other people.”⁸⁶ Because she is a mother figure, when donations of food and clothing come in excess, Tammy and her husband set up a clothing swap and food pantry outside of their tent. In collaboration with a woman named Jessie who runs the Orange Cooler Project (2021)—a grassroots organization that provides encampment communities with orange water totes to keep people hydrated, Tammy states that she has:

more water than we could drink. We were going to drown in it. We got a tote and we put it out. In a few short days it was emptied of water. People take water as they need it. We always try to keep things on the edges of our stuff that we don't mind others taking.⁸⁷

On Thursday nights, organizers and unhoused residents host karaoke and movie nights by donating a projector and generator and occupying a neighboring street. This takes place next to the baseball diamond and basketball court that Warren built and painted with his neighbors. DIY social and cultural activities help to build community and solidarity based on the shared experience of living unsheltered on the sidewalk. As Warren posits, “We're trying to change the

⁸⁶ personal communication, January 6, 2023

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

community with basketball, which we are because that's what basketball does. That's what sports do. It's for clearing your mind and not going off doing negative stuff.”⁸⁸ Yet, Warren was recently arrested for providing this community recreational space. As an unhoused African American man, he sees it as unjust racial policing and a way to punish DIY urban design tactics and bring more drug- and gang-related crime to his community, so that they can be cleared. “They take it away. More crimes. That's what they think. But they want more crime over here. That's what I'm saying. They hate it. They want that money.”⁸⁹ From this overview of the private residential infrastructure and community infrastructure in Van Nuys, two points are worth noting before delving deeper into the catalog of DIY urban design interventions and everyday socio-spatial tactics. First, private residential spaces provide amenities absent in interim shelter locations, including a secluded bed, entertainment, and a place to cook hot meals. Community infrastructure provides a place for people to relax and engage in everyday activities. Second, these activities and interventions become targeted for criminalization and demolition by the city.

I was only invited into three private residential structures, so I relied on thick descriptions to portray the amenities. For example, Morris, colloquially known as “Grandpa” in Harbor City, had built himself a bedroom from scrap wood with a locked door. His son, who helped with translating our conversation, and encampment residents like Chase, Elmer, Nydia, and Paul assisted him with construction by providing him tools and extra muscle to finish the job. Adjacent to his bedroom, there was a canopy replete with a couch and a large propane barbecue similar to a taco truck. He was grilling eggs with peppers. Mobility is super important in an

⁸⁸ personal communication, February 9, 2023

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

encampment like the one in Harbor City, which is subjected to frequent sweeps. Nydia describes how they all helped out Grandpa with DIY mobility:

We built two sheds underneath grandpa's tarp. Those sheds, we put them on a trailer with wheels so that they're mobile for whoever needed them. That seems to work out fine until the city gets a hold of you. You keep it in one area too long and the city has eyes on it.⁹⁰

When I asked Morris why he constructed his own place, he bluntly responded, “I build to sleep better and to keep warm.”⁹¹ Austin, who is a “Protector” of his community against unsafe consumption of drugs and gender-based violence in Van Nuys, lives in a 12-man tent with a tarped PVC-pipe structure providing more protection from inclement weather. Within Austin’s tent, he has a couch, coffee table, bed, nightstand, storage area for his bicycle, generator, cooler with food, and a hot plate. We sat down briefly on his couch, I was offered Kentucky Fried Chicken, and then we left to do the interview on the sidewalk because his friend had burns from an electrical incident. Philip, like other RV and camper dwellers, has a kitchen, a place to sleep, and a workspace. I met up with him during my visits to Venice to walk around and meet with people who were structure builders or had policy and design recommendations based on their experiences with hostile designs. With his vehicle operational, he did not need formal outreach services. As he told me:

I can take my showers in the community, I can get my food, I can get a place to sleep, which is what I do in my RV. Right? So, everything that the services are there to provide, I specifically have made up my mind to do for myself.⁹²

Private residential infrastructure is designed in stark contrast to hostile shelter designs like shared sleeping arrangements, dirty co-ed restrooms and showers, lack of kitchenettes to

⁹⁰ personal communication, February 5, 2023

⁹¹ Morris, personal communication, February 5, 2023

⁹² personal communication, January 22, 2023

cook hot meals, and dehumanizing, stringent rules that led to eviction into public spaces. Building these spaces gives individuals control over the design of and amenities contained within these spaces. They also act as storage facilities. Socially, residents can invite guests over, cook their own meals, have access to entertainment, evade police by staying within their tents and expressing their rights, and indulge in the occasional beer or cigarette without fear of violating a demeaning, unreasonable set of rules.

The private and communal infrastructure built across each community were improvisational interventions that closely align with the peripheral, illegitimate design movement known as “ad hocism” (Jencks & Silver, 1972/2013). Ad hocism involves adaptive reuse of existing systems to solve an issue quickly. Some of the issues that are solved include lack of access to sanitation infrastructure (community showers and toilets), the necessity of water and hot meals (water coolers; barbecues and community kitchens), and the desire to create additional spaces for recreation (basketball court), artistic expression (protest art), and entertainment (movie nights). Following ad-hoc design principles, each intervention was efficiently constructed and possessed a private or community utility. In-the-moment, each intervention was creatively and politically plural in its design utility.

Figures 11, 12, and 13 (pp. 183–85) represent community DIY urban designs. The photographs show how DIY urban designs address hostile designs and conditions of living outside, including, among others, showers (Lincoln) and toilets (Belinda), water (Tammy) and hot meals (Morris), recreational spaces (Warren), protest art, and movie nights (Cassandra), and trash cans (Ted) and storage of property hidden in trees, mobile carts with shade, music, and hot plates (Wallace), and work stations to refurbish and sell bicycles to neighbors (Lincoln) and clothing swaps to downsize one’s clutter when living between shelters and their car.



Figure 11. DIY urban design and everyday socio-spatial tactics I. Photographs by Christopher

Giamarino.



Community water cooler



Private 5-gallon toilets

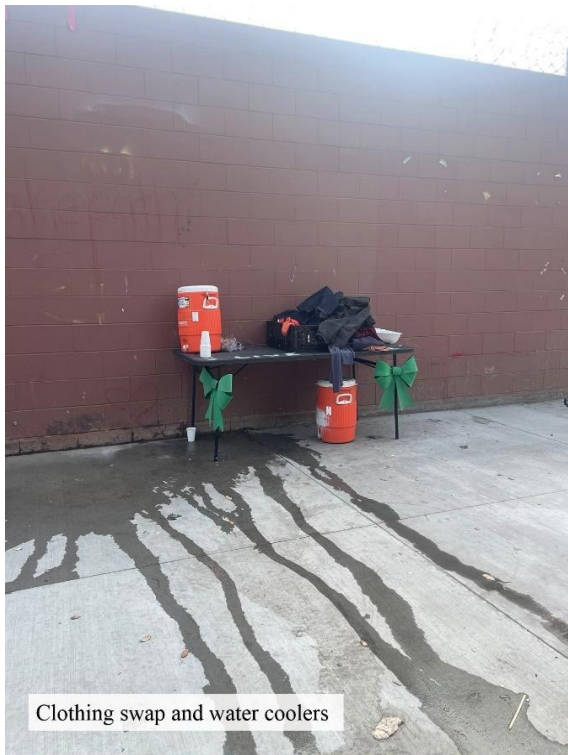


Living room with trash service



Mobile storage, cooking, and music cart

Figure 12. DIY urban design and everyday socio-spatial tactics II. Photographs by Christopher Giamarino and Wallace.



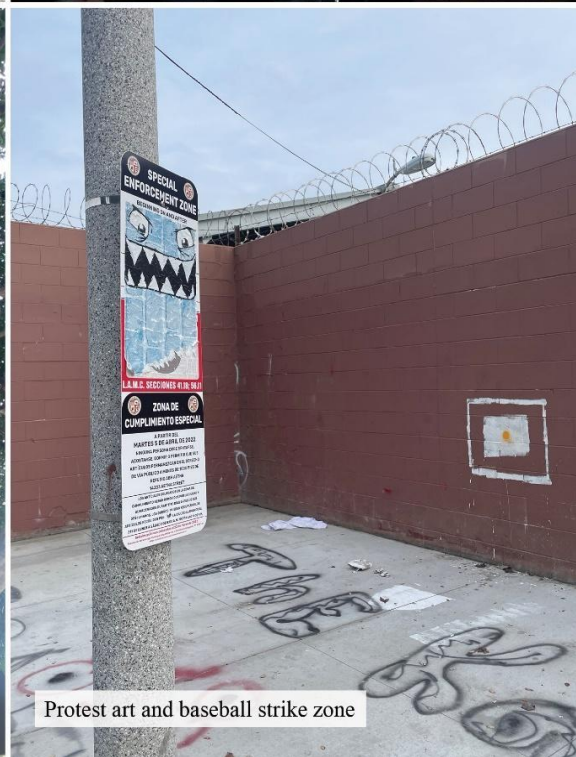
Clothing swap and water coolers



Movie night: Hocus Pocus 2



Tree storage of personal property



Protest art and baseball strike zone

Figure 13. DIY urban design and everyday socio-spatial tactics III. Photographs by Christopher Giamarino.

Through photography, it becomes clearer how structure builders recycle old systems for new, vital uses by practicing adhocism. Engaging in various economic schemes, including recycling cans and bottles, bartering with neighbors, foraging in alleyways and junkyards, boosting from hardware stores, and receiving donations from housed residents, businesses, and advocates, structure builders are able to recycle old systems for new uses. Zooming into the photographs in Figure 11, Lincoln repairs bicycles and sells them to neighbors in order to purchase a generator to power his television, a propane tank to ignite his heat lamp, and an old cellphone tent and 5-gallon bucket to construct a bathroom and shower, which he hooks up to a nearby fire hydrant for water. Warren foraged in alleyways and junkyards for the basketball hoop and purchased paint to design a recreational space that occupies a public street. Morris aka “Grandpa” deconstructs wooden pallets donated from a nearby business and digs a hole in the dirt to cook meals for his community. Looking at Figure 12, donations from mutual aid organizers to Tammy and Belinda afford the redistribution of life-sustaining necessities on public sidewalks like water coolers and private restrooms constructed with 5-gallon buckets, trash bags, and pool noodles for comfort. In Figure 13, community amenities are set up against walls like clothing swaps, movie nights with a projector and generator (donations from advocates), and protest art against anti-homeless policing.

Private structure builders rely on boosting from hardware stores and foraging in junkyards to acquire tools, materials, and supplies to design and construct more sturdy homes that reappropriate and reconfigure public spaces for private uses when no alternatives exist. During LA’s historic winter storms, wooden pallets were set down, pieces of plywood were screwed together with door hinges and PVC pipe, and tarps were hung over structures to prevent flooding. Often, a door was installed using wood screws and door hinges with a lock to increase

security and privacy. On the inside of private structures, amenities often included a bed, a living area with a couch and TV, a hot plate and a cooler with ice to store perishable foods, and a storage or office area. The interior design of private structures provided individuals with amenities that they did not have access to in the shelters. The spatial layout of private and community DIY interventions were strategically designed and positioned in public spaces to avoid demolition by not violating a quality-of-life ordinance.

Successful tactics to avoid demolition when engaging in DIY urban design interventions include, among other things, setting up private structures and community infrastructure on sidewalks and maintaining 3-feet of space for ADA compliance, storing private property in surreptitious ways (Figure 13), and erecting tents and tarps around semi-permanent, makeshift private homes to avoid violating LA's bulky items ordinance (56.11). By engaging in DIY urban design tactics, individuals' capabilities to control what their home looks like, how they feel living in public spaces, who they interact with, and how they utilize community infrastructure are enriched.

Building or living in semi-permanent structures and vehicles enhances feelings of privacy, autonomy, and dignity for unhoused residents. Dexter's attached curtains to his camper van in response to his experiences at the ABH in Venice. "The curtains are there for our privacy. We have privacy. I don't want people looking in."⁹³ Wallace's hybrid shopping cart, which he called his "Roving Oasis" that housed music speakers, a big umbrella, a stove, and his sleeping supplies, was both a private residential space and community infrastructure in Echo Park for dance parties and cooking meals, as he was a former chef in a hotel before becoming unhoused.

⁹³ Dexter, personal communication, January 22, 2023

He referred to this DIY structure as his “Temporary autonomous zone.”⁹⁴ Nydia used her “DIY time to think, to plan, to go over what’s going on in [her] life, or to motivate [herself].” She added, “Because while you're thinking you don't realize you're building and then when ultimately the project is done, you're like, ‘Oh wow. I did that’.”⁹⁵

Community infrastructure is built and utilized to enrich solidarity and resistance to hostile designs, provide places for social and cultural activities, and improve safety through community vigilance and self-policing. Ted and Lincoln build and sell bikes so that community members could enhance their mobility via alternative transportation. Warren built the basketball court. For residents, building community infrastructure keeps them out of trouble and prevents them from falling into substance abuse and criminal activities. In Echo Park Lake, the community shower, kitchen, garden, and clothing swap created a centralized place where people could access services and basic necessities. Community infrastructure in Echo Park, in Harbor City, and in Van Nuys helped build a sense of safety for unhoused residents. “Being able to build a safe space for yourself and for your community should be a given. We built that here, and it was just by coming together, standing together.”⁹⁶ The Van Nuys encampment, with its movie nights, DIY toilets and showers, persistent presence near the Aetna ABH build solidarity and resistance to hostile designs. As Pierce notes, “Why this place in particular? Proximity to me to an extent, and just the spirit of resistance, and the fight that you can feel on that street. It's strong geographically.” He sees that DIY experimentation can serve as inspiration for alternative, compassionate responses to living in public spaces; even serving as a model for other

⁹⁴ personal communication, January 27, 2023

⁹⁵ personal communication, February 5, 2023

⁹⁶ Alex, personal communication, January 28, 2023

encampment communities and educating the public about the struggles that unhoused communities deal with daily.

Sometimes, private residential infrastructure and community dynamics also create socio-spatial contradictions. For example, traditional gender roles can be obfuscated through DIY. Women like Fiona and Tammy set up food pantries and cook for their community, while others like Cassandra organize movie nights. Men like Chase and Austin create hygiene infrastructure and built structures that enhance safety for women to use showers in public and feel protected from NIMBY harassment and sexual violence. Other men like Lincoln and Tim hack urban infrastructure, a dangerous and labor-intensive feat, to increase access to water for showers. Notwithstanding this tedious task, they rationalize hacking infrastructure as a right to public utilities like water that the city provides for its residents to stay hydrated and hygienic.

Key motivations for participating in DIY are many. Cassandra sums up the main motivations for unhoused residents to partake in DIY quite nicely:

I think people on the street just straight up understand that it's nearly impossible to live without money. So, if you have \$0, you have to figure out a way to support each other. People are super skilled on the block and have different things that they do. There are people who fix bikes, and there are other people who really like to cook, and people who always find the coolest shit in the trash and make the community their catwalk a little bit. They're like always showing off. It's amazing. I think what motivates people is that people don't just give up and die. I think people have figured out ways to live in spite of everything.⁹⁷

With a lack of money, unhoused residents need to survive in public safely. They do so by evading police by camouflaging their tent on the outside, providing bare necessities on the inside, and keeping their space clean. “Camouflage. Don't give them a reason to look inside.

⁹⁷ personal communication, January 6, 2023

From all aspects, cover everything. Don't let them see you. The moment they see you, they will start bothering you.”⁹⁸ Dexter extends his clean space out to his community in Venice because he’s a “Venice Dog” and is “going to keep Venice clean, man.” “I’ve been on all kinds of beach cleanups. I’ve been on the beach cleanup for the annual celebrations of Venice. I go early and clean up the area. Make it look nice.”⁹⁹ Others are raised to be community caretakers and build safe spaces for others in need. Women like Tammy and Fiona describe themselves as motherly figures who want to provide for their people. DIY also provides people with a place to stay and protects people from harsh elements. “Because it’s freezing ass cold. It’s for protection, too.”¹⁰⁰ Lastly, as they wait and have faith in eventually being housed, people have a greater sense of autonomy, dignity, and control over their private spaces. “Freedom. We have the freedom to pretty much do what we want to go, where we want, live where we want, experience what we want. For me it's just freedom and that mental peace.”¹⁰¹ They produce community spaces “for everybody to relax, sit down, and not have to run around and worry about anything.”¹⁰²

DIY urban design interventions are grassroots productions of private residential and community infrastructure by structure builders to provide a private space for security and access to life-sustaining amenities like a bed, restroom, shower, and place to cook hot meals. This population is a privileged, knowledgeable, stable, and creative subculture of unhoused individuals who have contradictory views of the role that DIY design plays in addressing and balancing the needs and desires of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Simultaneously, they construct neatly designed private structures to protect themselves from

⁹⁸ Lincoln, personal communication, January 19, 2023

⁹⁹ Dexter, personal communication, January 22, 2023

¹⁰⁰ Brooke, personal communication, February 12, 2023

¹⁰¹ Damon, personal communication, February 8, 2023

¹⁰² Warren, personal communication, February 9, 2023

unhoused individuals they perceive to be dangerous in order to differentiate themselves as less troublesome due to their resourcefulness, but they also provide community spaces to share necessities like food, water, a public restrooms, shower, and arts, entertainment, and recreational spaces with these same strangers. Despite the sense of autonomy, community, dignity, and self-sufficiency that DIY urban design interventions furnish for individuals in public spaces, participation in DIY design is not a cure-all. DIY urban design tactics are often dangerous hacks of formal infrastructure, do not protect against violent street conditions or harsh weather, and are usually targeted for criminalization and demolition.

Deromanticizing DIY: Architectural stopgaps and targeted demolition

Despite the creative resourcefulness of unhoused residents in responding to hostile designs through DIY urban designs in their private residential and community spaces, these everyday socio-spatial tactics are limited architectural stopgaps that ultimately become targets for demolition and criminalization. In some cases, hacking urban infrastructure to access electricity causes fires from faulty wiring that leads to severe burns and injuries, while in others, like with Fiona and her partner, they cook hot meals with wood that smells of smoke and hand sanitizer (Figure 14).

For women, sharing a tent or living in a squat that they have helped build could end up being a dangerous situation resulting in a life-changing, traumatic incident. For Brooke, who asked mutual aid organizers for assistance to enter a rehabilitation program and take care of her cats in Harbor City, she did not want to romanticize what her squat structure looks like or how she built it. “I ended up squatting in a squat where I ended up getting raped. Nobody cared. There is a police case going on with that and the guy was arrested. So bad shit happens to you in

the streets.”¹⁰³ When I asked Brooke if “bad shit” only happened to women, she replied, “No, as anybody.” Tim, an unhoused man who, like Lincoln, hacks the fire hydrant in Van Nuys for running water and lives in a pallet tent on the concrete, had once been swept seven times in one year. As he sardonically stated, “It sets you back. You go and come back, and all your stuff is gone. Everything. Your phone. Your bicycle. There's just a thumb tack on the ground. That's about it.”¹⁰⁴ I asked him what justice would look like for people living outside and he quickly replied, “Don't live on the sidewalk. I mean think about it. It's not really fun to begin with.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Brooke, personal communication, February 12, 2023

¹⁰⁴ personal communication, February 2, 2023

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*



Figure 14. Deromanticizing DIY urban design tactics. Photographs by Christopher Giamarino.

Unhoused residents do not wax poetically about DIY urban design responses to improve quality-of-life on the streets. The longer they stay unsheltered on the streets, the more resourceful they become in understanding and evading hostile designs through DIY urban designs, but the more likely they are to experience mental health issues and substance abuse. Austin called it a “catch 22.” “I’m so against people, and the trash, and the rhetoric. Just the mess of it. Some of these people, can’t they just make it look somewhat half assed or organized. You go into mine and it is half ass clean.”¹⁰⁶ He’s describing the process of legalizing oneself by not attracting unwanted attention by the police or city for street cleanups that leads to displacement, dispossession, and demolition. Philip (2018) wrote about this process for vehicular residents in Venice in an article published in *Free Venice Beachhead* entitled, “The Hack: Living in Your Car.” As he told me, DIY urban design tactics and the ability to live alternatively in the city are prescribed by anti-homeless laws, self-policing, and maintaining a cleanly, uncluttered place. “The way you don’t get pushed around; you go through the trouble of legalizing yourself. And then once you’ve legalized yourself, then you can kind of stand your ground and recognize that you have the right to exist as well.”¹⁰⁷ Possessing tacit planning knowledge of hostile designs is important to avoid their negative effects. Philip makes sure his RV is smaller than normal sized RVs so that he can park it on the street overnight without violating oversized parking restrictions. This form of self-policing structured the social dynamics of the Echo Park Lake Community. You had to follow rules, pitch in to buy supplies, and respect other park-goers in order to be rewarded. As June, who would go around picking up syringes and trash during her time living in Echo Park Lake, describes:

¹⁰⁶ Austin, personal communication, February 2, 2023

¹⁰⁷ personal communication, January 22, 2023

Our tactic: we would have a barbecue, or we would have a game of dominoes at night with the pit fire here. If your area is clean, then we could share a coffee. Someone would pitch into to buy gas; someone would pitch into buy a pot. We would reward each other with communal time. Coming together and being like, 'How was your day?' Playing a game, watching a movie on a phone, cooking hot dogs, whatever. That was our reward. It worked. It enticed them to be like, 'Okay, we need to keep it clean because June is going to do hot dogs next Friday'. It helps with the incentive.¹⁰⁸

DIY urban designs are no match for the nonstop winter storms that pelted heavy rains at each community during March 2023. In Harbor City, Belinda obtained pallets from nearby industrial businesses so that residents could build elevated private residential spaces to avoid flooding. The pallet worked for Chase, who says, “my house would have been like castles with little water all around it. It would have been underwater, but because they brought the pallet and foam it worked.” However, he describes how the weather seeped through into his tent: “At night, at this time of year right now, the tents, if you don't have that much insulation, they're just like giant coolers. They're dripping wet inside.”¹⁰⁹

Community infrastructure, depending on the frequency of sweeps and one's race/ethnicity, became targeted for demolition. Harbor City residents have stopped doing big builds because the police and sanitation, as Nydia reveals “killed all of [their] structures. They won't let [them] build structures.” Jane, who attempted to legalize herself from 56.11 enforcement, had built a closet space, but as she acknowledged dejectedly:

Anything we build gets torn down every other week. So, nothing matters as far as that goes. Everything that people donate to us, they trash every other week. So, it's just horrible because there's no way to have a clean place that's not an eyesore because of the way they're doing things; because of their sanitation practices.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ personal communication, January 28, 2023

¹⁰⁹ personal communication, February 5, 2023

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Similarly, Chase revealed how sweeps and demolition of DIY property forced people to downsize and created more detritus:

Everybody stopped building big things. Everybody started downsizing. We try to keep it as clean as possible because if not, they clear us with those cleanups. They backtrack us. Not everybody has the energy to move all your shit in one day. I get tired. There are elderly people right here that just can't do it and they lose their shit constantly. That's not helping. They come to do a cleanup and they leave more of a mess than how it was.¹¹¹

In Van Nuys, Patrick and Warren were often targeted and harassed by the police for engaging in artistic interventions, including Patrick shooting music videos using the surveillance infrastructure and fenced off lots and the painting of a free throw line for Warren's basketball hoop or him painting his own art to process what he experiences on the streets. Patrick points out a surveillance camera that he used to make a music video about the policing that takes place in the public spaces near the Aetna ABH. It is on Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) property. The cops constantly watch what is going on through this camera, and one time when he was shooting a music video, hanging with his son, and drinking a beer by his tent, they came through to harass him. As Warren asserts, "Anything that you care about, they'll target. Anything that affects your heart, they can tell. They can look at it and say, 'Oh, that person loves that'. Then they throw that shit out."¹¹² Talking to unhoused residents revealed how DIY urban design interventions—to improve quality-of-life by enhancing capabilities, to practice life-sustaining activities like going to the bathroom, to access basic necessities like shelter and food, and to reconfigure public spaces into dwellable, livable places—are quickly targeted for criminalization and demolition. For example, when attempting a DIY traffic calming

¹¹¹ personal communication, February 5, 2023

¹¹² personal communication, February 9, 2023

intervention, we learned just how swiftly the city could act to erase pedestrian safety for unhoused communities.

The street near the Van Nuys encampment was a dangerous speedway that had caused a few deaths and one collision that resulted in minor injuries. In collaboration with unhoused residents, activists, and a grassroots DIY group, I reached out to a grassroots DIY organization based in LA called the Crosswalk Collective. Together, the Aetna Street Insurgent Research Collective, unhoused residents, myself, and Crosswalk Collective LA attempted to install a traffic calming measure to create a safer pedestrian environment for the community.

Calming traffic with a crosswalk: Do-it-yourself interventions and hostile designs in praxis

The first two conversations that I had in Van Nuys were with Tammy and Patrick. While asking them questions in my car, several cars dangerously zoomed down the two-lane connector street. Each car went well over the 25 mile-per-hour speed limit, shaking my car as they sped by. In response, Tammy put orange traffic cones a couple feet from the curb in front of her home to slow down traffic (Figure 15). After being evicted from the nearby ABH shelter due to discrimination, prison-like conditions, and dehumanizing designs like the lack of a kitchen and showers and bathrooms that closed overnight, Patrick and his son moved into a tent on the sidewalk. Shortly thereafter, his son was struck by a vehicle and escaped with minor injuries. “Now my son's with me, and I'm not gonna let him be somewhere where I'm not because I don't trust none of these motherfuckers. He got hit by a car the second day he was here.”¹¹³ Collisions between vehicles and unhoused pedestrians are a recurring hostile design issue raised by people in Echo Park, Harbor City, and Van Nuys.

¹¹³ personal communication, January 8, 2023

Residents experience life-changing crashes that lead to them becoming unhoused, are struck by vehicles crossing dangerous streets to go to the bathroom and have to constantly deal with noise pollution caused by fast-traveling vehicles. In Harbor City, the placement of porta-potties across a six-lane boulevard from an encampment and forcing people to move during sweeps have created deadly conditions at crosswalks. Belinda recalls this hostile design in Harbor City where unhoused residents are being forced to cross a dangerous boulevard to use porta-potties overnight. She states, “So many people get hit by cars. It's actually fucking insane. I would wager to say that I think almost all of the unhoused people I know at the camp have gotten hit by a car.”¹¹⁴

In response to this situation, a group of activists decided to intervene through a DIY traffic calming intervention. In collaboration with the Aetna Street Insurgent Research Collective, composed of organizers, academic researchers, and unhoused residents, we scheduled a street festival that would include mutual aid services, food, music, and art, and an attempt to slow down vehicles and improve pedestrian safety in this community.

¹¹⁴ personal communication, January 27, 2023



Figure 15. Tammy's DIY traffic calming cone. Photograph by Christopher Giamarino.

As part of this street festival on March 4th, 2023, I reached out to the Crosswalk Collective LA—a grassroots organization that addresses deadly street conditions through DIY painting of crosswalks—to participate through a traffic calming design. According to them, I was the third person to reach out to them about this location within the last two years. During the morning, they laid down crosswalk stencils and painted two crosswalks in the middle of the community. Crosswalk Collective LA [@CrosswalksLA] (2023) tweeted an image of the intervention on March 6th, 2023, that read:

We took advantage of a break in the rain to paint two crosswalks by a homeless encampment, brought to our attention by three separate requests. Cars killed two residents in past years and injured another in January. The city doesn't keep us safe, so we keep us safe.

On March 7th, 2023, just three days after the traffic calming intervention to slow down traffic and keep unhoused residents safer, the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LA DOT) removed the painted crosswalks (Figure 16). Much like other unhoused residents' fears of and experiences with demolition of DIY urban design responses to hostile designs, this was another real-time example of the city punishing tactics to improve quality-of-life for and use of public space by unhoused residents. For years, the city did nothing to address the dangers for pedestrians on this street through urban design interventions; all it took was three days for them to respond to efforts to make public spaces safer for unhoused residents.



Figure 16. A story in 3 acts:

- Community requests: "We need a safer crosswalk to protect pedestrians and unhoused folks"

- March 4: CCLA paints two crosswalks

- March 7: LADOT removes both crosswalks (Crosswalk Collective LA [[@CrosswalksLA](#)],

2023b)

As evidenced by the stories of unhoused residents and this example, the city is quick to intervene when something compassionate is designed and furnished for unhoused people by unhoused people and their allies in public spaces, especially when it enhances their capabilities to partake in life-sustaining practices and realize expanded socio-spatial rights to the city. They intervene through “soft” and “hard” controls. Frequent soft hostile designs include providing and then taking away public restrooms in publicly accessible spaces like the Venice Boardwalk, near libraries, and on sidewalks near ABH shelters and Tiny Home villages, as well as erecting fences around parks to exclude unhoused people and control who has access to them afterwards. “Hard” hostile designs include the enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances; ad hoc and regular police sweeps targeting encampments and semi-permanent individual and community infrastructure; hidden policing strategies like harassment, ticketing, and NIMBY vigilantism; and the production of no-go zones.

Learning from community and individual infrastructure

In an essay, Neil Brenner (2016) asks “Is tactical urbanism an alternative to neoliberal urbanism?” In it, he explores the tensions and relations between these two oppositional concepts. On the one hand, tactical urbanism represents a wide variety of grassroots, participatory, and do-it-yourself strategies to provide basic public goods when the market under neoliberal urban agendas has failed to provide or actively taken them away. On the other hand, individual or communal tactics, in response to broader shifts in the political economy from public provision to commodification of everyday life, may reinforce or entrench tenets of neoliberal urbanism like rugged individualism, reliance on volunteerism and nonprofits, entrepreneurialism, and competition for scarce resources under fiscal austerity.

Across each spatial typology (Table 3), DIY urban designs were responses to experiences with shelters, anti-homeless regulations, and hostile soft and hard controls across each neighborhood. Residents had lived experience or knowledge from other residents about the hostile regulations and hostile designs that existed across shelters and public spaces. They experienced soft and hard hostile design controls and responded through similar DIY urban design tactics to realize capabilities to partake in biologically necessary activities like going to sleep, using the restroom, maintaining basic hygiene, cooking hot meals, and engaging in recreational and social activities.

Place	Space(s)	Shelters	Hostile designs		DIY urban designs
			Soft controls	Hard controls	
Echo Park	Public parks	A Bridge Home	Closure of restrooms	Anti-vehicular dwelling restrictions	Autonomous tent city
	Public streets	Tiny homes "Inside Safe" (hotels/motels)	Fencing of park	Displacement Camping ban Demolishing DIY	Community garden Kitchen Bathrooms and showers
Harbor City	Interstitial spaces	Tiny homes	Taking away porta potties	Regular police sweeps	Bathrooms and showers
	Public streets Public parks	Safe Parking Programs	Inadequate shelter infrastructure Fencing of park	Demolishing DIY	Pallet builds Community kitchen
Van Nuys	Zoned sidewalks	A Bridge Home	Closure of restrooms	Ad hoc police sweeps	Bathrooms and showers
	Public streets	Tiny homes "Inside Safe" (hotels/motels)	Inadequate shelter infrastructure Taking away showers	NIMBY vigilantism Demolishing DIY	Pallet builds Recreational/social spaces Power Crosswalk
Venice	Public streets	A Bridge Home	Closure of restrooms	Anti-vehicular dwelling restrictions	Vehicle as home
	Public parks Zoned sidewalks	Safe Parking Programs "Inside Safe" (hotels/motels)	Fencing of parks Inadequate shelter infrastructure Anti-homeless architecture	Camping ban NIMBY vigilantism Demolishing DIY	Bathrooms and showers Kitchen Power

Table 3. Typology of shelters, hostile designs, and DIY urban designs across the four neighborhoods.

I posit that DIY urban design tactics—small-scale, grassroots interventions to access life-sustaining amenities—are symptomatic of the relational hostile designs experienced by unhoused residents but also point to ways in which cities can produce more just planning and design alternatives in public space. Despite the deromanticized nature of the design examples that I have illustrated above,^{xlvi} through my critique of hostile designs, I advocate for the inclusion of DIY tactical responses into the formal decision-making processes and planning and design outcomes that shape public space. Integrating the knowledge and practices of DIY urban design tactics by unhoused individuals into urban policy is necessary to contest the reification of neoliberal urbanism (Brenner, 2016). Instead of furthering the privatization of public space and redistribution of responsibility to individuals to find shelter, access hygiene infrastructure, and eat food and drink water, cities should work to accommodate these interventions resourcefully through inclusive participatory processes and design outcomes in time and space. Advocating for life-sustaining infrastructure like safe restrooms, communal showers, places to cook and socialize, and opportunities to access services and housing without criminalization should not be considered controversial urban policy. DIY urban design interventions and everyday socio-spatial tactics are predominantly coping and survival strategies that are required when no reasonable alternatives exist. These tactics are increasing access to necessities like shelter, food, and water through the production life-sustaining infrastructure.

DIY as coping and survival

Kimberley Kinder (2016) investigated the transformative possibilities of DIY self-provisioning in Detroit by residents contending with urban disinvestment and the shrinking of socio-spatial rights under neoliberalism. She contends that DIY is a “limited coping mechanism, not a combative strategy for systemic reform” (Kinder, 2016, p. 6). For unhoused residents in neo-

revanchist LA, DIY interventions function as limited coping and survival tactics. Using five-gallon buckets to go to the bathroom because restrooms have been closed overnight or portapotties have been taken away, hacking fire hydrants to set up sidewalk showers because CARE+ cleanups have stopped providing frequent showers due to resistance, cooking with wood and hand sanitizer on reclaimed pots and pans, and relying on local planning knowledge about which public spaces are safe to set up shelter are not desirable lifestyle choices. They are tactical responses to hostile designs, attempts to develop life-sustaining infrastructure, and provisions to access bare necessities.

Despite DIY being a “weak weapon” (Kinder, 2016, p. 200), such tactics can improve quality of life, increase safety and protection, and point to the collective potential of activism to respond to the neoliberalization of poverty management and the commodification of public space in pursuit of augmented socio-spatial rights to the city. Nevertheless, as Philip bluntly stated about using his camper as a housing solution, “It’s coping. I don’t want to live in my vehicle. I want to have an apartment.”¹¹⁵ DIY urban design interventions are survival tactics by unhoused inhabitants who have no reasonable alternatives. They have experienced the hostile designs within interim shelters (or heard about them from friends and decided to live in alternative housing solution), been evicted from them, and been put into daily situations where they must avoid police harassment, shelter themselves from the dangerous social and climatological conditions in public spaces, and figure out ways to access life-sustaining resources like water, food, and places to go to sleep, pee and poop, and maintain basic hygiene.

¹¹⁵ personal communication, January 22, 2023

DIY = dwellable inhabitation

In LA, there is a citywide push of anti-homeless zones and hostile designs across shelters and public spaces accompanied by a simultaneous pull of services and promises of transition into housing. In the broader political economy of LA, the homeless management regime designs and provides inaccessible and unreasonable alternatives for unhoused residents to access bare necessities like power, food, and water, services, and shelter. This is accomplished through the planning and design of interim shelter spaces, regulatory strategies which are extended out into nearby public spaces, and shrinkage of socio-spatial rights to urban space. As unhoused individuals are shuffled into, out of, and between housing, public spaces, and shelters, criminalized no-go zones expand into LA's neo-revanchist landscape, and hostile designs diminish access to life-sustaining infrastructure. To cope and survive with others—friends, family, neighbors, or strangers, unsheltered people living in public spaces rely on grassroots planning and design knowledge, donations and volunteerism from mutual aid organizers, adjacent land uses and buildings, bartering, and foraging to construct and develop DIY private residential and community infrastructure. Private residential infrastructure responds directly to the design pitfalls of hostile designs within interim shelter spaces, including a lack of privacy, places to cook a hot meal, sufficient storage areas, entertainment in living rooms, and workstations for art and refurbishing things like bicycles. Community infrastructure increases access to bare necessities and life-sustaining practices; occasionally provides social and cultural activities like movie nights and karaoke; and offers community spaces to destress, recreate, or protest. Notwithstanding these creative, resourceful tactical interventions, regulations and hostile designs ultimately target this infrastructure for demolition, as evidenced by the traffic calming intervention in Van Nuys. Additionally, DIY urban design interventions can be dangerous (i.e.,

electrical fires), unsanitary (i.e., going to the bathroom in a bucket in one's tent or van), are architectural stopgaps that are no match for the harsh climatological and social conditions one faces on the streets. They also do little to address racial policing, discrimination or gender-based violence.

So, is DIY urban design an alternative to compassionate revanchism in reimagining hostile designs to produce just public space designs? Under LA's current regime of compassionate neo-revanchism, DIY urban design tactics are not considered an alternative. Despite fluctuations in enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances, street cleanups, and police sweeps that afford DIY urban design interventions, the shrinking of public space and demolition of DIY amenities illustrate that punitive strategies return and prevail. The role of the state—politicians, city planners, urban designers, homeless service providers and outreach teams—must be restructured to learn from and accommodate DIY urban design tactics into its suite of compassionate policies for the unhoused, while addressing and abolishing its punitive strategies under compassionate revanchism. A hybridized form of DIY urban design tactics coupled with compassionate strategies by the state—inclusion of unhoused individuals into decision-making processes that impact the regulation and design of shelters and public space—are required to reimagine hostile designs through the production of just public space designs.

In the next chapter, I reimagine hostile designs as just public space designs through dwellable inhabitance. Here, unhoused individuals hold decision-making power and the right to produce public spaces for life-sustaining activities when no reasonable alternatives exist.

CHAPTER 7

Reimagining hostile designs as just public space designs: DIY city planning and urban design recommendations

Houseless residents often unknowingly located themselves within or were spatially coerced into expanding anti-homeless zones—sidewalks near shelters, parks with public restrooms, and streets near clinics and food pantries. These zones were often imperceptible to them. Sidewalks, parks, and streets were adjacent to life-sustaining infrastructure like restrooms, food pantries, showers, harm reduction services, and shade. However, as the “pull of services and the push of anti-homeless laws” attracted residents to particular locations (Hennigan & Speer, 2019, p. 916), hostile designs encouraged DIY responses and communities became targets for criminalization when they began organizing and constructing self-sustaining amenities that the city used to provide and then took away. Anecdotal evidence from all four communities hinted at reasons why bathrooms, showers, and sanitation services were provided and then taken away. These amenities were initially provided because of the growth in unsheltered homelessness near shelters and complaints from housed residents and businesses about trash and human waste. The communities were unsure why these services stopped being provided but suggested that the city didn’t want to make the general public think that they were incentivizing homelessness in public spaces. They stated that the same housed residents and businesses were complaining about the visibility of the encampments and that this visibility made local city councilmembers look bad, so they took hygiene and sanitation infrastructure permanently away. Instead of learning from these coping and survival strategies to enhance social and spatial rights to the city, the city responds criminalizing and demolishing them, as evidenced by the painting of the traffic-calming crosswalk and its removal three days later in Van Nuys. In this chapter, I draw from my

conversations with unhoused residents and photographs of DIY urban design interventions to rethink how hostile designs can become just public space designs. Grounded in the grassroots responses to hostile designs by unhoused residents, and in conversation with my just public design framework, I recommend city planning and urban design solutions that can help produce a city without all forms of revanchism.

Prospects for just public spaces

Percy, an elderly African American man who had been displaced from a vacant public space triangle after setting up a semi-permanent structure where he could rest and do his art, spoke to me on the Venice Boardwalk. From his understanding of zoning, his occupation of the leftover grassy triangle was unclaimed land that he had a right to build upon, since private property owners had theirs. As he describes:

That leaves little spaces between them, those little islands, and strips of land. What I'm saying is that those are unclaimed residential and/or commercial private properties. Unclaimed. You could develop them. You could beautify them. Then put a bed down. I think as people of color, we should have the right to develop those spaces within your cities that you zoned off and lotted off in square feet.¹¹⁶

After NIMBY harassment and demolition of his shack, he lamented, “I have no space to do anything like lay down and do artwork. Just no space at all. They took the sidewalks. They put those fake flowerbeds and cactus beds to keep people from laying down. That ain’t right.”¹¹⁷ After talking with him, I walked back to my car and noticed a neon sign outside of a commercial office building in Venice that read: “It won’t be like this forever.” Ironically, a closer look

¹¹⁶ personal communication, February 11, 2023

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

revealed a surveillance camera and planter with cacti that represent a hostile design entangled in the broader political economy of anti-homelessness in LA (Figure 17).



Figure 17. It (hostile designs) won't be like this forever. Photograph by Christopher Giamarino.

Hostile designs within and across shelters and public spaces materialize in myriad forms, including prison-like shelter spaces fenced off with stringent rules, anti-homeless regulations and no-go zones, ad-hoc harassment by housed residents and the police, fenced off parks, and closed restrooms, among other things. Together, they represent an urban design injustice by shrinking unhoused people's socio-spatial rights to public space. In what follows, I integrate the local planning and design knowledge from unhoused residents into policy and design recommendations that strive toward public space design justice. I propose process- and outcome-based design solutions that reimagine urban space to be less hostile toward unhoused residents. Thinking through a comprehensive just public space design framework, I advocate for "dwellable inhabitation" that transforms the unsympathetic signifier of "It won't be like this forever" into a socio-spatial reality and right to the city for unhoused residents. To echo, "dwellable inhabitation" is a capability afforded through regulation and urban design, which allows individuals to appropriate public space so that they can partake in life-sustaining activities (e.g., sleeping and eating), when no accessible or reasonable alternatives exist. As evidenced from my critique of hostile designs within shelters and across public spaces, there is limited access to reasonable alternatives that beget DIY urban designs and everyday socio-spatial tactics. Grounded in the voices, experiences, and demands of unhoused residents involved in this research, I recommend just public space designs that reimagine hostile public spaces as sites of dwellable inhabitation.

It is important to note that there is no one-stop planning and design solution for public spaces to be less hostile to unhoused communities given the diversity of people experiencing homelessness by age, race, and gender, and fluidity of dwelling type. The just public space design framework that I conceptualized in Chapter 2 offers the city of LA the flexibility to

employ contextualized regulatory and design solutions, as opposed to what they are doing now: placing strangers with different needs into the same shelters, criminalizing evicted individuals and families, and subjecting them to hostile designs in public spaces. As will become evident, these just public space design propositions are interconnected. For example, reopening public spaces and providing restrooms and shower services—a form of distributive justice, can aid in destigmatizing unhoused individuals based on their renewed ability to maintain basic hygiene—a form of recognitional justice. My recommendations strive for dwellable inhabitance. As discussed by two of my interviewees, Patrick and Dexter, “Livable space for an actual human person.”¹¹⁸ “How would I design it? Just a little more humane with a little more focus on being humane to people, and not closing off all the avenues where it forces them to use the alleys.”¹¹⁹ DIY urban design tactics by unhoused residents are creative, unsanctioned private residential and community-based reappropriations in response to the hostile designs that take away life-sustaining infrastructure, access to public space, and socio-spatial rights to the city.

Unlike “intentionally functional and civic-minded ‘contributions’ or ‘improvements’” (Douglas, 2014, p. 6)—community libraries built by privileged, educated people that are deemed legitimate by cities (Douglas, 2018), these coping and survival tactics are often criminalized and demolished because they reconfigure public spaces for private and community-based uses. Instead of demolition, learning from DIY urban designs by unhoused residents involves defending and reopening public spaces, institutions, and life-sustaining amenities that were taken away through enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances and hostile designs. The propositions below are broad recommendations grounded in the voices of unhoused residents I spoke with

¹¹⁸ Patrick, personal communication, January 8, 2023

¹¹⁹ Dexter, personal communication, January 22, 2023

that will lead to object-oriented (outcome) and subject-based (process) dwellable inhabitance. By learning from unhoused communities' DIY urban designs, whereby they furnish themselves private housing solutions and community-based infrastructure, cities can work to expand access to life-sustaining infrastructure and services when no reasonable alternatives exist.

Distributive justice in public space

Distributive justice refers to design outcomes that redistribute public amenities and infrastructure goods in cities and regions and capabilities to access them to produce a more equitable distribution of social amenities, infrastructure, and resources in the built environment. To recollect, each space and community was dealing with relational hostile designs extending out from shelters into public spaces that pushed and pulled them to different public spaces. The fence around Echo Park Lake controls who enters the park, the greenbelt in Harbor City and adjacent parking lot have been closed to housed and unhoused residents, the Metro parking lots near the Van Nuys encampment are also securitized with fencing, and the park across the public library where unhoused residents in Venice come to use the restroom and charge their devices is fenced off. For unhoused residents like Cassandra, publicly accessible spaces like Metro lots and parks should be “very accessible and open to all,” and can be places to provide services:

I am someone that believes and will always believe in parks, and parks are utilized to some degree, but not to the extent that they could be incredible hubs for distribution. They can be schools, things for people that live on the sidewalks who would prefer to live in a place where there is greenspace. I think it makes a lot of sense that people would seek parks out. It would be better to live here than it is on the sidewalk for so many reasons. But I really think that parks could be sites for distributive justice. Parks are amazing. We all care about them. I think they could definitely be utilized to serve needs, but also the things that people desired around feeling safe, and I remember when I was younger, I would take a lot of classes at the park. And that was an awesome place.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ personal communication, January 6, 2023

Each structure builder was involved in the production of informal housing and community infrastructure, which is a growing phenomenon in California that traditional planning regulations and design guidelines do not permit (Wegmann & Mawhorter, 2017). They reappropriated public spaces for quasi-public necessities and land uses. This redistribution of public spaces and amenities could be accomplished through a reopening and de-fencing of underutilized parking lots, parks, and the life-sustaining infrastructure within and surrounding them (i.e., public libraries, restrooms, electricity, and Wi-Fi). Simon, an unhoused resident who lived near Dwight’s RV in Venice with his friends Yazid and Clifford, succinctly recommended three resources that communities needed, “power, heating, water.”¹²¹ Additionally, almost every person I spoke to requested that public spaces have more restrooms, trash services, and hygiene infrastructure like wash stations and showers. In Echo Park Lake and Van Nuys, DIY hygiene infrastructure like wash stations were put in place during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, but then were taken away by the city. Drawing on literature from the Global South, residents were not only calling for the right to construct informal housing but also for an expanded right to sanitation infrastructure in response to “infrastructural inequality and exclusion” (i.e., hostile designs) to maintain basic health and hygiene (Speer, 2016, p. 1051).

Having access to a reliable, safe power source allows people stay connected and remember medical appointments, job interviews, and apply for services like Safe Parking Programs or interim shelters. As one of his neighbors was just recently electrocuted and severely burned in an electrical fire, Austin pointed to the fenced off Metro parking lot behind his tent as a potential site for renewable power and safe power outlets:

¹²¹ personal communication, February 4, 2023

With all the power that we have in this world, why haven't they got a solar system right here, or solar system covering this lot here. Okay, and then they got these panels right here. And then you can go ahead and string your power line from there. Why haven't they done that yet? But they're talking about how if we harnessed the power from the photovoltaics world, we can power the world for the rest of his existence. Figure that out.¹²²

Public libraries, usually open to general public, like the one in Venice that Jake was barred from entering because he sat outside to shield himself from the rainstorms under the awning are also spaces that should be accessible to unhoused residents. Research on libraries does note that librarians and other patrons may occasionally experience conflicts with unhoused patrons, so each branch has its own rules for proper behavior that are enforced (Klinenberg, 2018). Notwithstanding these rare conflicts, social infrastructure like libraries provide charging stations, restrooms, and computer access that other private places like coffee shops and shelters may fail to provide due to financial and entry barriers. They can even act as heating and cooling stations during harsh climatological conditions.

Wallace, who had lived in Echo Park Lake, explained that having knowledge of and access to dependable locations for services and a safe place to dwell made life easier:

There just needs to be a place that people can come to and have everything taken care of right there. You know, because otherwise, it's hit or miss. I could only get one thing done a day. Today I can't go get food supplies because I have to take a shower today. And I have to get my tent today because somebody threw it out so I can't find a place to put the tent.¹²³

He called for public spaces to have kitchen spaces, community gardens, showers, and supplies with outreach teams providing other services, donations, and housing assistance. In a more decentralized form of distributive justice, Pierce and Justine had innovative ideas for food

¹²² personal communication, February 2, 2023

¹²³ personal communication, January 27, 2023

distribution and how to address the public restroom crisis. Pierce, like Wallace, liked to cook and had knowledge about DIY community fridges. To address hunger, he proposed:

Just a community fridge where you just come and go. That was a DIY solution that people just put together. If the city wanted to not co-opt but just make them more prevalent so that there's a community fridge on every corner. People shouldn't be going hungry. There's more than enough food to go around. Finding ways to make that accessible would be good.¹²⁴

Justine wished that businesses, restaurants, housed residents, and politicians would not cite public health, sanitation and hygiene, and the general welfare of the public to criminalize unhoused people. From her experiences with gender-based violence, she also called for 24/7 security and maintenance of the restrooms.

What is proactive? Toilets! Number one. Have so many that they're all clean. Because when it's raining, the homeless go in there and sleep and do drugs. You got to have security going around checking on the toilets and making sure people aren't getting raped around the toilets. But if there's so many of them, it's not going to be a targeted spot. But that's what it was over on 3rd. It was the only place to go to the bathroom at one point. It will be a benefit to everybody, including restaurants, everything, all businesses.¹²⁵

Morris, aka “Grandpa,” thought about his wife’s struggle to walk late at night from their encampment in Harbor City to use the restroom. A few years prior, the parking lot and greenbelt were accessible, porta-potties and trash service were provided to keep their spaces clean, and CARE + showers came every so often. “It'd be better if we had an area where we could just have showers that we could use daily. This spot is so empty. We should have a shower and restrooms. She has to walk super far.”¹²⁶ Closing down restrooms, fencing off parks, taking away access to

¹²⁴ personal communication, January 30, 2023

¹²⁵ Personal communication, February 4, 2023

¹²⁶ personal communication, February 5, 2023

power is not going to solve homelessness, it is just going to motivate people to partake in DIY urban design interventions As Philip notes:

Alright, so I want to recognize that people are more capable than we give them credit for. So, if you think we're just going to shut down all the bathrooms, and people are going to dislike it, and then they're just going to magically leave. That's just bad policy. That's just making it so that somebody who wants to use the bathroom has a harder time using the bathroom, and then it lowers the bar for somebody who's not going to think the problem through to just take a crap on the street, right? So, you can't say, 'Oh, we're just going to make it harder and take away all of the outlets. When there's no plugs, then people are just going to leave Venice magically'. No, they're not going to do that. What they're going to do is they're going to start taking apart the bikes that were brought here that's got big batteries in them. And then like all of those companies are just going to get their batteries stolen, because people realize, 'Oh my God, the outlets just like the prong, we can just plug right in there and just keep that charging'.¹²⁷

Here, distributive injustice is a lack of social and spatial access to rights, amenities that housed residents have in their private homes, and capabilities to move between and use private and public spaces. Distributive justice in public spaces would be the dependable provision of toilets, kitchens, showers, feelings of security, and designated places to dwell for unhoused residents. Learning from DIY urban design interventions and formally providing them in spaces where unhoused communities develop would shrink the expansion of anti-homeless zones and their attendant hostile designs in public spaces, which include fences around public spaces, as well as soft controls like taking away restrooms, hygiene infrastructure, and trash services and hard controls like police harassment. Public spaces like underutilized public transit lots, parks, and public institutions (i.e., libraries) can serve as centralized places for people to access power, Wi-Fi, heating and cooling, restrooms and sanitation/hygiene infrastructure, and bare necessities like food, water, and shelter.

¹²⁷ personal communication, January 22, 2023

Procedural justice in public space

Procedural justice indicates design processes that ensure that unhoused individuals are well represented and have a voice in creating urban form by actively promoting participation and collaborative decision-making. Following Arnstein's (1969) useful typology of citizen participation in urban planning and design decision-making processes, presently, unhoused residents' "participation" or power in influencing the regulations and designs across shelters and public spaces falls between therapy and consultation (Figure 18). Therapy as a mode of public participation treats unhoused individuals as powerless and unfit (reproducing stereotypes of substance use and mental health issues) to be engaged with, while consultation may involve unhoused residents in decision-making processes but not actually incorporate their local knowledge or DIY urban designs into formal regulations or public space design outcomes.

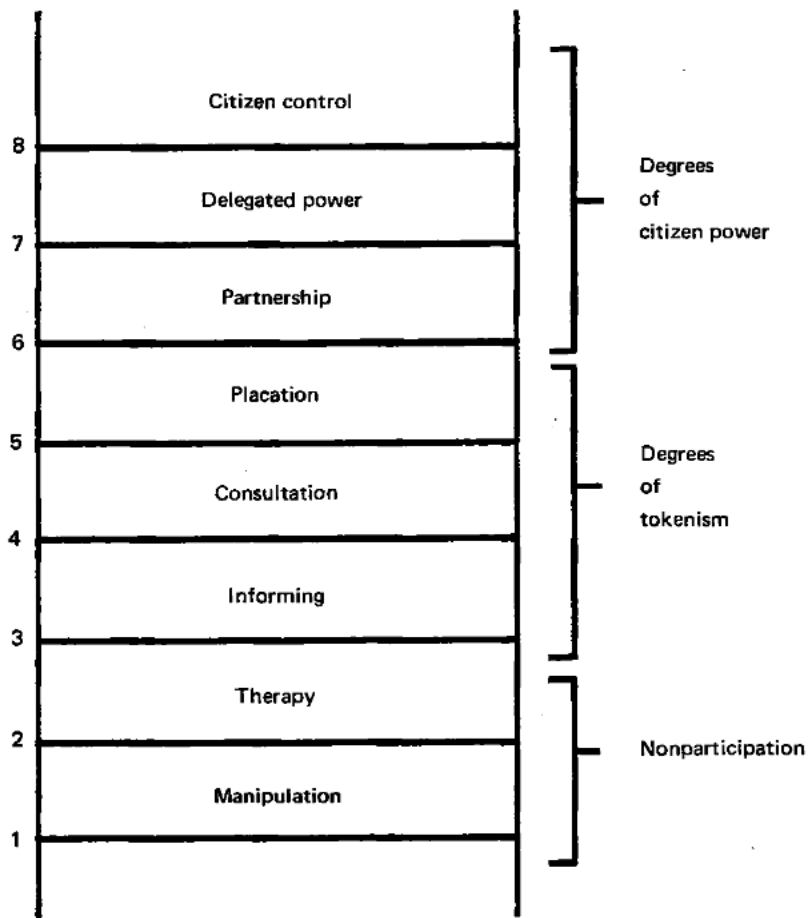


FIGURE 2 *Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation*

Figure 18. A typology of procedural justice in planning and design (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217)

In the case of Percy, who was told by a housed resident that he could construct his own shelter on a grassy triangle, and then that person called the cops and sanitation for a targeted sweep that demolished his house and discarded his art, he was falsely presented with a sense of decision-making power when in fact, he did not possess any (manipulation). For many residents who were placed into the hostile designs of shelters, evicted, and lived within anti-homeless zones with hostile public space designs, they were situated on the therapy and informing rungs. Therapeutic approaches treated unhoused individuals as unfit to participate in decision-making

processes or simply informed them through a one-way flow of information that they either accept shelter or move from a public space in order to avoid arrest. Stringent rules, rehabilitative motives, dehumanizing designs target the symptoms of one becoming unhoused (i.e., mental health, incarceration for violating a quality-of-life ordinance, substance use). During ad hoc police sweeps, flyers are often taped near encampments and sanitation and outreach workers inform unhoused residents that they must move during the scheduled “clean-up” day. As it currently stands, decision-making processes regarding the regulations and designs across shelters and public spaces delegate little to no room for unhoused representation and vocal power. Just city planning and urban design decision-making processes would relinquish power to those with on-the-ground knowledge, listen to their needs and demands, and incorporate them into public space regulations and design outcomes.

The DIYers and structure builders that I met and conversed with possess invaluable grassroots planning and design knowledge as well as lived experience with the hostile designs of shelters and public spaces. Having centralized places with services, life-sustaining amenities, and shelter in public spaces for unhoused people can also function as sites of procedural justice, where the city and outreach workers could go talk to people and improve the regulatory and service landscape for unhoused communities. These public spaces could also reinforce the social and political functions of ongoing activism and DIY urban designs. As Cassandra advances, policy should be “grounded in people who are unhoused and a big part of that is more than just meeting the needs and organizing for political power, it’s having a say in really big policy that’s mainly designed to punish people.”¹²⁸ Similarly, Pierce believes the planning and design of shelters and public spaces can be improved by learning from DIY, by “working hands on with

¹²⁸ personal communication, January 6, 2023

people who are the most affected, who are creative, and have the most to gain and the most to lose to build these things and get them going.”¹²⁹ He also told me that by paying attention to what is built, the city can learn about what is possible in efforts to create more inclusive, compassionate public spaces for unhoused communities.^{xlvii}

Unhoused individuals are not asking for much. As June stated:

We're not fighting for something grand and big. We're fighting for access to the city. We're fighting for the same rights that they have, which is to go home in peace to know that we're going to have a roof over their head, and the kids are going to have meals in their stomachs.¹³⁰

Instead of demolishing tents, semi-permanent structures, hygiene infrastructure, recreational areas, bathrooms, or community showers, the city should halt their enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances because “these structures and tents that people build keep them alive. The structures are the only barriers, the only shelter they have from the elements that can kill them.”¹³¹ For example, the displacement of Echo Park Lake was described by June as a “political game of chess” where policymakers with decision-maker power and a powerful voice in homeless politics touted the sweep as a success, when in reality it shuffled people around and led to death, so that future communities were discouraged from materializing. As Justine stated for Venice, where the closure of public restrooms overnight was justified and legitimated through public health, sanitation, and general welfare discourse, “They’re brainwashing the people. They’re changing the language. So, who controls the narrative, controls the people.”¹³² However, as it becomes clear in my critique of hostile designs across shelters and public spaces, grounded

¹²⁹ personal communication, January 30, 2023

¹³⁰ personal communication, January 28, 2023

¹³¹ Belinda, personal communication, January 27, 2023

¹³² personal communication, February 4, 2023

in the lived experiences of unhoused residents, the city's failure to include unhoused residents into design charrettes and give them a powerful voice in decision-making processes regarding the regulation and design of these spaces, has reproduced homelessness and forced them to partake in DIY urban design tactics. At the encampment community in Harbor City, residents conveyed to me that they need more help because the sweeps coupled with the hostile designs produce the unsanitary conditions that reproduce stereotypes and justify the enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances. "They should help out this area instead of turning it into more of a dump."¹³³

What unhoused residents want is for "people to think things through for the poor. Find out the humane possibilities for people, and not try to cut off all these avenues."¹³⁴ Humane, livable design is possible if the city involves unhoused residents in decision-making processes, giving them citizen control. This would require outreach workers, architects, politicians, and other policymakers to come and talk with communities. Treating the diverse unhoused population in LA as a monolith, designing interim shelters with inadequate services where complete strangers with different needs dwell side-by-side, depriving men, women, and LGBTQIA+ individuals of access to private restrooms and showers with better security, implementing stringent rules that fail to take into account the unique needs of the population, and criminalizing their existence outside in public spaces when shelter supply is inadequate reflect procedural injustice. As Philip advocates for, "We need to have a more effects-oriented triage of how to deal with the people who are living out here."¹³⁵ To demonstrate the benefits of outreach workers, decision-makers, and policymakers (i.e., urban designers, architects, and politicians) visiting encampment communities and learning from unhoused residents to design service and

¹³³ Chase, personal communication, February 5, 2023

¹³⁴ Dexter, personal communication, January 22, 2023

¹³⁵ personal communication, January 22, 2023

housing solutions for them, I close with a quote from Philip that encapsulates the failure of hostile designs in interim shelters that bleed out into LA's public spaces:

I feel like the biggest thing we can do to humanely go forward with decision making is to have more complete data. We have to be able to triage people more. He brought up the drug component of all this. We can put right next to the drug component, mental illness. We could also put next to that the people who came here perfectly fine, and then degraded over time because they're living in this condition. So, I feel like the way we could address humane design is to have more complete information as to who the population is. Then you can categorize access to care in some better definitions then trying to approach things in a one size fits all. Like every subsection of the population, this subsection of the population is not a monolith. There's a whole bunch of people from a whole bunch of different walks of life in mindsets that end up here. To try to solve it with one broad stroke is how we are missing so much of the people that could benefit from some of these policy decisions.¹³⁶

Fiona in Van Nuys and Nydia in Harbor City also called for more training of shelter staff to deal with mental health issues in order to treat people more compassionately instead of kicking them out onto the streets. Knowing what a person is dealing with can aid in providing that person the services and help they need. Outreach workers trained in mental healthcare services who are empathetic and compassionate would be more effective than police-led outreach. The lack of humane design for unhoused communities can be attributed to the city's failure to listen and learn from the occupation and production of public space, especially the construction of life-sustaining infrastructure and housing solutions that function as architectural stopgaps in response to hostile designs.

Interactional justice in public space

To attain interactional justice, design processes and outcomes must treat homeless individuals with dignity and make them feel welcome in the production and consumption of built form by

¹³⁶ personal communication, January 22, 2023

encouraging multiple users and activities to interact and share the public realm. Hester (2006) would call interactional design justice “enabling form.” Enabling form, functioning to achieve interactional justice for unhoused communities, brings unfamiliar groups together in public spaces and facilitates interactions and collaborations to address complex problems like hostile designs that reproduce homelessness.

Former residents of Echo Park Lake, as well as unhoused residents across the four neighborhoods with knowledge of the former autonomous tent city, considered the community a model of interactional justice. As Alex recalls, as we sat in the park where he formerly lived and was violently displaced from just two years prior:

What people built here was special. Anybody could come here from anywhere in the world and find a place where they could sit down, relax, and be alive. Do whatever they wanted, whatever they desired to do. Whether it was walk around, sing with somebody, and play their guitar with somebody. It was a resource that provided anything anybody needed to survive. I would love to see that more. It happened here and it's not the first time it happened. When people can come together, build in public spaces, whether it's a park or even just on the side of the freeway, or on sidewalks, it can be done. Whether it's a sidewalk, whether it's a park, you can have communities build homes for themselves and thrive, have dignity, have respect, and have each other. I would love to see the city and the state use that as a model and find real solutions from that.¹³⁷

The Echo Park case corresponds to fluctuations in LA’s broader socio-spatial management strategy of homelessness during COVID-19. The development of the Echo Park Lake DIY encampment community emerged during initial COVID-19 tolerance of encampment formation before it was demolished through the re-enforcement of anti-homeless regulations and implementation of hostile designs. In less punitive urban contexts, tolerance has led to complementary policy solutions like sanctioned encampments that provide additional services and outreach where communities have previously built their DIY shelters and spaces (Orr et al.,

¹³⁷ personal communication, January 28, 2023

2023). During this ongoing period of post-COVID-19 neo-revanchism (cf. Giamarino & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2023), the reconfiguration of public space through DIY urban design tactics is criminalized and public space for dwelling is shrinking.

Feeling welcome in the production and consumption of built form afforded unhoused individuals across each community to feel dignity, respect, and a sense of community. While the enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances and formal city outreach ceased during the beginning of COVID-19, interactional justice was temporarily tolerated, which gave people citizen control (procedural justice) in planning and designing a central place with the services, necessities, and life-sustaining infrastructure they needed (distributive justice). As vaccines were administered and the city reopened socially, politically, and spatially, DIY urban design interventions and everyday socio-spatial tactics were criminalized and demolished, and unhoused residents were limited in their ability to interact in and share the public realm. Parks near libraries, publicly accessible restrooms, and underutilized parking lots were fenced off and closed. Residents in Echo Park, Harbor City, Van Nuys, and Venice were pushed from these spaces to interstitial areas. They also had ideas on how cities could encourage the equitable production and consumption of built form. Doing so can strengthen the social and political functions of public spaces, while also providing much-needed services to unhoused communities when no reasonable alternatives exist.

Camille and Tammy, unhoused residents in Van Nuys, referenced campgrounds as a solution. While Camille and I smoked cigarettes in her friend's RV, she recommended the conversion of the Metro parking lot into a Safe Parking site and campground. "You'll never see too many cars parked out here. I'm sure they can find other places to park. They can make this

whole area out here for the homeless.”¹³⁸ For residents without access to a vehicle, Tammy suggested that closed parking lots do nothing for anybody except create more heat for unhoused residents. She recommended digging up the asphalt and turning the parking lot into a campground. Austin, a structure builder living near Tammy, recommended that the city provide supervised restrooms, showers, a first aid/harm reduction station, and designated spaces with piles of wood for residents to build their own structures in the same lot. The geographical strength of locations like Metro stations and popular parks is that unhoused communities could rely on public transit and centralized services and shelter opportunities, while having control over what their space looks like in waiting for opportunities to transition into housing.

For a more robust production and consumption of built form, the city of LA could learn about the DIY urban design interventions in response to hostile designs across shelters and public spaces and collaborate with unhoused residents and mutual aid organizers to build “transitional” and/or “affordable” villages in underutilized parking/vacant lots (McCormick & Village Collaborative, 2023). through 63.44, based in Eugene, Oregon, has created a more humane, livable tiny home village model with DIY guides for the physical, economic, and social elements of what these centralized hubs can become. Physically, these villages are clustered around community spaces and offer the privacy of a single-family home with the advantages of dense urban living. Economically, their model is cheaper than building a traditional apartment complex. Socially, unhoused residents who reside here are given greater autonomy in accessing rights to privacy and ownership through cooperative and community land trust (CLT) models. Their website has information on how to establish housing co-ops and community land trusts, and how to allow unhoused residents to participate in the construction of their own housing to

¹³⁸ Camille, personal communication, February 9, 2023

have citizen control over the design or choice in design. To establish a co-op model, the shared owners lease from a CLT, have affordable leases, operate maintenance at true cost, and make decisions democratically. To establish a CLT model, a nonprofit leases land usually for 99-year leases, stewards the land for permanent affordability, and provides training resources for residents to establish a co-operative ownership structure. The operating costs are less than those of LA's short-term interim shelter programs and can lead to permanent ownership by unhoused residents if an "affordable" village model is implemented. These village models are likely to cause the least amount of conflict in underutilized places where unhoused residents I spoke to live, including vacant lots and underutilized parking lots.^{xlviii}

In other cases, community infrastructure and public life-sustaining amenities like restrooms could enliven public spaces and provide opportunities for housed and unhoused residents to share the public realm. Damon and Josephine set up chairs outside of their camper on the periphery of Echo Park Lake to create a pop-up social space to hang out with friends and share drinks with their housed neighbors. As Josephine noted:

We always have our camp chairs out. Last night, some friends came over and we hung out and talked and had a few beers and that was nice. Kind of feels like this is our little front porch. We have a lake right out in front of our front doors, which is nice.¹³⁹

In doing so, they were able to access and use their neighbors' garbage bins. By feeling welcome in sharing the public streets and park with others, Damon stated that residents have treated him like he is their neighbor. "They just came out and treated me as though I lived in the building like I was just a neighbor. Nobody's really complained about it. I use their garbage cans."¹⁴⁰ For Damon, this treatment is likely the result of his homeless housing typology, which

¹³⁹ personal communication, February 8, 2023

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

is a legal camper van, as well as his purposeful interactions with police and nearby housed residents to let them know that he and his girlfriend are peaceful and respectful of the neighborhood. The Harbor City community, as Nydia described to me, had built tables where they could eat food because the dirt road that they had been pushed to was too dusty. Therefore, minor design interventions like taking down fences, placing street furniture, and maintaining the cleanliness of public restrooms can create opportunities for enabling form.

Recognitional justice in public space

Recognitional justice means that design processes and outcomes ought to prioritize the cultural claims of homeless individuals by recognizing diverse users and activities in the public realm. For unhoused residents, the unsanctioned nature of their DIY urban design tactics that reconfigured public space for private life-sustaining activities like shelter, cooking, and going to the bathroom attracted geographic targeting that led to their demolition. Despite some community-based infrastructure like kitchens, clothing swaps, and social and cultural activities, the reappropriation of public space was highly visible. Their publicness, the aesthetics of their structures (i.e., makeshift shelters on sidewalks or RVs on public streets), the discrimination experienced by unhoused BIPOC individuals, and stereotypes of the deserving vs. undeserving poor point to recognitional injustice that leads to domination and oppression in realizing capabilities and rights to the city. When asking Patrick, an unhoused black man, how he would redesign public spaces to be more accommodating to the cultural claims of unhoused residents, he quickly replied, “There's nothing wrong with the spaces that they have for the public if I was treated like the public.”¹⁴¹ After losing his Mercedes sprinter van, he constructed a tent in a park

¹⁴¹ personal communication, January 8, 2023

in North Hollywood where he was targeted by police, arrested through 63.44 (overnight camping ban in public parks), and shuffled through periods of incarceration in jails and shelters before moving out onto the sidewalk near the Aetna ABH. This dwelling type fluidity is manufactured by the enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances and strengthened by the hostile designs embedded into shelters and public spaces. The bulky item provision of 63.44 was enforced and led to Patrick's arrest because the sanitation services offered by the city's Park's department stopped collecting trash, so his tent became targeted for a sweep. Quality-of-life ordinances are a key legal mechanism for the continued domination and oppression of unhoused individuals in public spaces. Therefore, eliminating police-led outreach and reimagining these laws was a focal point for those that I spoke to regarding recognitional justice.

Unhoused residents either advocated for the abolishment of quality-of-life ordinances or recommended that the penalties associated with them be eliminated. Alex, for instance, called for a constitutional right to public space if no other alternatives are available. "The idea that it should be coded into law that someone has the right to sleep at the park in a tent, I don't think that in and of itself is a crime or should be criminalized."¹⁴² California Senate Bill SCA9, first introduced in 2007 and yet to pass, calls for a state constitutional right to housing as a basic human right to attain a standard of living for normal health and well-being. Additionally, in 2018, the California Statewide Homeless Bill of Rights Campaign put forth a "Right To Rest Act" that was a social justice movement and "grassroots organizing campaign fighting to end the criminalization of poor and homeless people's existence" (California Right to Rest Act 2018, 2018). In an op-ed, Sam Lutzker (2021) has called for the city to stop giving people living in their vehicles citations, as it sets them back; as evidenced by my conversations, many unhoused

¹⁴² personal communication, January 28, 2023

residents have lost their vehicles due to citations and repossession, which puts them into more dangerous situations. Because the supply of short-term shelter and affordable housing options continues to fail to meet the demand of LA's growing homelessness crisis, these ordinances possess no legal legitimacy. Unhoused residents have called for designated places for people to camp and have taken to writing in local newspapers to describe the daily conditions they face when contending with these laws. Philip, for example, has written for *Free Venice Beachhead* to act as a liaison between his unhoused friends, housed residents, activists, and decision-makers to provide helpful strategies to avoid citations and sleep safely in one's vehicle. Unhoused residents also see that encouraging interactional justice can increase recognitional justice. As Belinda recommends:

Having a spot where the city tells them it's okay for them to exist, instead of all these places where they're told they're not allowed to exist makes more sense if we want to talk about addressing the problem. We want people to get services and there's so many people that don't get services because they work during the day and service providers come during the day.¹⁴³

Services can and should include restrooms, mobile showers, mental health treatment, opportunities to access harm reduction supplies, sanitation pickup, and places to set up, sit, and sleep. One key contradiction that came up across everyone I spoke too was the anti-drug stance and harm reduction. Harm reduction services like clean needles and supervised places to use are lifesaving, especially compared to the deadly, unsupervised hotels, motels, ABH sites, and Tiny Home villages. However, many residents like Austin in Van Nuys, Brooke in Harbor City, Dexter in Venice, and June in Echo Park Lake saw meth and fentanyl use as problematic and a key cause of stereotypes and criminalization of homelessness. Austin has had to administer

¹⁴³ personal communication, January 27, 2023

Narcan to reverse overdoses on friends due to fentanyl-laced drugs. While clean pipes and needles were being offered from a van in Harbor City, Brooke requested assistance entering rehabilitation. Dexter saw how meth spread through the Venice Boardwalk and created hazardous conditions for people trying to use the restrooms. June remembers having to clean up syringes next to the playground in Echo Park Lake. Destigmatizing and decriminalizing the right to rest and sleep in public spaces are necessary, and harm reduction services may be offered out of sight in central locations like Echo Park Lake or the Van Nuys Metro lot or peripheral locations like dirt alleyways in Harbor City or behind grocery stores in Venice where vehicle dwellers live, perhaps with transportation services for unhoused folks to access these more private, safe consumption spaces for drug use. Where, when, and how harm reduction services are administered in public spaces goes beyond the scope of this research, especially concerning recognitional justice.

The shower, restrooms, and hygiene infrastructure at Echo Park Lake were architectural interventions that addressed recognitional injustice. “You could meet somebody that's unhoused, and you wouldn't have known he was unhoused. Because he doesn't fit that picture that's painted of someone that hasn't showered, that smells, that lined up at the door trying to clean windshields.”¹⁴⁴ By demolishing or taking away restrooms, hygiene infrastructure, and trash service, public spaces become an “eyesore” (Nydia) and housed residents complain about the unsanitary and unsafe conditions, which lead to the erection of fences. However, as Nydia argues, “If you didn't feel safe? Why would I feel safe? I have to live there because that's the only place. What am I going to do? Put a camp in the median?”¹⁴⁵ Jake sharply ordered, “Take

¹⁴⁴ Alex, personal communication, January 28, 2023

¹⁴⁵ personal communication, February 5, 2023

down the fucking fences. Reopen them and put bathrooms, wash stations. They think that the homeless are dirty and nasty. But fuck we don't have nothing to throw our clothes into.”¹⁴⁶

Residents did acknowledge that spot cleaning may be necessary, but the way that sweeps are carried out leads to harassment and dispossession of all property. “The city, the state, the people, the police, they don't even try to see whether it's messy or not.”¹⁴⁷ Despite the lack of respect and harassment that unhoused residents face, they recognize that they need to share public space with other residents. People living in vehicles detailed that they would wait until nighttime when other people have parked to find a safe place to park. People living in tents also suggested that they were not bothering anyone by setting up shelter near a Metro station, near industrial land uses, or within public spaces. Although they recognized the need to respect certain laws and share public spaces with housed residents, hostile designs reproduced the perceived fears and public health conditions associated with homelessness in public spaces. Camille, an indigenous LGBTQIA+ RV dweller, claimed that perceived fears lead to judgment where, “People are like, ‘Oh, they're homeless’. It's kind of like a race war. Between people who aren't homeless and who are. It's like racism used to be. That's how it is. People are racist now against the homeless.”¹⁴⁸ Lincoln, thinking through recognitional justice, stated, “As far as justice-wise, you don't have to bother the homeless. You can just sit there. If the place is dirty, make them clean it. Don't throw our stuff away.”¹⁴⁹

“Good” design can accommodate the cultural activities of unhoused communities and strive for recognitional justice, but it is no “match for extreme ethnocentrism or xenophobia”

¹⁴⁶ personal communication, February 4, 2023

¹⁴⁷ Camille, personal communication, February 9, 2023

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ personal communication, January 19, 2023

(Hester, 2006, p. 187). DIY urban design interventions and everyday socio-spatial tactics are coping responses to the public health discourses embedded in each quality-of-life ordinance. As the city takes away opportunities through hostile designs, to use the restroom, maintain hygiene, and keep one's private residential and community spaces clean, it reproduces the conditions and stereotypes of homelessness that lead to the demolition of DIY constructions.

Care and repair in public space

To address public health concerns, sanitation and hygiene, and general welfare—the key discourses that those in power invoke to justify cleanups that lead to displacement, dispossession, and demolition—care and repair is realized when design processes and outcomes encourage unhoused individuals to maintain and steward public spaces, to peacefully co-exist with other participants, and reduce social conflicts. On the sidewalks near the Aetna ABH, longtime residents are often seen sweeping the sidewalks near their tents, placing trash into nearby receptacles, and maintaining a cleanly spot around their private residential infrastructure. However, I did notice that trash trucks drive by, and unhoused residents' trash cans still remain full. Fiona relayed to me that sanitation will only come and pick up designated trash bins and won't pick up unhoused person's trash they've placed in receptacles outside tents.¹⁵⁰ RV dwellers do the same to not attract unwanted police attention and harassment. As Pierce told me, he “recognized the city wasn't going to come,” so he had to justify his right to park in his RV. “I just got to get out and clean the street now.”¹⁵¹ June recalls formal outreach workers in Echo Park Lake asking her to pick up trash and needles:

¹⁵⁰ personal communication, January 26, 2023

¹⁵¹ personal communication, January 30, 2023

I would purposely make rounds around the park walking three, four times a day, picking up needles, disposing of hygienic stuff to the point where even LAHSA and the people that were coming here to help the people were coming to me and telling me, ‘Oh, here’s a red bin. If you see something, you collect it’. At a point, I was like, ‘Isn’t that your job?’”¹⁵²

The Echo Park Lake community cleanup model also created a jobs incentive program where residents were paid for cleaning duties each week and were incentivized with hot meals. Jake mentioned that a similar program could be implemented citywide, if public spaces are reopened and unhoused residents are paid to maintain them. As he cynically recommended:

I think if they opened them up and offered work, even cleaning the sidewalks. I see a lot of people doing that, going around sweeping the sidewalks. I think if they just give them something like that to do, something that gives them a little bit of pride and a little extra money in their pocket. I think it would help a lot. You know, they did it back in the 30s. They built all of our fucking interstates and shit like that after the war. We could do that. Yeah, again. This is a great country. It’s just a bunch of assholes running it.¹⁵³

Bridget, who was downsizing her closet out of her car via donations to neighbors, recommended sanitation services and supplies because she did not like the piling up of trash. “We need trash cans right here. So, all we do is bag our trash and stick it there. And sanitation does pick it up if they want to.”¹⁵⁴ Camille picks up trash even if it isn’t hers to illustrate that unhoused people are not actively producing dirty places that need to be swept. As she recalls:

I’ve seen where other people make a mess recycling. I’ll pick it up. And a guy looks at me saying, ‘What are you doing?’ I say, ‘I’m picking up this right here. I didn’t put it there’. He said, ‘I know you didn’t. Why are you picking it up?’ I said, ‘Because I don’t want everybody to think I did it. Whoever did it wasn’t thinking what they were doing and didn’t care. But I do care’. So, he gave me like 30 bucks that day just because. I didn’t ask for the money but thank you.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² personal communication, January 28, 2023

¹⁵³ personal communication, February 4, 2023

¹⁵⁴ personal communication, January 12, 2023

¹⁵⁵ personal communication, February 9, 2023

Anti-homeless ordinances and hostile designs create the conditions they purportedly aim to eradicate. As Nydia pointed to the fenced off park in Harbor City, she contended:

The amount of money that they pay for the sweeps and stuff like that could be spent better spent opening the park. I'm sure one sweep could pay for a month's worth of trash can services over there. One porta potty, two porta potties. Even if it's just to house for a temporary thing to house them. The sweeps are stupid. All they do is they come, they clean, and we come right back. We come right back because this is where we all started.¹⁵⁶

Complaints of piling up trash and people going to the bathroom in public spaces can and should be attributed to hostile designs. Sweeps, according to unhoused residents, produce more trash. Providing and then taking away restrooms and dumpsters produces more trash. The unsanitary conditions that legitimize sweeps, displacement, and demolition of DIY interventions materialize through the enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances and implementation of soft and hard controls. The money used for sweeps, should be used to implement just public space designs in dependable places where unhoused residents can dwell, access services, and, ideally, transition into housing without fear of displacement and dispossession.

Public space (homeless service) hubs

A recurring recommendation from residents I spoke to are public space hubs or dependable locations with better shelter rules and designs where they can sleep safely, build their own private residential and community infrastructure, access mental health and hygiene services, and, hopefully, transition to permanently, affordable housing. In this section, I consider two examples of hub: one where unhoused residents are given agency, rights, and a choice to use public spaces and access services, and one where unhoused residents are fenced into lots, patrolled by security,

¹⁵⁶ personal communication, February 5, 2023

and public funds are spent on short-term solutions to visibly hide growing unhoused populations. Thinking through just public space design, hubs can provide unhoused residents with access to helpful information regarding services and housing in places like parks. On the other hand, money can be siphoned away to third-party organizations that keep fences up and hem in DIY urban design interventions in controlled environments. Then, I consider the lessons that can be learned from the Echo Park Lake community and applied to other public spaces that I studied across all four neighborhoods, particularly the DIY urban design interventions that should be incorporated into the formal design of public spaces in LA.

Park as place-based provision: Learning from Woodruff Park in Atlanta, Georgia

In the Spring of 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, I attended a webinar hosted by the Project for Public Spaces. The talk centered around Woodruff Park, a central park located in downtown Atlanta, Georgia, the city's overcrowded shelters, shoddily constructed short-term shelters in vacant lots, and poorly managed hotels, and the potential for the park to connect people to services and housing without hostile designs (Madison, 2020). Through a private-public partnership, a placemaking and revitalization effort was pursued at the park to install a multifunctional mobile game cart that offers information, power stations to charge electronic and mobile devices, and other amenities for housed and unhoused park visitors. As part of Atlanta's citywide "housing first" approach, one of the webinar presenters, a case manager named Janika Robinson of HOPE Atlanta (a nonprofit service provider that seeks to end homelessness and hunger for every Georgian), frequented the park to establish relationships with unhoused park visitors and connect them with services and opportunities for housing. As a more compassionate, pop-up solution forged by a partnership with local Atlanta nonprofits and the Project for Public Spaces, the goal of the kiosk within this public space hub is to provide unhoused residents with

services, case managers, shelter options, and opportunities for housing without criminalization. This type of service model could be expanded in LA to include dependable pop-ups -- large transit hubs and parks with dependable services, life-sustaining amenities like bathrooms and showers, and spaces to rest when no reasonable alternatives exist in the city's interim shelter programs.

Hubs as hostile designs: Urban Alchemy's mass tent encampments

A controversial “hub” model that has popped up is the “mass tent encampment” in cities like LA and Portland. These sanctioned encampments are a less politically controversial model than constructing permanent shelter infrastructure (Orr et al., 2023). Essentially, tents are placed on top of pallets within fenced, securitized lots run by local service providers and third-party organizations with services. The hubs are controversial because of the amount of money they cost to operate and the organization that is contracted to run them: Urban Alchemy (UA). UA is a San Francisco-based nonprofit that has been hired in places like Skid Row to head street cleanups as well as ABH sites and Tiny Home villages. Former councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, the architect of the Echo Park Lake displacement, hired UA to supposedly provide sanitation services and housing to residents, but as became clear UA played a key role in supporting the police-led displacement. They are considered a “key broker of displacement” and operate as a “mercenary outfit” that shifts the focus of addressing the homelessness crisis away from the provision of affordable housing and political will to house people toward individual problems like mental health afflictions and concerns for the aesthetic conditions of public spaces (Roy et al., 2022, p. 124).

UA is notoriously a pro-cop organization having campaigned for pro-cop mayoral candidates locally in San Francisco, encouraged increases in police budgets, and carried out cop-

led displacements like the one in Echo Park Lake back in 2021 (Sam Lutzker [@SamLutzker], 2023a). Mass tent encampments can cost up to approximately \$5.1 million per year to operate a 150-person space with an additional \$400,000 upfront cost (N. Hayden, 2023). This amounts to \$34,000 per person or \$2,800 per person per month. Obviously, with this money, unhoused residents could afford a decently sized one-bedroom apartment in LA. Additionally, each encampment is surrounded by a 1,000-foot criminalization zone where sitting, sleeping, panhandling, and cooking are prohibited. This controversial hub model is an extension of ABH sites, Tiny Home villages, and SPPs, which include hostile designs that extend out into public spaces, thus shrinking the socio-spatial rights of unhoused residents based on offers to be placed in costly, short-term shelters or campsites. Utilizing public homelessness funds to improve the regulation and design of public space, drawing inspiration from the Woodruff Park pop-up example, and learning from Echo Park can help the city of LA transform hostile designs into just public space designs.

Was Echo Park Lake a just public space hub model?

Unhoused residents and organizers I spoke with had lived experience and knowledge of the rise and displacement of the Echo Park Lake tent city. For proponents of this model, the encampment temporarily enhanced autonomy, self-sufficiency, and capabilities for unhoused residents to realize dwellable inhabitation. Former residents were able to sleep safely, access sanitation and hygiene infrastructure, cook hot meals, and provide bare necessities when the city stopped conducting outreach during the height of COVID-19. It unfortunately was not a just public space model following the precepts of the just public space design framework. If it had been, the DIY urban design infrastructure would still be intact, unhoused residents in the park would have been included in decision-making processes regarding the regulation and fencing of the park, housed

and unhoused residents would have continued to share the public walkways and grass patches, the restrooms and hygiene infrastructure would have been maintained, and dependable sanitation and hygiene services would have been supplied daily. A just public space design process and outcome can be realized with the city's political and financial support, volunteerism and mutual aid organizing, and the creative grassroots DIY urban designs of private residential and community infrastructure by unhoused residents. Having a place to sit and sleep, go to the bathroom and shower to maintain personal hygiene, cook food, and build community is not a controversial model that should be criminalized.

Towards dwellable inhabitance: The role of city planners, urban designers, and policymakers in enacting 'just' public space

As Edward Soja (2010) conceptualized, spatial justice is the fair and equitable distribution of socially valued resources (i.e., public goods and spaces) and realizable opportunities and capabilities to access them. Hostile regulations and designs of shelters and public spaces dehumanize and criminalize unhoused residents' ability to access public goods, spaces, and services by not considering that they have inequitable access to dwell in private spaces like apartments and homes. The broad recommendations above, following just public space design propositions advanced by unhoused residents, can best be implemented through "co-design" (Sendra, 2023). Co-design is a participatory process and design collaboration that addresses power imbalances between decision-makers like city planners, urban designers, and policymakers, marginalized groups like unhoused populations, and housed residents and businesses who often possess power in how public space should be regulated, designed, and used. Co-design gives unhoused residents control and honors their DIY planning and design knowledge in producing public spaces. It is a tripartite process and practice involving "collective

thinking, creating partnerships, and addressing power imbalances” (Sendra, 2023, p. 5).

Collective thinking requires urban planners, urban designers, and policymakers to create time to go to unhoused communities, facilitate participation, and learn from past mistakes through DIY urban design interventions as coping responses to hostile designs. Creating partnerships reduces the oppressive and time-consuming demands involved in constructing capabilities to access bare necessities and partake in life-sustaining activities.

Just public space designs require decision-making processes that give power to unhoused residents (Lake, 2017) and built environment outcomes that are equitable, democratic, and diverse (Fainstein, 2011). Learning from the conflicts and contradictions of private and community-based DIY urban design will challenge “design professionals to balance expertise-driven design strategies with locally derived social and cultural values that may or may not match perfectly with innovative techniques employed to generate more equitable, sustainable, and efficient places” (Lowery & Schweitzer, 2019, p. 507). The current governance strategies by politicians, service providers and outreach organizations, shelters, city planners, and urban designers need to learn from the ad-hoc DIY design tactics of unhoused individuals in order to produce more equitable public spaces. This requires the state to collaborate with, co-design, and accommodate unhoused communities’ DIY urban design tactics into formal decision-making processes and practices affecting regulatory and design outcomes of public space. The adoption of a hybridized radical planning and design approach citywide should blend the benefits of DIY urban design infrastructure with the positive aspects of compassionate revanchism (i.e., more shelters, expanded services) to produce just public spaces that enhance one’s ability to dwell, access services, and voluntarily enter shelter if they so choose. Accommodating established DIY urban design infrastructure and learning from DIY urban design tactics to provide public space

amenities and services requires the state to manage the social, political, and spatial conflicts that will arise when endorsing just public space designs.

To enact just urban design in public space, it is important to consider the myriad contradictions proffered by unhoused structure builders and critically rethink the roles of city planners, urban designers, and policymakers. Together, they will have to work as regulatory and design experts, intermediaries between vested stakeholders, and architects of public knowledge concerning legal amendments and design interventions that accommodate or learn from DIY urban design tactics. Accommodation signifies the tolerance and incorporation of structures built by unhoused residents. Learning from indicates the formal provision of sanitation infrastructure and places to dwell by the city.

DIY urban design recommendations produced innumerable contradictory statements from structure builders. For public restrooms, structure builders called for increased security by police, while others suggested that communities could self-police this sanitation infrastructure. Structure builders with lengthier lived experience being unhoused possessed more tacit planning and design knowledge in hacking infrastructure and building private residential infrastructure in public spaces, while newer structure builders were more likely to engage in unlawful (i.e., in violation of quality-of-life ordinances according to the City of LA Municipal Code) community-based DIY urban design activities like the construction of basketball courts on heavily-trafficked streets or the establishment of bike mechanic shops. Structure builders who had experienced violence in public spaces by the police or NIMBY vigilantes or had their structures demolished and property dispossessed wanted access to shelter spaces in hopes of receiving services and opportunities to transition into housing, while other resistant structure builders wanted the right to occupy public land and spaces to build shelter from the bottom-up. The safe use of drugs and

variations in mental health were also contentious subjects among structure builders. While some wanted safe sites to consume drugs, others wanted it completely out of their community. Structure builders acknowledged the toll that living in public spaces took on mental health, especially if a person did not possess tacit DIY planning and design knowledge of regulations and architectural skills. They suggested that a key role of outreach should be to target unhoused residents with mental health issues for placement into Tiny Homes, A Bridge Home shelters, and motel and hotel rooms. Acknowledging these innumerable contradictions in policy and design recommendations, I consider the roles that policymakers, city planners, and urban designers could play to enact just public space designs.

The role of homeless service organizations, public agencies, city planners, and urban designers should broadly be to conduct outreach, facilitate public participation between housed and unhoused residents, and enact socially, spatially, and politically contentious just public space designs. While there is a need to consider multiple perspectives to ensure democratic, inclusive decision-making processes and outcomes that will shape who can and cannot use public space, and for what purposes, the homelessness crisis is growing and there is a need to rethink how outreach is conducted, who has power in amending public space regulations, and how public space should be redesigned and function.

For outreach, the role of homeless service providers should be to conduct unarmed service outreach with sanitation workers and trained mental health and crisis management professionals. Instead of spending millions of dollars a year on street cleanups and police sweeps that push encampments to unknown public spaces, this money would be better spent on dependable mental health and hygiene service provision in public spaces, trash pickup, bathroom and shower access, and the voluntary ability to choose to either move into a shelter if bed space

is available or stay put. These services could be centrally provided at public kiosks strategically placed in public spaces with growing unhoused populations. Here, the role of homeless service providers and public sanitation agencies would be to ensure an expanded right to dwell in public space and to access sanitation infrastructure (Speer, 2016). Care and repair justice can be enacted by a rethinking of the role of outreach, but the tacit knowledge of city planners as mediators in decision-making processes that impact the regulation, zoning, and use of public spaces is required to work toward procedural and recognitional injustice.

The actionable role of city planners should be to accommodate a plurality of users and activities in public spaces by facilitating decision-making processes that reimagine the zoning and regulation of public spaces. City planning is a reflective practice that requires planners to mediate contentious debates in public participation hearings while they happen, learn from the outcomes of legislative amendments (i.e., abolition of quality-of-life ordinances, the taking down of the fence at Echo Park Lake, the rezoning of public parking lots or parks for mixed uses like dwelling) after hearings conclude, and subject private assumptions and stigmatizations to public tests to inform and reassure the general public that democratic decisions have produced desired results for public space use (Schon, 1983). Presently, unhoused residents are overlooked or tokenized in public hearings affecting their use of public space for life-sustaining activities. An example of how these processes can be effectively mediated comes from the recent de-fencing of Echo Park Lake. Hugo Soto-Martínez, the City Councilmember of District 13 where Echo Park Lake is located, released a public statement concerning the removal of the fence that both responded to calls by advocates to decriminalize being unhoused in parks and ensured housed residents that unarmed professionals would monitor the park to offer people services and shelter (*Our Statement on the Removal of the Fence Surrounding Echo Park Lake*, 2023). City planners

will have to make value judgments to intervene and ensure that unhoused residents have the power to influence legislation and amend regulations that target them for criminalization. Another key intervention could be zoning text amendments to LA's zoning code for temporary or permanent rezoning of public spaces to accommodate DIY urban designs, dwelling, and community infrastructure as suitable mixed uses. While regulations can work to enact procedural and recognitional justice, design interventions are necessary to secure distributive and interactional justice.

Urban designers, be they landscape architects tasked with redesigning public spaces or architects in charge of shelter designs, should relinquish their design expertise and work with unhoused structure builders to accommodate or learn from their myriad DIY urban design interventions. Knowing what rights to housing and infrastructure have been communicated through the construction of private and communal infrastructure can work to address the hostile relationship between hostile designs in shelters and public spaces and DIY urban designs. Design interventions could be mutable pieces of smaller infrastructure or larger, permanent amenities. Parks should have public restrooms and showers monitored by unarmed outreach workers, more seating and shade, places to cook, and public space hubs for individuals seeking services and shelter. After rethinking regulations and zoning, larger parks and underused public parking lots could even have designated places where one could lay down and/or construct a private structure. These places would also give mutual aid organizations dependable locations to continue to provide hygiene supplies, hot meals, and harm reduction and healthcare services. By providing programmatic, mutable amenities for and opportunities for DIY construction by unhoused residents in public spaces, distributive and interactional justice can be practiced. Together, it will take partnerships between mutual aid organizations, formal service provider

agencies, city planners, urban designers, policymakers, housed residents, and unhoused residents to enact just public space designs.

As Sorkin (2018, p. 210) recognizes while considering the ingenuity and impossibility dialectic of informal, grassroots constructions of private residential and community infrastructure in public built environments:

While we celebrate its possibilities for empowerment, liberation, and creativity—and see its improvisation and spirit of sacrifice and mutual aid as crucial to its sustainability and resilience—we must not forget that these places also have a tremendous capacity to oppress.

Therefore, and as I have demonstrated when documenting the relational nature of DIY urban design knowledge and constructions, it is vital for the city to reimagine anti-homeless ordinances and hostile designs in public spaces. Each community I researched had its own unique demands, but also had universal needs to realize capabilities and rights to exist in the city. I advocate for the city to pursue co-design and adopt the recommendations I have promoted in this speculative just public space design chapter. First, the city should create partnerships with the Services Not Sweeps coalition, nonprofit service providers, and unhoused communities to create a less oppressive foundation to co-design interim shelters and public spaces to be more dwellable. Second, processes and outcomes of co-design must redistribute power equitably to unhoused residents who have been historically marginalized and criminalized through quality-of-life ordinances and hostile public space designs. Here, anti-homeless ordinances should be abolished, and public spaces should serve as dependable hubs for information, services, and shelter. Lastly, if DIY urban designs function as architectural stopgaps and infrastructural critiques of hostile designs, the creative resourcefulness and coping tactics of unhoused residents should be supported through funding and facilitation to design a more “dwellable city.”

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion: Designing a “dwellable city”

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the city of LA has produced an ad hoc anti-homeless landscape of no-go zones by expanding and enforcing quality-of-life ordinances, constructing hostile designs within and across shelter spaces and public spaces, and targeting known encampments for sweeps under the false promise of more compassionate services and opportunities for long-term housing. Yet, the ad-hoc enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances, shrinking of public space, and criminalization of homelessness during COVID-19 mirrored previous strategies like the Safer Cities Initiative and attempts to contain unhoused populations into service-concentrated areas like Skid Row. What differed from previous revanchist strategies was that the initial tolerance of encampment community development during the initial stay-at-home orders led to a more visible production of DIY urban designs by unhoused communities due to lack of policing through cleanups and sweeps. In response to hostile designs that started in 2020 and continue to this day—materialized in poorly run short-term shelters connected to anti-homeless zones and “soft” and “hard” controls on sidewalks, in parks, and on public streets, unhoused residents adopt a variety of DIY urban design interventions and everyday spatial tactics to cope, survive, and build dwellable individual and communal spaces while contending with the neo-revanchist city. However, instead of learning from these interventions, the city has criminalized and demolished grassroots construction and shrank the socio-spatial rights of unhoused residents to urban space in LA.

Through my photographic tracing and conversations with unhoused structure builders, I have advocated that learning from and accommodating DIY urban designs into formal urban planning and design processes and outcomes, as well as responses to unsheltered homelessness,

can help to abolish no-go zones, critique and reimagine hostile designs, and produce more just public space designs. Incorporating lessons learned from DIY urban designs into public spaces can create centralized public space hubs where unhoused people can visit without fear of criminalization to receive mental health and hygiene services, sleep safely overnight, and, eventually, transition into permanently affordable housing. Rethinking hostile designs through just public space designs can address socio-spatial injustices by expanding (rather than shrinking) capabilities and rights to the city for unhoused residents. There is reason for hope and skepticism, however, based on recent events.

Damon and Josephine, who have a TV in their camper on Echo Park Lake’s perimeter, told me in early February, “We saw on the news the other night they might be removing the fence. We’re pretty excited about the fence going somewhere.”¹⁵⁷ This was in reference to the announcement by Hugo Soto-Martínez (*Statement on Echo Park Lake*, 2023)—the newly elected democratic socialist city councilmember who unseated Mitch O’Farrell—that the fence was coming down to mark the two year anniversary of the March 24th, 2021 Echo Park Lake displacement. The formal de-fencing of the park took place on March 27th, 2023. On the same day, Councilmember Soto-Martínez released a statement to address the removal of the “temporary fence surrounding Echo Park Lake” (*Our Statement on the Removal of the Fence Surrounding Echo Park Lake*, 2023). In it, he lets his constituents know that service providers and outreach workers will be at the park seven days-a-week, and unarmed responders will be dispatched at night if complaints are made. Some of the additional shared goals include creating a park that is “safe, clean and accessible for all,” “expanding programming at the park,” “improving accessibility” through repairs, “preserving greenspace,” and allowing street vendors

¹⁵⁷ personal communication, February 8, 2023

in to enhance cultural vibrancy and economic opportunities, among others. To celebrate, former residents of the tent city and mutual aid organizers hosted a community potluck on April 1st (Figure 19). But questions remain. What will happen if unhoused individuals come to the park to realize dwellable inhabitation? How will the city respond to their need to use public restrooms? Who will the future regulation and design of the park as a safe, clean and accessible space be catered to? Architecturally and symbolically, the fence coming down expands unhoused residents' rights to access this park. Yet, Councilmember Soto-Martínez is a big proponent of Mayor Bass' "home run" program: Inside Safe.



Figure 19. Echo Park Lake Rebirth. Flyer via Sam Lutzker ([@SamLutzker], 2023b)

Recently, an article published in *Bloomberg CityLab* (Sisson, 2023) shamefully pits Mayor Karen Bass’ strategy to address homelessness against unhoused residents, calling it a “new fight against an old foe: homelessness.” It focuses on the potential for “Inside Safe” to be a more compassionate model to address the precipitous rise in homelessness, which has been caused by “high housing costs, and exacerbated by a new drug addiction crisis and the economic

and social disruptions of Covid-19.” Being more compassionate, “Inside Safe” continues many of the past interim shelter strategies with the promise of no police presence. But placing people into hotels and motels temporarily does not address the regulatory and architectural design issues and social dangers that unhoused residents like Austin, Fiona, and June faced when entering into PRK and PHK sites; especially considering this model, as in ABH and Tiny Homes, leads to evictions and dwelling type fluidity, reproducing unsheltered homelessness. Residents in Harbor City like Nydia and Jane also called for more mental health services, education about homelessness, and sensitivity training for staff hired to these short-term shelter programs. As Philip recommended, there is a need for more comprehensive data to triage unhoused residents before giving them various services and placing them into housing programs. The placement of unhoused residents with different needs, mental health conditions, criminal records, substance use addictions, among other things, into shared, co-ed shelters, creates hazardous situations and traumatic experiences that lead to people either getting kicked out or living between shelters and public spaces.

There is reason to be skeptical of “Inside Safe” based on the city’s recent involvement with the encampment near the Aetna Street ABH. On March 20th, 2023, the city was supposed to come and place all residents in Van Nuys into hotels and motels. They told everyone to pack two bags and be ready by 8AM. In response to people’s lived experience inside these hostile interim designs, the community drafted a letter to Mayor Karen Bass for the March 20th placements. The letter had 16 demands and two questions (Aetna St Community, 2023). The demands insisted that Inside Safe addresses the hostile regulations and designs of previous placements that led to evictions from similar programs. Demands included, among other things, that choosing to enter a program be voluntary and those that choose to stay on the sidewalk not be criminalized; that

placement into a hotel or motel be within a 3-mile radius; that rules be given upfront; that residents be allowed more than two bags of property; that residents have access to meals that meet their dietary restrictions; that harm reduction services and medical staff be available 24/7; and that residents are allowed to meet with the Mayor. The city never showed up on March 20th before the torrential downpour that started the day after (Abraham, 2023). One resident had been approached a few weeks before but refused to use the Inside Safe program because they would not allow her to share a room with her sister; they were going to put her into a hotel room with a complete stranger. Upon visiting the sidewalks after the rains subsided, residents' clothes, tents, and personal belongings became soaked and washed into the sidewalk's gutters. Again, the city's failure to act reproduced the public health, sanitation, and hygiene problems its quality-of-life ordinances, CARE + cleanups, and interim shelters aim to alleviate.

At the time of this writing, the fence at Echo Park Lake has come down, Mayor Karen Bass is making an urgent push with "Inside Safe" to address homelessness in Van Nuys, and encampment residents and vehicular dwellers in Harbor City and Venice are still being targeted for CARE+ cleanups despite lack of access to shelters or safe parking locations. Future research LA-based research is needed to examine whether the city will rethink its hostile designs. Studies can catalog what Echo Park's rebirth looks like regarding DIY urban design tactics; assess whether unhoused residents are given more rights, decision-making power, and longer stays in interim shelters on their way to transition into permanently affordable housing; or investigate if certain communities, given councilmembers' promises, are provided more compassionate services and outreach without criminalization while sleeping in public spaces or vehicles.

Beyond LA, future research could analyze the relationship between hostile designs and DIY urban design tactics by unhoused communities in other cities around the world with

different political economies, built environments, and cultures. Scholars could also test the effectiveness and utility of the just urban design framework I developed and explore whether there are other forms of design injustice that need to be addressed in other contexts. Questions left unanswered in my research include whether enacting just public space design is feasible, and how city planners and urban designers will intervene if given opportunities to include unhoused individuals in decision-making processes and design charrettes shaping design outcomes.^{xlix} Tensions left unexplored include whether advocating for and providing more accessible public spaces for unhoused individuals strengthens or degrades the social, political, and environmental ideals of public spaces, and whether these desires are inherently unjust. Lastly, architectural critics or scholars with expertise in building design could adapt my just public space design framework to just shelter/housing design to critique and rethink the rules and spatial layout of emerging service architectures. These proposed architectural, political, and spatial investigations can supplement my mapping of anti-homeless regulations, critique of hostile designs in shelters and public spaces, cataloguing of DIY urban design tactics, and recommendations for just public space designs.

By adopting a hybridized planning and design practice that accommodates DIY urban design and critically rethinks formal public space regulation and infrastructure, the state (i.e., politicians, service providers, city planners, and urban designers) should unite the positives from compassionate revanchist management of homelessness—expanded services and different shelter types—with the benefits of DIY urban design tactics—autonomy and control over construction of private infrastructure, development of community hygiene and sanitation infrastructure. This strategy also requires the abolition of anti-homeless ordinances and the demolition of hostile designs. Like my photographs and conversations suggest, policymakers need to visit

communities with structure builders, understand what DIY urban design tactics are being implemented and why, talk with structure builders and community members as to what they need, and reimagine how hostile designs can be transformed into just public space designs through learning and accommodation. This radical co-planning and co-design strategy will be more effective in enacting just public space design by permitting dwelling, improving access to services and shelter, and expanding rights to the city and its public spaces. Public spaces can and should be socially, politically, and spatially accessible, especially to unhoused residents who require them to partake in life-sustaining activities. As history has shown, the enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances, investment in interim shelters, and imposition of hostile designs across new service architectures and public spaces only reproduces homelessness. Let's rethink hostile designs as just public space designs by learning from and accommodating DIY urban design interventions because it cannot and "It won't be like this forever."

Endnotes

ⁱ Each community that I strategically sampled in my dissertation was connected through the Services Not Sweeps Coalition. Advocacy groups across each space shared DIY urban design knowledge and were connected in collective struggles to access more permanent shelter/housing, receive services, and resist hostile designs.

ⁱⁱ My conversations with unhoused residents in my dissertation revealed myriad fluid dwelling type living situations. Shelters require that a person spends the night once every three nights. Therefore, many people I spoke to lived out of their cars, in shared tents, or built semi-permanent structures that afforded them more autonomy, dignity, and livable design.

ⁱⁱⁱ For an in-depth review of ambivalent poverty management and the coexistence of geographies of care (post-revanchism) and geographies of punishment (revanchism) please refer to my theoretical framework and literature review sections.

^{iv} Footnote 8 in *Martin v. City of Boise* (2019, p. 32) suggests that the ruling is not absolute. It does “not cover individuals who *do* have access to adequate temporary shelter, whether because they have the means to pay for it or because it is realistically available to them for free, but who choose not to use it.” It also does not rule that “a jurisdiction with insufficient shelter can *never* criminalize the act of sleeping outside.” Thus, enforcement of quality-of-life ordinances are “constitutionally permissible.”

^v This seminal court case will be referred to as *Martin* for the remainder of this dissertation.

^{vi} Although just urban design is used to describe an inclusive theoretical framework containing five interrelated concepts of design justice, the policy recommendations I advocate for are grounded in the do-it-yourself urban design tactics and policy solutions of unhoused residents that participated in my research.

^{vii} This count of half-a-million people represents those counted by Continuums of Care across the United States over a two-day period. For example, in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care, an annual point-in-time homeless count is carried out on two nights in January. This is not necessarily an accurate reflection of the spatio-temporal fluctuations in homelessness over the last forty years. As an estimate, the point-in-time count allows Continuums of Care to provide data to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to receive funds for homeless management, services, and affordable housing construction. Other estimates (Carlen, 2018; Flaming & Burns, 2017) suggest that LA’s unhoused population is two times the size of what is counted during the point-in-time count.

^{viii} Examples include investments in public restrooms and shade infrastructure.

^{ix} The Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP) and Los Angeles Community Action Network (LACAN) have conducted work to advocate for listening to the voices of unhoused individuals and incorporating their recommendations into urban policy. Through their Homeless Bill of Rights Campaign, WRAP surveyed over 700 individuals to draft the California Right to Rest Act 2018, which recommends the abolishment of street criminalization (Western Regional Advocacy Project, 2016; California Right to Rest Act 2018, 2018). LACAN spoke to unhoused women in Skid Row to understand their experiences with violence in the shelter system; from these conversations they formulated urban policy recommendations that support the use of federal funds for housing, collaboration with encampments to design housing, and the repeal of street criminalization (LACAN, 2021).

^x Repealing quality-of-life ordinances that outlaw sitting and sleeping in certain public spaces is an example of interactional justice because it would allow for social interaction with other users.

^{xi} As an example, public parks could create designated areas where camping is allowed where unhoused individuals could receive services and opportunities for shelter. Other housed users would see these areas as safe spaces where people could transition out of homelessness.

^{xii} Cities could provide sanitation equipment and services for unhoused individuals to discard their trash and maintain their shelters. This could reduce complaints by other users that public spaces used for shelter are dirty and need to be swept by police.

^{xiii} At Echo Park, the unhoused and homeless advocates constructed do-it-yourself hygiene stations and a community garden suggesting that these services are needed in public spaces. Sidewalk encampment residents can often be seen sweeping the sidewalk and placing garbage in specific areas; sanitation services would help.

^{xiv} The most recently published national homeless count only assessed the state of sheltered homelessness due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Henry et al., 2022).

^{xv} Portions of this literature review have been adapted from prior research (Giamarino & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2023).

^{xvi} For vehicular dwellings, hostile designs function as a regulatory process of enforcement and zoning. Streets are zoned to ban overnight dwellings and tickets and towing are the hostile outcome. Streets become hostile when street signs, zones, and policing restrict vehicular dwellings. Around Safe Parking Lots, which provide safe overnight spaces to sleep in one's car yet ban RVs/campers, streets are zoned to enforce overnight camping bans.

^{xvii} In a study of homeless women's tactics of resistance in England, Casey et al. (2008) find that their everyday experiences and uses of public space were tied to their identities and how they wanted other to perceive their identities. They sought to 1) maintain their pre-homeless identities engaging in activities like listening to the music they liked before becoming unhoused, checking out cultural institutions, and not congregating where large groups of unhoused people slept; 2) retain a sense of respectability and dignity by not carrying around blanket and washing their clothes; and 3) avoid being identified with other stigmatized groups or behaviors commonly associated with homelessness (e.g., sex work, alcoholism).

^{xviii} These four tactics are not mutually exclusive. An unhoused person may choose to adapt their appearance and change their behavior. For example, Stuart's (2016) ethnography of Skid Row demonstrates how unhoused individuals avoid certain parks and streets in the 50-block district due to gang and/or cop presence.

^{xix} The city of Jacksonville had determined that eight defendants, including the eponymous Margaret Papachristou, were in violation of Jacksonville Ordinance Code 26-57, which outlawed conduct such as gambling, pickpocketing, juggling, and loafing and subjected violators to up to 90 days imprisonment and a \$500 fine. Four defendants, including Papachristou, were arrested for loitering near a used cars parking lot that had been broken into recently. The US Supreme Court ruled that this ordinance was too vague and encouraging arbitrary arrests, and that the defendants were not adequately informed of how their conduct violated the law.

^{xx} These newly emerging public spaces are those produced in LA after the ruling in 2019. After the Echo Park sweep, a fence was erected around the park to better enforce LAMC 63.44, the overnight camping ban in public parks. Around A Bridge Home Shelters (temporary shelter), LA has created Special Enforcement Zones (SECZ) to criminalize unhoused folks who camp on adjacent sidewalks. After a Safe Parking lot is implemented, adjacent streets are zoned to ban RV dwellings. While fences, zones, and street restrictions are not new, their use as hostile designs near these spaces are justified through this ruling and demand attention.

^{xxi} My prior work was included in a background chapter in my dissertation on recent homelessness trends in Los Angeles (Giamarino, Blumenberg, et al., 2023; Giamarino, Brozen, et al., 2023).

^{xxii} These three cities are excluded because they function as their own Continuum of Cares that compete for homeless services, shelter, and housing funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

^{xxiii} This past research is based on an Institute on Inequality and Democracy fellowship with Koreatown for All where I mapped current and proposed anti-homeless policy using Geographic Information Systems; a Graduate Research Mentorship where I conducted a content analysis of quality-of-life ordinances and interviews to understand activist resistance to their enforcement with Dr. Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris; and statistical analyses of trends in homelessness by dwelling type (tents vs. vehicles) and spatial models of determinants of homelessness through a Graduate Student Research position at the Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies with Dr. Evelyn Blumenberg and Madeline Brozen.

^{xxiv} The escalated efforts began in between the UC Grad Student Worker strike and my fieldwork under newly elected Mayor Karen Bass' "Inside Safe" initiative. The After Echo Park Lake Research Collective describes these strategies as mode of "permanent displaceability" (Roy et al., 2022, pp. 19–36). This concept posits that unhoused residents in Los Angeles are under constant threat of displacement from public spaces, shelters, and housing, which ultimately excludes them from social and spatial rights to urban space. Permanent displaceability is carried out through three non-linear strategies: 1) sweeps from public spaces; 2) waiting, shuffling, and disappearing from formal homeless service spaces; and 3) punishment and banishment from urban space. As I conducted fieldwork with key informants, it became clear that their geographic knowledge of where residents and/or friends might be was limited by the carrying out of sweeps to get people into short-term shelters. Permanent displaceability made it impossible for me to focus on just one encampment community and given the fact that this is a citywide process and mode of governing homelessness, it made sense to choose communities experiencing similar yet different forms of hostility.

^{xxv} In Summer 2020, I became a volunteer, organizer, and researcher with Koreatown for All (KFA) through a UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy (IID) Fellowship. From this fellowship, I organized a volunteer-based mapping pod with open-source tutorials that taught interested activists and unhoused people how to map anti-homeless zones for use in legal advocacy work. After the conclusion of this fellowship in December 2020, I continued to volunteer with legal aid groups to provide maps and data for use in lawsuits. As I befriended organizers within the Services not Sweeps coalition network across Los Angeles, I interviewed organizers in Van Nuys as part of another research project tracing the production of anti-homeless zones during COVID-19 (see Giamarino & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2023). From these ongoing organizing relationships and friendships, I introduced my dissertation research and was given access to certain spaces where hostile designs and do-it-yourself solutions were present. Additionally, through work as a Graduate Student Researcher within IID, I was fortunate enough to establish rapport and trust with organizers and unhoused communities based on IID's prior abolition and justice-based work with the Echo Park Lake community.

^{xxvi} The Aetna Street Insurgent Research Collective is a group of academic researchers from UCLA Luskin's Institute on Inequality and Democracy and movement-based activists and unhoused individuals. Together, we study displacement and unjust municipal strategies that invest public money into criminalization and the production of housing precarity. Our empirical and oppositional research critiques socio-spatial and racial banishment and works to advance housing and public space justice in Los Angeles. Previously, they worked with the Echo Park Lake community and Echo Park Rise Up in Echo Park, Los Angeles, CA. Presently, we are working with the Aetna Street community in Van Nuys, Los Angeles, CA.

^{xxvii} Of the 36 unhoused individuals, I asked them what the structural causes or personal reasons were as to why they became unhoused. None of them said it was a choice. The primary reasons for losing housing were unemployment, incarceration, and domestic violence.

^{xxviii} The background research conducted for this chapter comes from a previous Graduate Research Mentorship project under the advisement of Dr. Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris where I mapped the production of anti-homeless zones in Los Angeles during COVID-19. The final research has been published open access in *Urban Affairs Review* (Giamarino & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2023). In this chapter, I edited the contents of this prior research to fit with my interviews, photographs, and analytical and theoretical focus on hostile designs.

^{xxix} The purpose of my research, specifically in this chapter, is to contextualize contemporary trends in homelessness and demonstrate the reuse of policing and spatial displacement strategies that have produced a neo-revanchist anti-homeless landscape. For histories of Skid Row, homelessness in Los Angeles, and the United States please see: Gudis, C. (2022). *Containment and Community: The History of Skid Row and its Role in the Downtown Community Plan* (p. 32). Los Angeles Poverty Department. https://www.lapovertydept.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/skidrow-now-2040_green_paper_final_web_upload.pdf; Loukaitou-Sideris, A., & Banerjee, T. (1998). *Urban Design Downtown: Poetics and Politics of Form*. University of California Press.; Mitchell, D. (2003). *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. The Guilford Press.; National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. (2018). *Tent City, USA: The Growth of America's Homeless Encampments and How Communities are Responding*. National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. Skid Row Housing Trust. (2021). History Timeline. *Skid Row Housing Trust*. <https://skidrow.org/about/history/>; Smith, N. (1996). *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the revanchist city*. Routledge. Stuart, F. (2016). *Down, Out, and Under Arrest: Policing and Everyday Life in Skid Row*. University of Chicago Press.

^{xxx} Anecdotal evidence and casual conversations with unhoused residents during my research revealed that Project Homekey sites, as part of Mayor Bass' "Inside Safe" initiative, are placing complete strangers into shared hotel rooms with little to no background screening. One particular resident in Van Nuys was offered placement through "Inside Safe" into a nearby hotel and asked outreach if her sister could share the room with her. She was told no and refused to enter into a hotel room with a stranger.

^{xxxi} In separate conversations with activists in Venice and Dr. Chris Herring, 41.18D (sit-lie law for sidewalks) and 85.02 (anti-vehicular camping regulations) maps have both implemented, enforced, and proposed zones (Chin, 2022; Eiteneer, 2023). Based on my previous research and conversations with unhoused residents for my dissertation, it became clear that the nature of whether a zone is enforced or proposed does not matter. Ad hoc enforcement, hidden policing strategies, and other forms of monetary harassment (i.e., citations, vehicle impoundment) effectively cover the City of LA with anti-homeless zones.

^{xxxii} Census tracts and Business Improvement Districts accessed from: City of Los Angeles. "City of Los Angeles Hub." 2020. <http://geohub.lacity.org/>. Freeways accessed from: koordinates. "Los Angeles Freeway | GIS Map Data | City of Los Angeles, California | Koordinates," 2018. <https://koordinates.com/layer/98160-los-angeles-freeway/>. Sit-lie law and overnight camping boundaries accessed from: Stiles, Matt, Ryan Menezes, and Emily Alpert Reyes. "L.A. Might Ban Homeless People from Sleeping on Many Streets. What about Your Block?" Los Angeles Times. 2019. <https://www.latimes.com/projects/homeless-sleeping-maps/>.

^{xxxiii} Tammy's chihuahuas were not ferocious. They were very cute and protective of their mom, dad, and brother. But they would not let me pet them. However, my mom's chihuahua never let me pet him either.

^{xxxiv} I was unable to gain access to the Aetna ABH site adjacent to the Van Nuys encampment. Much like unhoused residents who were denied access to use the facility's co-ed restrooms and showers, the fortress-like, securitized design of the space was actively hostile towards outsiders. Therefore, I relied on accounts of the designs and archival research (i.e., journalism) that photographed the interior of these spaces. This photograph is not of the interior of the Aetna ABH, but there are two designs in place: office trailers with beds jammed into open office cubicles and Sprung fabric structures with bunks and cots.

^{xxxv} Given my strategic sampling strategy where I only interviewed people who were living in public spaces that had bad experiences living in interim shelters, individuals with critical perspectives of shelters who could be deemed shelter resistant are overrepresented in my dissertation. In future studies, I could adopt a more relational approach to get perspectives from those living outside of and inside shelters so that my critiques of shelters could be counter-balanced by individuals' concerns and possible fears of living unprotected on sidewalks and/or in parks. Chris Herring's (2019) relational ethnography of the spatial interplay between shelter development and encampment construction focuses on how seclusion in shelters justifies exclusion in public spaces. The socio-spatial fluidity of individuals between these spaces did come up in my interviews, but it is not the key focus of my dissertation. I was interested in the role that hostile designs within shelters and across public spaces play in eliciting DIY urban design interventions.

^{xxxvi} During a meeting with the Aetna Street Insurgent Research Collaborative, an unhoused resident had been approached by an outreach worker and been offered placement in an “Inside Safe” location. She had requested that her sister, who is also unhoused in Van Nuys, be placed into the shared room with her. However, she was denied this request and told that she would be bunked with a stranger who was next on the placement list. With this information, she refused placement into a hotel room.

^{xxxvii} On one particular day in Van Nuys, a middle-age white man dressed like Lance Armstrong on a bicycle, stopped at a congregation with me, organizers, researchers, and unhoused residents. He asked us what we were doing, and we told him we were with UCLA doing research. He told us that he hoped that whatever we were doing would be “mature.” Later, an organizer found out that he was a neighborhood councilmember from Studio City that filmed encampments while bicycling through them to create geographic knowledge of hotspot locations to call for sweeps.

^{xxxviii} Austin, a “protector” on Aetna, hated fentanyl. He assisted residents in testing drugs like meth for fentanyl and monitored consumption, so that he could make sure his neighbors did not overdose. During our conversation, he stated that several times, he had to administer Narcan to reverse an overdose.

^{xxxix} One of the Metro lots was contracted out to a nearby car dealership. Therefore, cars have been given priority over human beings in accessing assigned spaces.

^{xl} Footnote 8 in Martin (2019, p. 32) suggests that the ruling is not absolute. It does “not cover individuals who do have access to adequate temporary shelter, whether because they have the means to pay for it or because it is realistically available to them for free, but who choose not to use it.” It also does not rule that “a jurisdiction with insufficient shelter can never criminalize the act of sleeping outside.” Thus, LAMC 63.44, which bans bulky items and overnight camping in public parks, and CARE + Cleanups are “constitutionally permissible” under Martin.

^{xli} This information was relayed to us during our research by an advocate for the unhoused (personal communication, April 2021).

^{xlii} In Herring et al.’s (2020) research on the impacts of enforcing anti-homeless laws in San Francisco, done in collaboration with the San Francisco Coalition on Homelessness, they define spatial churn as the process of sporadic displacement that unhoused residents experience when they are displaced from a public space. During this process of displacement, they also experience emotionally traumatic run-ins with police and are often dispossessed of personal property. The churn through enforcement, displacement, and dispossession reproduces homelessness in a downward dwelling type trajectory and exacerbates racial, gender, and health inequities for individuals experiencing homelessness. Similarly, in my research, I experience a similar churning effect, but the churning happens between shelters, public spaces, and prisons, and leads to the production of DIY urban design responses to cope and survive that are then criminalized.

^{xliii} For example, Ted, who now lives in a tent near the Aetna ABH, used to live in a camper, which was all he had at the time. Sanitation and police took it from him because it was non-operational.

^{xliv} Out of respect for individual’s privacy, I did not take photographs of the interior of semi-permanent structures, as they are people’s homes. I rely on fieldnotes that I took after I returned home to describe what these spaces furnished compared to hostile shelter designs.

^{xlv} I would like to thank Alex, Belinda, Cassandra, Dexter, June, Philip, Pierce, and Wallace for their novel insight on DIY urban design, as well as connecting me to unhoused DIYers and structure builders for this research in their communities. Without their local knowledge and experiences with hostile designs and DIY urban designs as tactical responses, I would not have been able to carry out this research.

^{xlvi} There were several findings that deromanticized the politically, socially, and spatially transformative nature of DIY urban designs and everyday socio-spatial tactics by unhoused residents. Women that I spoke to, as well as men, like Bridget, June, Nydia, Jane, Justine, and Brooke, contended with gender-based violence and traumatic events on the streets. These included fears of and direct experiences with drug dealing, sex trafficking, sexual assault, and harsh conditions living in public spaces like trying to sleep overnight in peace or using the restroom or go shower without unwanted contact. Often relying on local businesses, donations and knowledge from mutual aid organizations, and other persons' discarded belongings in alleyways and dumpsters, DIY urban design tactics were primarily coping and survival responses to hostile designs within shelters and across public spaces. Examples included enhancing access to bare necessities and life-sustaining amenities like cooking hot meals on propane grills or pans heated with hand sanitizer, hacking fire hydrants to set up makeshift showers, and using 5-gallon buckets with pool noodles to go to restroom in one's tent, structure, or vehicle, among others. Within larger tents and semi-permanent structures, comfortable bedding, entertainment appliances, storage, and social spaces provided people with a sense of autonomy, comfort, and privacy not afforded in shelters and right outside in public spaces. However, tactics were required to not attract demolition, which usually included placing a tarp over any semi-permanent structure to disguise and subvert the bulky item violation in L.A.M.C. § 56.11. Obviously, providing safer and more sanitary infrastructure that is frequently maintained in public spaces was a recurring request from unhoused residents I spoke to.

^{xlvii} The city (i.e., service providers, nonprofit shelters, architecture firms, and city councilmembers) could also learn from what is being built in these encampment communities to improve the architectural layout, hygiene infrastructure, behavioral rules, and community amenities of interim shelter programs. Again, my just public space design framework could be adapted to focus on just shelter design, but this goes beyond the scope of my dissertation. I critiqued the rules and designs of shelters to demonstrate the relationality of hostile designs across shelters that extend out into public spaces and encourage DIY urban design tactics.

^{xlviii} Tiny Village models can also be adapted by cities into Safe Parking Programs. By seizing and reopening underutilized parking lots, the city can allow residents to park their vehicles and sleep safely overnight. Targeted services and opportunities for housing can be administered on site, while bathrooms, showers, and meals can be permanent fixtures.

^{xlix} In partnership with Kounkuey Design Initiative, an urban design firm based in Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Department of Transportation and City Council District 1, headed by democratic socialist councilmember Eunisses Hernandez, unveiled a miniscule bus stop shade/light structure that is 24 inches wide. Costing \$10,000, "la sombrita" as it was nicknamed instantly became targeted on Twitter as a wasteful hostile design because it did not provide ample shade or a place to rest for people who rely on public transit (Bloch, 2023).

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Appendix I: Extended positionality reflections

While conducting research on hostile designs in anti-homeless zones and do-it-yourself designs as individual and communal tactics of everyday resistance to socio-spatial displacement by unhoused folks, I faced challenges—beyond the pandemic—with my privileged positionality. I would like to acknowledge this positionality as an upper-middle class White academic who grew up in the suburbs of Anaheim, California. It is important to note that throughout the duration of my dissertation, I contended with and attempted to ameliorate the disparate power dynamics between myself and the unhoused folks that I interviewed, and who were vital in the production of this dissertation. Over the course of my PhD studies these included, among other things, building rapport and trust with unhoused folks and advocacy organizations; ensuring their confidentiality and anonymity when taking photographs and interviewing them; and providing insight from my transcripts to organizers within the Services Not Sweeps coalition for ongoing legal and political advocacy work. By building long-term friendships and assisting with outreach (i.e., providing hygiene kits, food, and water) and legal and political advocacy efforts (i.e., mapping anti-homeless zones for lawsuit battles) by organizations like Koreatown for All (KFA)—a volunteer-based houseless advocacy organization based in Los Angeles’ Koreatown neighborhood that provides direct outreach and legal and political advocacy to unhoused people— I attempted to confront my privileged positionality and ameliorate uneven power dynamics while I conducted my dissertation research.

Building rapport and trust before conducting interviews over the course of three months was a two-and-a-half-year process, which started with a summer fellowship through the UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy. From June 2020 to December 2020, I co-organized a mapping pod with KFA. A mapping pod is an organized group of grassroots

cartographers that maintain communication digitally and respond to calls by organizers and legal aid attorneys to design maps and provide data to help unhoused individuals seeking injunctive relief in lawsuits protesting the enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances that led to an arrest and/or citations. Within the pod, I developed a series of open-source tutorials to recruit volunteers interested in mapping the expansion of anti-homeless zones during COVID-19 and produced several online maps using homeless count data and land use data for use in lawsuits to provide unhoused people with injunctive relief.

Over that same summer, I befriended other organizers within the Services Not Sweeps coalition (a broad network of 35-plus advocacy organizations in the City of Los Angeles), specifically activists working with encampment communities in the Van Nuys neighborhood of Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley. Through a Graduate Research Mentorship (GRM), I interviewed advocates from Koreatown and Van Nuys to understand the dynamics of police sweeps, hidden strategies of policing, and emerging anti-homeless zones for a research paper in *Urban Affairs Review* (Giamarino & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2023). The organizers and communities that I built rapport with during this time had one requirement: that any research I do be pro-abolition. In the GRM paper, we critiqued how the City of LA has revived unconstitutional spatial banishment strategies, advocated for the abolition of these conceptualized zones of anti-homelessness, and recommended increased services and amenities in public spaces for unhoused communities.

Fast forward from Winter 2020 to Summer 2022, I began working with the UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies to understand growing vehicular homelessness in Los Angeles and the impacts of anti-vehicular camping ordinances in the County of Los Angeles. From this research (Giamarino, Blumenberg, et al., 2022; Giamarino et al., 2023), I was invited

by Dr. Randall Kuhn to attend a talk by Dr. Ananya Roy on the expansion of anti-homeless zones and the findings from The Echo Park Lake Collective on the outcomes of the displacement of the Echo Park Lake encampment community on March 24, 2021. Here, I became a Graduate Student Researcher with the UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy to continue this work for another autonomous encampment community in Van Nuys. In November 2022, I was invited by Dr. Graham Pruss (Pruss & Cheng, 2020) to present this research at the 2022 National Vehicle Residency Summit where I met activists from Venice who live in their cars, vans, campers, and RVs. Through these networked connections in Echo Park, Van Nuys, and Venice, I began my fieldwork in late October 2022 and was slated to begin interviews before the UC Graduate Student Researcher and Teaching Assistant Strike commenced for two months. Therefore, I was not able to start interviews until January 2023.

It is also important to note that I have never experienced housing precarity or homelessness. A key reason why I was and still am interested in documenting do-it-yourself designs from the tactics of marginalized groups and advocating for their inclusion into formal policies and design outcomes to render public space more just is because I am a skateboarder. Having skateboarded for the past twenty years (or 2/3rds) of my life in the suburban and urban regions of New York, Hong Kong, and Los Angeles, I have experienced analogous forms of social and spatial exclusion. Well documented in scholarly research and print and video media, skateboarders are known for reconfiguring the uses of mundane architectural objects like stairs, benches, embankments, and handrails for playful performances known as lines and tricks. Simply by wanting to use spaces for playful reinterpretation, I've continuously questioned public space regulations and designs that have excluded skateboarding. It is from this perspective, as well as my belief in the political and social promises of public space to be inclusive and

accommodative to groups like skateboarders, street vendors, and unhoused folks, that I approached my dissertation research. From my skater's eye with special attention to alternative spatial details and social uses of public space, I editorialized and critiqued the production of unjust public spaces through exclusionary regulations and hostile designs and made sure to foreground the experiences and demands of unhoused folks in my recommendations for city planning policies and urban design outcomes that produce more just public spaces on people's pathways to housing. Public spaces are vital social and political places for play, sustenance, and survival.

Appendix II: Poetry as reciprocity

4 PAT:

Poet,

Artist,

Technician.

A nut can throw off your whole day,
but you strive towards autonomy
and self-sufficiency on an upward
trajectory. Venice streets are
public streets. Vehicular dwelling
is not a crime. Traci Park is a
narc. Venice is your home. The
boardwalk is your gallery. The
streets are yours. Tell your story
- Chris and hack on!
- Chris

Appendix III: Letter of support from Services Not Sweeps Coalition



02/01/2021

Attn Chris Giamarino

Dear Dr. Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Dr. Kian Goh, Dr. Vinit Mukhija, and Dr. Chris Herring,

Services Not Sweeps is an LA-based coalition made up of over 35 community organizations demanding a care-centric approach to homelessness and the end of criminalization. The organizations that are represented in Services Not Sweeps are representative across the City of LA and work directly with individuals experiencing homelessness.

Over the past year, we have had a successful collaborative relationship with Chris Giamarino. As a research fellow for one of our coalition's member organizations, Ktown for All, Chris developed a curriculum that could be used by advocates to learn how to utilize mapping in their advocacy and direct engagement work. Chris has also been supportive of our coalition assisting us in incorporating interactive maps particularly when the City of LA passed the place based ordinance that banned homelessness in designated areas.

We have reviewed Mr. Giamarino's dissertation proposal. We think this research will be very valuable for the field and our collective advocacy. Our coalition is excited to continue collaborating with Mr. Giamarino. We will be able to connect him to a network of advocates, activists, and volunteers who work on the ground across Los Angeles. In working with our coalition, Chris will be able to build relationships with unhoused people who can share their perspective on the subject that Chris will be researching. Our coalition also can provide consultation and expertise throughout the project and when interpreting results.

We look forward to seeing how the proposed project unfolds and appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the field of research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robin Petering".

Dr. Robin Petering
Secretary
Services Not Sweeps Coalition
ServicesNotSweeps.com

Appendix IV: Interview instrument

My name is Chris, and I am a UCLA PhD student working on a dissertation that explores how unhoused residents plan and design their communities to resist policing and create more inclusive public spaces and alternative homes. If you would like to be involved in this project, I will provide you with a \$30 grocery gift card. There are three introductory questions and ten questions about your role in designing and planning your community. If at any time you want to take a break, stop, or ask for clarification, please let me know. All responses will be stored safely and anonymized based on a fake name you provide me. After I have collected all interviews, I will provide you with digital or physical transcripts and initial write-ups. From this research, I plan to co-create a land use and urban design guidebook for encampment communities through affiliations with UCLA and grassroots orgs. Are you willing to participate?

Interview instrument for unhoused folks:

Background questions:

1. Could you introduce yourself: your gender identity, age/race/ethnicity, who you are, what community you belong to, how long you have been a resident in this community, and what your day-to-day looks like?
2. How did you become unhoused?
3. What have been your experiences with policing and outreach by the city?

DIY urban design questions

1. Can you describe the spatial layout of your community, your home, and your routines?
2. How did you become involved in the planning and design of your space and community?
3. How do you use individual and community design tactics in your everyday life?

4. What are some design examples that you've used or seen used that created better living conditions in public space?
5. What are your key motivations in designing private and public spaces for yourself and your community?
6. How has the city traditionally responded to the construction of housing, clothing swaps, food pantries, and other communal spaces for unhoused folks?
7. How do quality-of-life ordinances, police sweeps, move along orders, and other policies like safe parking and shelter expansion impact your individual and community design efforts and living spaces? What are the outcomes?
8. In response to police sweeps and other forms of policing, how has the planning and design of your individual and communal public spaces factored into contesting or avoiding detection and/or displacement?
9. Policymakers, including the city council, outreach workers, city planners, architects, the police, and others like housed folks, have decision-making power in how public space can be used, redesigned, and for what purpose. How have you or would you like to be involved in these processes and what planning and design lessons would you like them to take away from your local knowledge and efforts? What would you tell them as to why you construct private and communal places for yourself and others in public space?
10. What are your recommendations for how public spaces can be better regulated and designed to be more friendly for unhoused folks, especially in the design of community infrastructure, appropriation of space for living, and one's ability to access services and housing?

Appendix V: Thematic coding groups for interview transcriptions

Code group	Definition
Community dynamics	Codes within this group included information about the individual's relationship to their community, including friendships, interactions with police and outreach workers, and privacy concerns.
Contradictions	Codes within this group contained contradictory statements made by individuals related to their feelings about the police, their community, drugs and street violence, and urban policy/design solutions.
DIY designs	Codes within this group detailed the processes, practices, and interventions related to do-it-yourself urban designs as a coping, survival, and community-based response to neo-revanchism.
Hostile designs	Codes here detailed the hostile regulations, rules, and relational architectures between shelters, zones, and public spaces as experienced by unhoused individuals.
Just designs	Codes within this group were related to the theoretical justice framework that I developed—distributive, procedural, interactional, recognitional, care and repair.
Personal experiences	Codes were placed into this group when an individual revealed personal information about themselves, how they became unhoused, and any other experiences that may or may not have motivated them to partake in do-it-yourself urban designs.
Policy solutions	Excerpts in this group related to pre-existing local planning knowledge from unhoused residents about policies that worked from other urban contexts (i.e., other communities in Los Angeles or cities around the world).
Relational geographies	Snippets in this group detailed the spatial and temporal relationships between shelters, public spaces, land use and infrastructure, and dwelling types. Individuals often described their current situation in relation to a past experience with a shelter, knowledge about public space and how to hack various infrastructures, and the upward or downward trajectories of losing a vehicle and living in a tent or purchasing a vehicle and living between it, the shelter, and an encampment.
Revanchisms	Codes here related to the three revanchisms—revanchism, post-revanchism, neo-revanchism.

Appendix VI: Characteristics of unhoused people interviewed

Name	Age	Gender	Sexuality	Race/ethnicity	Reason	Type	Household size	Dwelling type
Tammy	48 F		Straight	Multi-racial, Caucasian, Latinx	Rent	Chronic	3	Tent
Cassandra	34 F		LGBTQIA+	Multi-racial, Caucasian, Latinx	Rent	Rent/lifestyle	2	RV
Patrick	39 M		Straight	Black/African American	Incarceration	Chronic	1	Tent/ABH
Bridget	63 F		Straight	Multi-racial, Latinx	Domestic	Chronic	1	Tent/ABH
Lincoln	31 M		Straight	Black/African American	Domestic	Chronic	2	Tent/car
Dexter	67 M		Straight	Indigenous	Unemployment	Rent/lifestyle	2	Van/Camper
Philip	45 M		Straight	Black/African American	Unemployment	Rent/lifestyle	1	RV
Fiona	50 F		Straight	Multi-racial, Latinx	Domestic	Chronic	2	Tent/ABH
Belinda	32 F		LGBTQIA+	Multi-racial, Caucasian, Latinx	Domestic	Long-term/lifestyle	1	Vehicle/couch
Wallace	46 M		Straight	Multi-racial, Latinx, Indigenous	Rent	Chronic/housed	1	Tent/Housing
Alex	32 M		Straight	Indigenous	Rent	Chronic/housed	2	Tent/Housing
Jane	34 F		Straight	Multi-racial, Latinx	Accident	Chronic/housed	2	Tent/Housing
Pierce	30 Trans M		LGBTQIA+	Multi-racial, Asian	Rent	Rent/lifestyle	2	RV
Tim	45 M		Straight	Multi-racial, Black/African American, Caucasian	Incarceration	Chronic	1	Tent
Ted	50 M		Straight	Latinx	Unemployment	Chronic	1	Tent
Austin	54 M		Straight	Latinx	Incarceration	Chronic	2	Tent
Yazid	35 M		Straight	Black/African American	Rent	Chronic	1	Street
Dwight	62 M		Straight	Caucasian	Rent	Chronic	2	RV
Clifford	45 M		Straight	Black/African American	Veteran	Chronic	1	Van/Camper
Simon	55 M		Straight	Caucasian	Unemployment	Chronic	1	Street
Jake	50 M		Straight	Caucasian	Domestic	New	1	Street
Justine	55 F		Straight	Caucasian	Domestic	Chronic	1	Street
Nydia	49 F		Straight	Multi-racial, Caucasian, Latinx	Domestic	Chronic	2	Tent/Tiny Home
Morris	68 M		Straight	Latinx	Rent	Chronic	2	Tent
Chase	37 M		Straight	Latinx	Domestic	Chronic	2	Tent
Percy	54 M		Straight	Asian/Pacific Islander	Rent	Chronic	1	Tent/Tiny Home
Jane	40 F		Straight	Caucasian	Domestic	Chronic	1	Tent
Damon	35 M		Straight	Black/African American	Rent	Lifestyle	2	Van/Camper
Josephine	33 F		Straight	Black/African American	Rent	Lifestyle	2	Van/Camper
Warren	30 M		Straight	Black/African American	Incarceration	Chronic	1	Tent
Camille	40 F		LGBTQIA+	Indigenous	Rent	New	1	RV
Kelsey	57 M		Straight	Caucasian	Domestic	Lifestyle	1	Tent
Joseph	38 M		Straight	Indigenous	Rent	New	1	Car
Percy	58 M		Straight	Black/African American	Domestic	Chronic	1	Street
Elmer	58 M		Straight	Caucasian	Rent	Chronic	1	Car
Brooke	46 F		Straight	Caucasian	Domestic	New	1	Tent