

Communication from Public

Name: Fix The City

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Council File No: 23-1206

Comments for Public Posting: Please accept this letter as Fix The City's comments concerning the use of Cotner for emergency shelter as proposed by Councilmember Yaroslavsky in Council File 23-1206.

Fix The City

October 28, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

Please accept this letter as [Fix The City's](#) comments concerning the use of Cotner for emergency shelter as proposed by Councilmember Yaroslavsky in [Council File 23-1206](#).

Fix The City is in full support of the use of Cotner for an emergency shelter. Our [initial review](#) of the site concluded that approximately 125 homeless individuals could be rapidly provided with emergency shelter and supportive services – all without impacting local residents and businesses. The street can be closed temporarily through a B permit that can be renewed every six months. Please have DOT review the necessary steps to make this project a reality.

Given the efficiency of the Los Angeles Recreation & Parks (LARP) in the deployment of 550 trailers for the homeless during Covid-19, we suggest that LARP be consulted on how they were able to roll out emergency shelter in mere weeks. It might also be useful to check on the condition and location of those trailers purchased by the City during the Covid emergency.

We further suggest that the City explore as “Phase 2,” the relocation of the Nebraska Yard and Los Angeles Sewer Maintenance Yard, both of which are on Cotner, for permanent supportive housing. These City functions could be moved to the vacant CalTrans area under the 405 at Pico.

These properties alone could provide much-needed permanent supportive housing for hundreds of the unhoused.

[The Cotner Location](#)

An overview showing where the Cotner emergency shelter project would be placed is shown below. The proposed project would be located on Cotner Avenue, specifically between the areas of 1924 Cotner Avenue and Nebraska Avenue, and is bounded on its western and eastern sides by City property alone. There are no residential uses near the proposed site.



Current State

This section of Cotner is already heavily used by the homeless in cars, trucks, RVs, trailers, and tents. Various support groups already provide basic services to the homeless individuals residing in this section of Cotner. As of 9/26/23, approximately 20 RVs, 10 cars, and 20 tents were present on Cotner. LAHSA favors locating shelters in proximity to encampments. Cotner is thus exactly where a shelter should be located.



Overview

The proposed project would consist of 113 13-foot trailers designated for single occupancy, and six 18-foot trailers designated for dual occupancy, totaling 119 trailers. When fully occupied, 125 unhoused people will have shelter. Each trailer has its own bathroom and kitchenette. If 15-foot trailers are used instead of 13-foot trailers, the total number of trailers would be reduced to 108. The required “Safe Parking” lot would be located on a city-owned parking lot and would accommodate 10-15 overnight vehicles.

The project would include 150’ of 10-foot wide service trailers for the provision of services such as meals, laundry, and counseling. Also included in the design are dog runs for both small and large dogs.

As can be seen below, the proposed project would have an overnight Safe Parking area so that the spaces can be used by city staff during normal business hours. Appropriate supportive amenities for safe-parkers may be provided at the eastern boundary of the safe parking area.

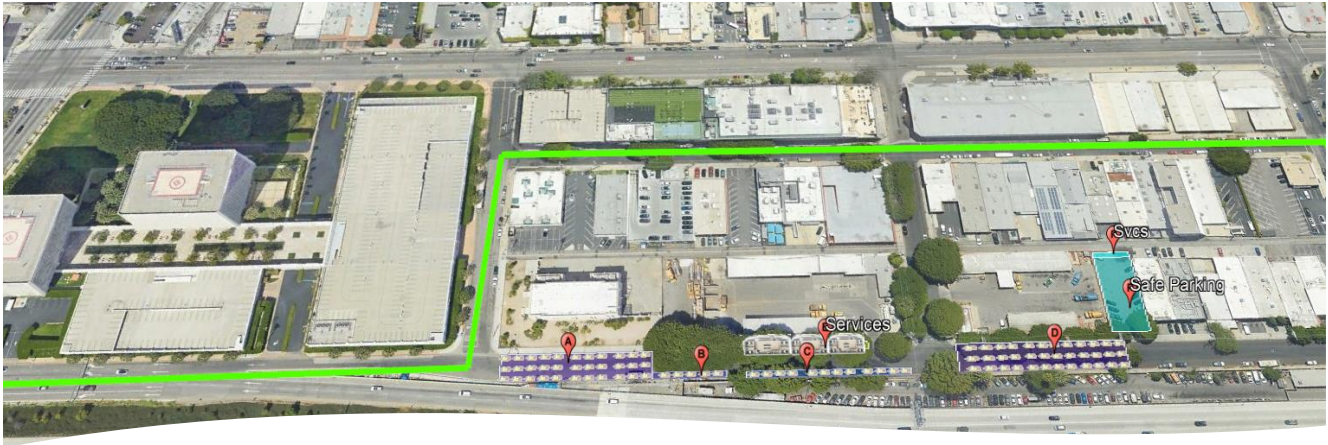


Business and Residential Impacts

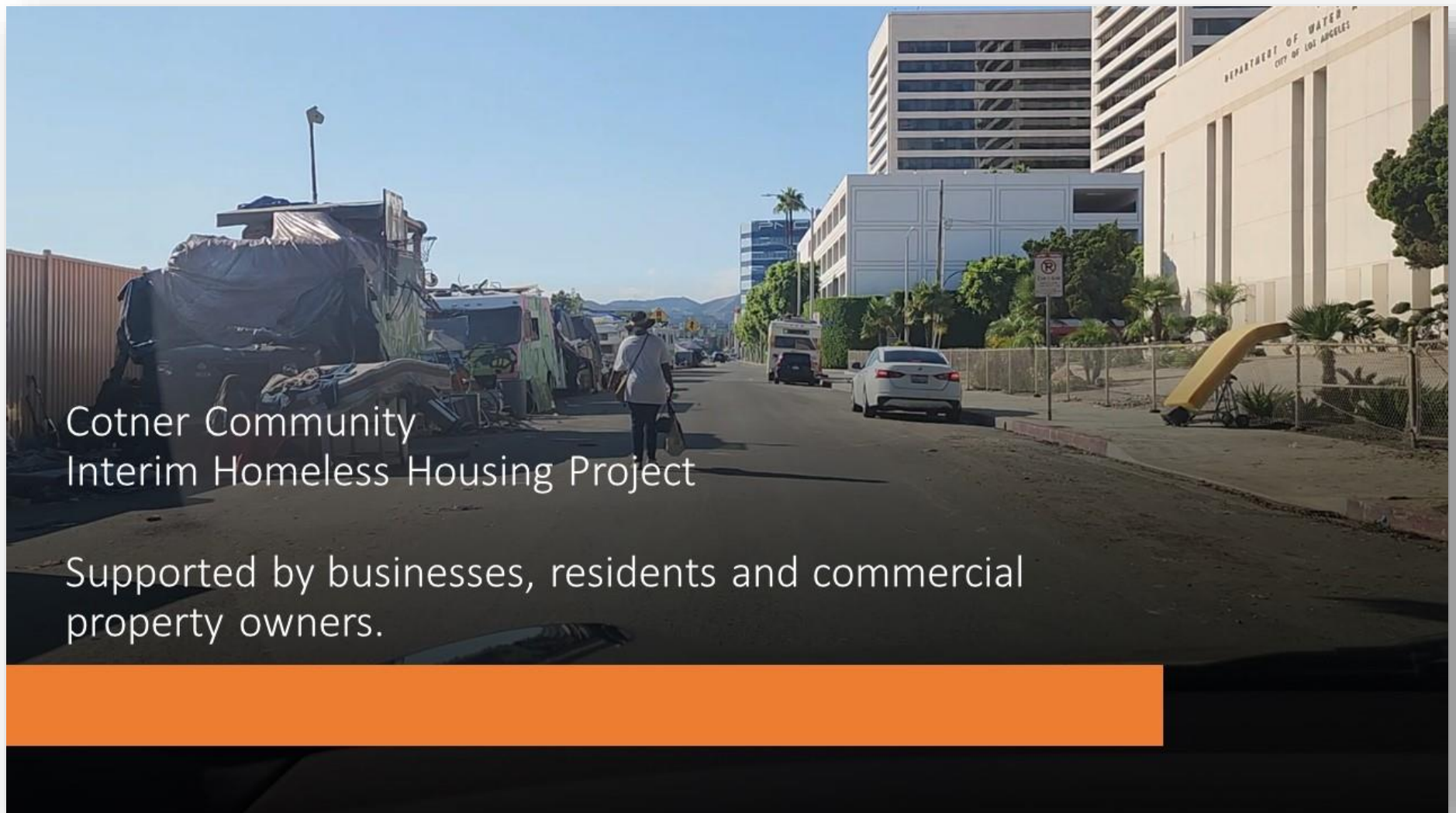
The Cotner Community is located on a portion of a city street that fronts exclusively city facilities. The nearest residential use is 350 feet away – on the other side of the 405 Freeway. Light industrial uses on Cotner further to the south already contend with substantial and unsupervised homelessness. The Safe Parking area is a city-owned parking lot used exclusively by City staff.

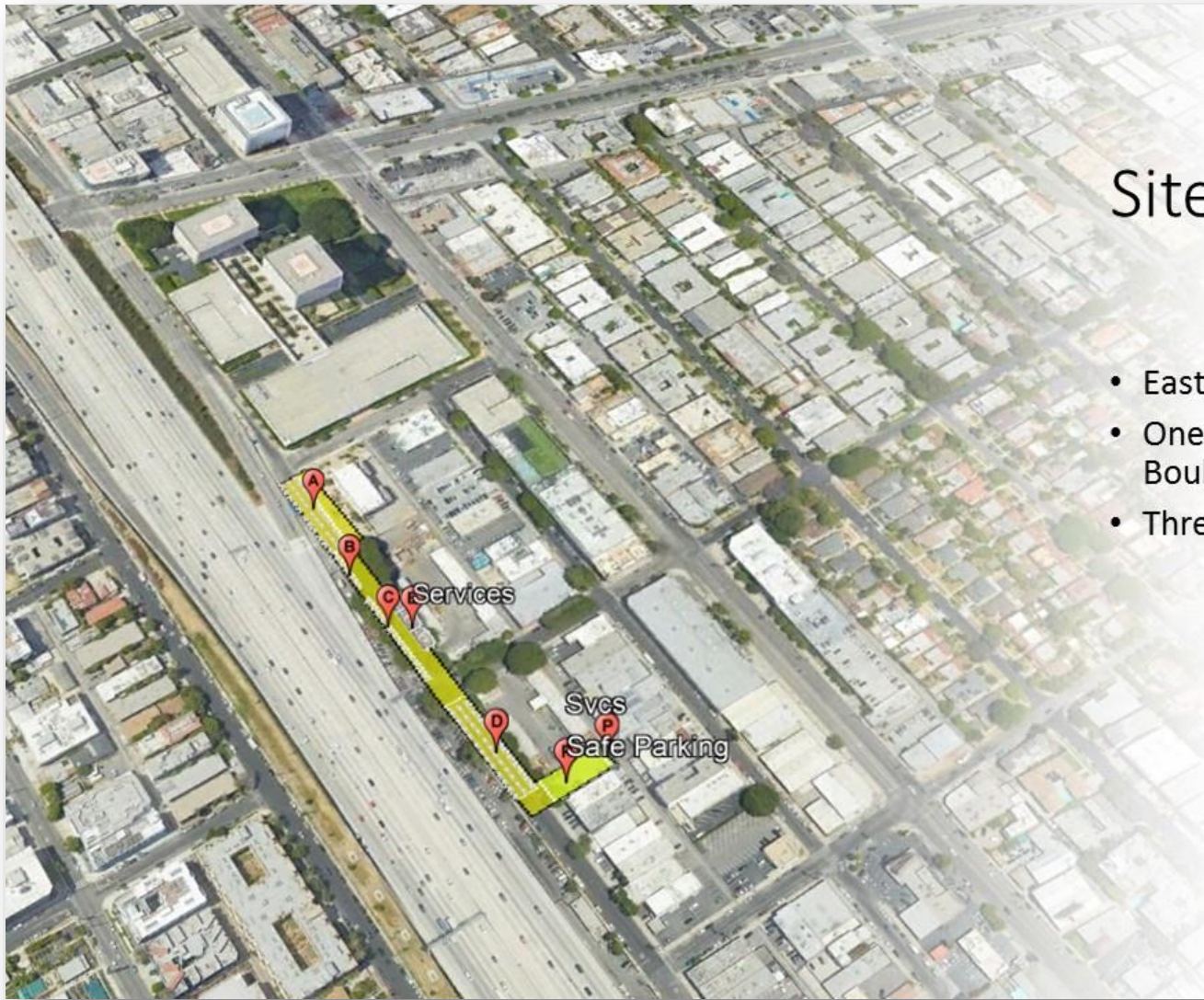
Transportation Impacts

Cotner is currently used by a relatively small number of drivers to gain access to the 405 as well as access to eastbound and westbound Santa Monica Blvd. This access will remain, as drivers can utilize Pontius and Nebraska to access Cotner north of Nebraska.



A brief PowerPoint presentation follows.





Site Location

- East of the 405
- One block below Santa Monica Boulevard
- Three blocks west of Sepulveda.



Fronts three City of
L.A. maintenance
yards/facilities.

No businesses, no
residential

Current State



The Cotner Solution

- Room for 120 Trailers (114x13', 6x21') plus 150' of supportive services trailers.
- Can use previously LA purchased campers – The campers used by L.A. Rec & Parks during Covid.
- \$20,000 list price if no City trailers available.
- Fronts only City property.
- Zero residential impact.
- Zero business impact.
- Already site of heavy encampments.
- L.A. already has experience from LARP Covid Response.
- No expensive infrastructure.
- Supportive services use larger RVs.
- No through traffic, city vehicles only, increased safety.



Trailers with water and power at Westwood Recreation Complex during Covid-19.

Utilities, Emergency Services

- Water and power would be provided in the same fashion as it was provided during Covid in our local parks.
- A service provider would regularly empty back-water tanks.
- Trash pick-up would be provided by City garbage trucks.
- Access is provided for police and fire response.



Safe Parking

According to the 2020 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, vehicular homelessness represents approximately 39% (18,900+) of the total number of unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County.

Vehicle dwellers are often unaware of safe places to rest at night and often lack access to the homeless services delivery system or connection to available supportive services.

- State law requires that homeless shelters have a safe parking area.
*"A 'homeless shelter' **shall include** a parking lot owned or leased by a city, county, or city and county specifically identified as one allowed for **safe parking** by homeless and unstably housed individuals."*
(emphasis added) Cal. Gov. Code 8698.4
- The Safe Parking area would be located in a City-Owned parking lot and provide:
 - Access to park a vehicle in a safe parking lot with onsite security and restrooms.
 - Access to have a Coordinated Entry System (CES) assessment completed.
 - Referrals and linkages to community resources.
 - Access to case management, financial assistance, and benefit connection.





Access to 405 Maintained

- For those drivers that use Cotner to get to building entrances, the 405 or Santa Monica Boulevard, access is provided via Pontius Avenue.

"If this is sustainable long term,...it's a good concept."
USA Today

RVs get new role as 'quarantine and isolation housing' and for homeless



Chris Woodyard
USA TODAY

Published 4:08 p.m. ET March 30, 2020 | Updated 4:21 p.m. ET March 30, 2020

- "During times of disaster, state and local agencies have used RVs to aid as local command centers, portable offices, temporary housing and other critical uses,"
- "RVs were already starting to play a role in housing the homeless in California before the coronavirus surfaced."
- "With 20 travel trailers provided by the state of California – left over from housing firefighters battling [the state's giant brush blazes](#) – Los Angeles County was able to transform two parking lots into housing for the homeless, complete with water and sewage hookups, [in about a month each](#)."
- "I see this [RVs] as an immediate, quick, innovative response." - Va Lecia Adams Kellum, CEO of St. Joseph's Center
- **"If this is sustainable long term," she said, "it's a good concept."**