

# Accessible Public Parks and Safe Shelter

Planning a Safe Path Forward for Critical Homeless Solutions

By Ramon Cruz

## Enabling Structured Homeless Camping and 24/7 Safe Accessible Shelter People and Parks

***Our parks are endowed with many blessings including a long tradition of recreational camping. Today, increasing numbers of long-term campers introduce new challenges and possibly the opportunity to provide a doorstep to shelter and emergency housing services. Imagine an outdoor therapeutic hospice to recover and recuperate from the ravages of the street, [PSTSD](#) (Post Street Trauma Stress Disorder), and the aggregate of ailments, losses, rejections, failures and gravitational stress along the way, for those struggling with inadequate shelter and the challenges of survival. A long journey. Deferred self-maintenance. This outdoor space is not the only doorstep, but one unique with several strategic resources and the capacity for thoughtful management and expansion, as needed.***

***Can you imagine a [Doggie-People Park](#) in your neighborhood? Or one that features [Music and Dance Therapy](#)? Include infrastructure with [Green Construction](#) and power grid independence? Are cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles and Fountain Valley guilty of [inhumane violations of human rights](#)? Is [24/7 access to urgent shelter care](#) too much to ask? Are [herd hazards](#) more powerful than herd immunity?***

***It is our moral duty to confront and solve the inhumane blight of homelessness and to understand some of the major causes of unhoused conditions and deadly hunger and exposure. The path forward requires very careful planning and precautions for safety and protection of the ecology, however, especially with modern excesses of housing deprived people. For Native Americans, the entire continent was originally one big public park, which they valued and protected for the commonwealth. A park that invited guests with a bring-your-own [tipi](#) (BYOT) expectation whenever and wherever needed.***

***As an alternative to BYOT and dangerous overnight shelters, we offer the essential resource of the [Arc of Safety \(AoS\)](#) with a [Pandemic Safe Haven](#), [Hospitalization Pressure Relief](#), and sustainable [Structured Campgrounds](#).***

***To some extent, the situations and behaviors of homeless campers and many refugees today mirror the quests of ancient trekkers and First Peoples who originally set foot on American soil. We invite you to join us on a virtual journey with our ancestors from East to West and a few episodes from my personal and family journeys as Mexican immigrants, as well. The tented people in our streets and parks today did not just suddenly appear from outer space or seismic faults...***

## The Original Garden

To set the framework for this discussion, let's step back a bit to view the big picture. In the beginning were beautiful but raw lands crafted by nature and suitable to sustain the lives of most creatures of all types. Hence, bountiful evolutions blossomed, some thriving longer than others. Diversity was the key to success, both at the level of new gene variations and speciation. The magic of genes and sustainable variations. Whether just a trend or some type of objective, this pattern generally resulted in greater

numbers of species and populations notwithstanding the changes in landscapes and ecological limits over eons.

A self-perpetuating phenomenon still active today where new species can evolve within an incubation period as brief as [50 years](#). You don't have to believe in evolution or understand the details to marvel at the omnipresent process that abounds in fascinating beauty every day and every place. This evolved from that. We evolved from those. Understandably, some find it questionable and unnerving. Not a new debate.

Occasional mass extinctions have happened, as well. Five that we have tracked so far, and possibly more may occur in the future. Despite the catastrophic causes of these holocausts, some species somehow had just the right combinations of genes to survive. And they carried forward the relay torch for their descendants, along with secret weapon DNA. Fortunately, some small mammals happened to be included in the lucky few survivors of the [last great extinction](#). Our small-scale mammal ancestors survived, but [larger dinosaurs](#) and many other species did not, including most tree-dwelling birds.

If there ever were a time to pull god-like strings in favor of hominid evolutions, this was the time to do it. Too early in history for political corruption to be on the table. Maybe an archangel intervened, somehow? Did they have politics, too?

As terrific as we are today, homo sapiens were not the first mammals or first hominids to place our footprints on the sands of time. But our evolving genes sustained us, despite the fate of many competing hominids. Some scientists estimate the [daily species extinction rate](#) of all species to be as high as 150. Every million years or so, more routine extinctions today also knock out about at least [ten percent](#) of species on the planet. Life is a struggle. Always has been. How we survive in our treks today may be aided by the journeys of living things millions of years ago, with genes that survive due to their useful capacities. Reproduction the only answer to limited lifespans. The cumulative journey of journeys. Family of families.

Extinct are also a number of hominid species, of which the most well-known is the [Neandertal](#). Intermingling between modern humans and Neandertals was possible about 30,000 years ago and led to populations with various combinations of genes of benefit to both species. What destroyed the Neandertals as a culture or species is open to debate, but likely tribal conflicts and competition played a role. Since modern humans retain many Neandertal genes, you might say we genetically adopted the Neandertals. A more diverse and resilient family. One benefit may be genes that help to adapt to colder climates.

Whether intermingling with DNA across families, tribes, ethnic groups, continents or sub-species, over generations, mostly beneficial genes tend to persist, influenced by ambient ecologies, the impartial governors. Some genes, and [epigenetic DNA](#) strands, may sleep in the background, until needed or provoked. Those combinations that are harmful will lose popularity with the democratic selection process. Pre-reproduction death registers a negative vote. Use it or lose it. Love sandwich voided.

### Diversity and Resilience

Along with periodic ice-ages and geographical climate variations, seasonal weather extremes have also contributed to more resilience for many species, prodding them to adapt with annual migrations, hibernations and periodic mating cycles, for example, with the help of diverse and untethered genes. Protein templates produced at times by rogue 3D printers. If they work, they persist. Thick skin

helps to safely traverse mountains, deserts and tropical jungles. Diversity and resilience, the promise for the future. Seasonal extremes an unappreciated benefit. Like a mean football coach or a demanding tennis fitness trainer. Nature routinely challenges our genes, and our jeans, too! It also gives us something to look forward to, every spring. Our [moon](#) also helps to regulate our seasons.

Likewise, those species that can successfully adapt to Climate Change may be ready for even more extremes. One advantage of the human brain is that we can decode the wizardry of natural genes and make situational solutions and shelters ahead of the evolutionary process. Coats, jackets, tipis, igloos, air conditioning, etc. We still haven't figured out how to make rain, or reposition rain clouds, but we can [desalinate ocean water](#) along our coasts to save us during severe droughts. With the wings of an airplane we can also fly over mountains and oceans to lands with more suitable climates. No feathers needed.

*We finally figured out, if big birds can fly, why can't I?* The lessons of nature and genes. But this Climate Change phenomenon isn't natural, it's an accident of man. And only our species can fix our sin, clean up our noxious mess. All nature can do, if we self-evolve out, is possibly find a more prudent species to fill the role of the top predator and animal breeder on the planet. Possibly one that doesn't like to kill so much. That might take a while, on this planet, given all the genes we've seen so far. May have to start afresh. The chances that only prudent hominids will survive the oxygen snuffer, not good.

We boast about magical machines that convey humans to the moon, and possibly soon to planet Mars. But sometimes our wizardry wanes for simple practicalities like making more safe housing available for our growing populations of homo sapiens, which deficit we have for decades seen in most large cities on this continent and others. Food distribution doesn't seem to match our needs in many places, as well. Is Climate Change the ultimate game killer? [Anthropocene](#) oxygen spoiler?

Perhaps we need to find and develop realistic safe habitation zones in other parts of our own planet for catastrophic emergencies more immediately available than the moon or Mars? Back to the caves? Ways to survive another ice age? A place to store all our maize, wheat, frozen burritos, weapons and battleships? Space trekking is fun, but if we can't figure out a safe way to survive on the planet of our birth, we're in deep guano.

### Force of Love

Whenever species survive, their genes have another generation to evolve, sometimes with new tricks up their sleeves. Some improvements, however, are at the cost of all those members who couldn't quite fit through the new winning doorway, or handle different extremes of weather and [ecosystems](#). Through the food chain, different species also impact the viability of others. It's called natural selection. Automatic democracy at the level of genes. The most important link in a food chain is always the first bottom link, the floor. No floor, no food! Bottoms up! [Massive blue whales](#) thriving on krill sustained by phytoplankton, a major source of [oxygen](#) to enrich our air and seas. Tiny plants able to photosynthesize. And what do the plankton need for existential nutrients? What do they NOT need in their environment? Studying the distribution of [phytoplankton](#) in our oceans may help us survive the next big one.

At the brink of procreation, the majority always wins. More healthy people as well as flora and fauna pass on their DNA better than the sickies. Humans have also acquired the status of planet Earth's greatest predator, and also the greatest breeder of plants and animals we like to eat and train for services. We breed and harvest more than we hunt and kill. Larger populations with less diversity, as

we clear forests for more corn. Domesticated corn to feed our top breed pigs that excrete more methane into our atmosphere, disturbing many sensitive ecosystems with more greenhouse gasses, Climate Change. Evolution never ends. **For mammals and other sexually reproductive creatures including humans,  $E = mc^2$  where  $m$  = heart muscle mass,  $c$  = love concentrate, the secret sauce. The magnetic Force of Love. *Let the Force be with you.***

For young adults, just a reminder that the powerful Force of Love requires that we all need to be prepared before making babies. Give them a healthy home. We have too many unhoused adults and children as it is. Be responsible parents and plan appropriately. If you're lonely or depressed, a pet may be a good companion while you build a more sustainable life and solve personal problems. Pets need love, too, and responsible care. And they usually wag their tails or purr instead of crying, like babies. Stay in school as long as possible, if you have that opportunity. Knowledge is fun and helpful. Thank you for contributing to the sustainable productivity of life. Use the Force wisely.

Our species, and particularly our generation of major world powers, will be known for beautiful ideas and ugly killing machines, which may eventually kill us all. Russian roulette politics. [Red Roulette](#) in China. Unmanned assassination drones scoped by our white-gloved finest. Unrecognized casualties – collateral damages. At least we apologize for our mistakes. Oops! Winning wars to create more enemies. Obsessive leadership expectations and old-fashioned imperialism. Selfish morals financed by shortsighted [dark money PACs](#). Climate Change, front and center. It's all connected in well understood ways, and we do have choices to improve the future for our species and all those human and natural resources upon which we depend.

### Lost Civilizations

Being top of our food chain has its advantages as long as we also take responsibility to maintain vital ecosystems in a sustainable manner. We're smart enough to know when we've been bad. Sometimes our inventiveness can go to our head. [Lost civilizations](#) show evidence of the consequences when we get careless with our predatory inclinations, or tamper with the limitations of natural resources. Let's hope our species does not thoughtlessly evolve out. What would our pigs do without all that corn we provide? Who's going to manage the stock exchange? Can [livestock](#) eat stock certificates? Are we already seeing signs of civilization failure with increasingly insufficient food and safe housing to match our population spread? Are we headed back to caves, tipis and igloos? Climate Change may be our undoing. The writing is on the cavern glyphs, the weather almanac.

### Choices

Your choice of a mate does make a difference. But unless you have twins, all your children will be formed by unique combinations of genes from both parents. So many genes and so many more [combinations, numbering in the trillions](#). *Don't blame your spouse if your baby's eyes are of a different color.* The magic of sexual procreation. Too many cooks... Unique combinations also add greatly to diversity and resilience, but occasionally to unhealthy malformations, as well.

Odds are, in addition to a few deformities, occasionally a genius like Einstein will possess the lucky combo to envision the secrets of space, or a child protégé like [Juana Inés de la Cruz](#) from Mexico may push the ceiling of expectations for women. Nothing is perfect, but obviously the population multiplies, some would argue only too well. You can love it. You can hate it. But you can't stop it. Biodiversity rules because it is the most sustainable model for life on this planet that has prevailed to date.

Everybody has a little color, some have more. A bountiful rainbow. The polity of *democratic genes* vs. *selfish genes*.

Choosing to abort or support an unplanned pregnancy is important to evaluate very carefully regarding quality of life issues, including the health and readiness of the mother. Avoid economic struggles and housing or food insecurity. Plan carefully. Below we will also more directly talk about some of the choices on [policy platforms](#) today affecting those struggling with adequate housing and our vision for [safe healing shelters](#). We will also focus on [economic sinkholes](#) that threaten the livelihood of many. Precautions to avoid.

### Romantic Spirit

Our romantic spirit. Although many species have coexisted for eons with no sexual procreation, let our species be one renown for simply loving to love and finding the most romantic excuses to engage in sexual love. As if we need an excuse, pandemics or no. Let our creativity also flourish with gender preferences of all types. [Other species](#) find it fun, as well. We also go out of our way to make family and friends laugh and be entertained with games and creativity.

*Love is never really earned, it is demanded, like a powerful magnet, heart to heart!* But even the most pure love, like maternal love, for example, tends to be a little selfish, too. Helps to keep the procreation wheels rolling, balls bouncing. Between love and hostility, the space of [civility](#) may prevail in interpersonal relations. The only way to teach love is to demonstrate your love ad lib. Heart to heart. Smiles and hugs and generosity of time and commitment.

Avoid name-calling and demeaning adjectives. Like muddy boots, harsh language should be checked at the door of your precious home, or habitable shelter. Deliberately insulting others on social media also damages your personal self-respect. You become a hater. Remedy, show off your stuff of love. More romance and even more babies. Hide in the closet of haters, or get into the groove of givers. Maybe it was the **Archangel of Love** who championed our species after all, back in the last great extinction. Maybe she also figured out a way to save a few small plunky birds. My favorite pastime.

### Herd Hazards

***What happens when herd infection vectors outnumber or outperform herd immunities? What if the entire herd spent several hours a day in the same barn, breathing the same air, drinking from the same water trough? Would that change the percentage for herd immunity? What if only half the herd lived this way, but the others had separate barns, or no barns at all? Some people have vaccine hesitancy. That's a problem. But crowded housing for many people is not a choice. When things get worse, crowding increases. Essential workers. Do our immunology scientists have [forecasting models](#) for these scenarios? Do these models also include existing or proposed crowding intervention alternatives such as the [Pandemic Safe Haven](#)?***

The same source that gives us life and love, our intimate families, can also harbor the seeds of our demise, simply through proximity and volatile viruses and bacteria. Seems like we should have learned that lesson when we first discovered the need for sanitation centuries ago. Or maybe it was one of those forbidden questions you're not supposed to ask. Why do wealthy people have big houses with lots of bedrooms, balconies, verandas, patios and hired hands to do the dirty work, like cleaning toilets? Why do some spouses sleep in separate beds?

The [herd immunity ratio](#) depends on the rate of infection when exposed to a given microbe. A higher infection rate, like that for measles, results in a herd immunity ratio of 93-95% required to protect those with no vaccinations. That translates to large numbers of people either previously surviving infection or being vaccinated. For COVID-19 the herd immunity ratio is estimated to be between 80% to 90%. If a variant like Omicron has a higher infection rate, the required herd immunity ratio would be higher, as well. Infected people who die do not help the ratio for safe immunity rates. If they are safely buried, they will no longer pose an infection hazard to others, however. Communities with lower vaccination rates should be more diligent with vaccinations, masking and safe distancing in order to reduce their herd hazards exposure. If you attend weekly large group gatherings, take the COVID test as part of the gathering ritual. Get used to it. Bless it.

Those who survive infections have good immunity only for a limited period of time, like those who only get one vaccination and no boosters. If you know any survivors in your community, ask them for their advice and lessons learned. Rural areas may more comfortably be safely isolated, until the youth go to school or families come to town or go to church. Shopping in town less often may also be a prudent adaptation by planning ahead and buying some necessities online to be delivered. My granddaughter got infected while she was in medical school. This was before vaccinations were available. Her symptoms were mild. Nonetheless, she's a strong advocate for vaccinations now that she treats many COVID-19 patients as a practicing resident in Texas hospital Emergency Rooms.

It's a numbers game compounded by the enemy being able and likely to change the rules at any moment as a matter of course. Very frequent mutations. That's the big picture for them. No emotional concern for abandoning their ancestral legacy several times a day. No emotions. Futuristic machines. Maybe the Archangel of Love had a powerful counterpart here. Hopefully we will learn to sustainably adapt.

***We posit that the main threats of pandemic infection spread are not in our classrooms, workplaces, grocery stores or public transportation (which certainly provide many nibbles and bites), but are back at home.*** This is where we incubate these viral assaults and give them time and enclosed space to grow and occupy the air we breathe and share with family and friends around sofas, dining tables, kitchens, bedrooms and dens for many hours at a time. Clean door knobs or toilet flusher handles? A battlefield trench disguised by TV entertainment, video games, delicious food on the table, friendly conversations, innocuous laughter and quietly sleeping to the sound of snores, while the bugs silently do their work. Watch dogs not alerted. Security cameras not microscopic. Do we need a 'no jokes' rule at the dining table to contain the laughter?

The holiday gathering magnifier accelerated by cross-country jets. Merry XXmas! If nothing else, families will be wise to ventilate their homes with open windows especially when gathering with other folks, although that may not be practical during the holidays. Patio gatherings are also safer than indoors. Investigate [safer HVAC filtration](#) systems and filters, such as a [HEPA filter](#). Maybe give yourself another year to be better prepared? Prepare for the new normal. Pandemics. Mutations.

The virus is not smart. But nature has programmed it to do repetitive behaviors and form different shapes and molecules that work for their reproduction. Our social practices and infrastructures have no meaning to them, other than an environment that helps them reproduce more efficiently. If we build larger rooms, better ventilation and practice more social distancing, some of them may also adapt to that scenario, as well. Looks like the latest variants are very happy with the way we live, play and work in our houses, playgrounds and workplaces today.



The threats of confined air spaces we inhabit in groups are obviously a hazard we must learn to disarm for our protection in whatever ways we can. Spatial efficiency may need a new dimension or two for human sustainability. Efficient [natural ventilation](#) will help. Architectural safeguards and building - safety standards must be expanded while we further investigate chemical prophylactics to deal directly with viral biology. Whether architectural or biological, the public health remedies must be equitably accessible to all socio-economic sectors of our populations.

***Can our public health institutions also provide safe havens from pandemics and other diseases: [emergency shelters](#), where working class people who are ill can access separate spaces to protect their families once they test positive to the virus?*** Accessible safe isolation rooms can help fight the battle against [other types of airborne infectious diseases](#) as well, such as the common cold, influenzas, chickenpox, mumps, measles, tuberculosis and diphtheria, for example. If a pandemic becomes endemic, the emergency shelter space will likely help to reduce the demand for hospitalizations, as well. *Policies that are based on avoiding overwhelmed hospitalizations, may be unwittingly allowing large volumes of deaths, as long as they don't occur too frequently. Institutional priorities. Relax masking requirements while more people die less frequently. What's the standard for allowable monthly deaths to this or that pandemic? Who is responsible for mitigating deaths at any monthly rate? The natural death rate in crowded households will decrease as the more vulnerable members in each unit bite the viral dust. Is that statistical progress?*

### Crowded Households

The standard used for overcrowded households is where the total count of occupants exceeds the number of rooms in the residence excluding the bathroom. A home with more than 1.5 people per room is severely crowded. A study of nearly 400 pregnant women in New York showed that COVID-19 infection rates are nearly three times higher for those who live in neighborhoods with crowded households. This study by [Columbia University](#) was published in the [Journal of the American Medical Association](#) and showed that crowded housing is more significant than population density or poverty in the region.

A study in 2020 by CalMatters looked at overcrowded housing and COVID-19 infections in California. The analysis results entitled [The neighborhoods where COVID collides with overcrowded homes](#) finds that [Neighborhoods with large numbers of people per household have about 3.7 times the rate of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 1,000 residents as neighborhoods where few residents live in tight quarters](#). The research focused on 10 counties with the largest numbers of COVID cases in May 2020, including Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, Orange, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Francisco, Kern, Tulare and Sacramento. **Sacramento** was the **only** county where overcrowded housing neighborhoods **did not** show a significant increase in COVID infections. About two-thirds of Californians in crowded households are essential workers or live with essential workers, and most of these live in poverty and are people of color.

[About one in six Californians — 6.3 million people — live in overcrowded houses or apartments that make it difficult to isolate from one another](#). In response to these data, Lee Riley, a UC Berkeley epidemiology professor who has studied infectious disease in urban slums in other countries, said [The strong link between overcrowded housing and infections could point to one reason that California's shelter-in-place order didn't bend the curve right away: People continued to spread the virus to the people with whom they live](#). For many of these households, from our perspective we might say: **Essentially, the herds are in the house!** Hazardous herds of microbes and vectors, that is.

Hispanics generally have more household crowding than other ethnic groups by state as shown in this interactive report by [America's Health Rankings](#). Click on the STATE tab for your state. On the POPULATION tab you can also choose Black, Hispanic, White or General Population. Other measures or years are also available in other tabs.

Several studies in the UK on the topic of COVID infection rates for larger household sizes and ethnicity, were analyzed and compared in a consensus paper, [Housing, household transmission and ethnicity: For SAGE meeting 26th November 2020](#). The findings show that *There is a correlation between large /multigenerational households and increased risk of infection and or mortality across all five studies, even when controlling for deprivation and other factors*. This paper also includes recommendations focusing on guidance and issues for those in the populations studied.

We also know that during a pandemic each one of us must be careful with social distancing, masking and good hygiene, especially in crowded homes. And let us not forget the prophylactics when we're having fun with our mates. Take any vaccination that is needed to protect yourself and your family. Make sure everyone at home is safely vaccinated. Even if you're chicken, as many of us are, you don't want your body to become the nutrition and petri dish for nasty viruses hopping in and out of your lungs. Those viral bugs really do thrive on human lung tissue. To them it's like caviar or truffles. If you don't feed them, they quickly die, and they can't bounce around to other family members.

If you want to be macho, get the max macho vaccination and booster available. And brag about it in the locker room! Protect yourself, your family, your friends, your clubs, your sports teams, your classmates, your work chums, and your community. The vaccine: a prophylactic for your lungs. Don't be clever with your strategies. You don't want to lock-step take down your [entire family or household](#). *Learn to protect the inside of your home, much like you have invested in fortifying the outside*. Add another room or two, and better ventilation, including balconies, if that's something you can afford. Placing some [partitions between beds](#) may be helpful if your rooms are crowded.

***Without good ventilation everybody in the same room or car for several hours will likely breathe the same soup in the fish bowl, regardless of spacing. Only [high quality KN95 respirator masks](#) will help in this situation.*** Some people who test positive for COVID-19 voluntarily sleep in their cars to protect the family. Others may pop a tent on the premises, if space available. Accessibility of safe spaces for isolation or quarantine is beyond the means for most essential workers, struggling day by day. Finding ways to protect them and their household members should be of paramount interest for the health of all who depend on these essential people. Virtually all of us who like to eat. It's not that these people are unemployed, it's that their compensation and safety standards are not adequate. Maybe we need to pay a little more for our veggies, pork and poultry? Higher, more humane standards, all the way around. Happier herds of cattle and more vigorous cowboys on the job.

### Forecasting Models

Scientific forecasting models for COVID can be [helpful for policy decisions](#), as well. Only short term predictions are reliable, however, under current applications and data. We hope to encourage the CDC and [university think tanks](#) to explore a variety of potential intervention proposals in order to determine the logical framework of possibilities, regardless of whether budgets or politics are currently aligned. Is it worth a trillion dollars to save a million lives? That breaks down to only \$1K per life saved. Saving hospitalization costs may easily balance that.



### Nature

The Original Garden was naturally cultivated each season by whimsical torments and floods which often caused chaos to growing populations of two-legged intelligent creatures that evolved from apes over a million years ago. Glaciers and floods also helped to carve out some of the most spectacular canyons, rivers, cataracts and wonders of the world. Tectonic ruptures helped to recycle the mountains ground down by everyday erosion.

Time bountiful when not mischievously destructive. One rule: things always move, one way or another, quickly or slowly. Gravity tends to make big things round and swirl in the heavens with geometric orbits. To see what the largest and smallest plants and animals are made of, including magical genes, you need a good microscope. More amazing are the intricate ways all the parts are constructed and how they work together, how they [cooperate](#) with one another, or sometimes don't, in the milieu of [cellular life](#).

### Domestication of Plants

In between floods and ice-ages, the first known domestication of cereals, such as wheat, barley, rye, oats and flaxseeds, were systematically developed along the [Fertile Crescent](#) by several cultures. The traditional practice of foraging, hunting and gathering, now with competition for food supply – agriculture. At times when forage or prey were scarce, having a supply of easily stored grain was a life-saver. Cultivating grains required more land, irrigation, storage space, labor, planning and organization. ***This is where our sapiens species claims its name. Now we somewhat peacefully can mostly eat what we grow, hopefully without knocking out too many trees, or fighting neighbors over land space for crops, or water rights. Not just clever tools, but how we use them to magnify our sustainable future possibilities in an organized, planned manner. Farming vs. hunting and gathering.***

Agriculture often a family or community endeavor. A driver of [future civilizations](#), with a good dose of cooperation and reciprocal incentives. A way of life. Less scavenging, more farming and celebrating the harvest cycle. Understanding the seasons, chronology and movements of heavenly bodies became an essential art, as well. If you can't control the rain, it helps to predict it and related factors to support important crops. The science of survival. The stuff of ancient meteorology. Not that we don't like rain dances, too!

### East to West

In that same Holocene Epoch, when the ice-age of the times was thawing, and agriculture developing in various parts, the pristine lands of America were discovered by brave human explorers and large-game hunters from the northern next-door continent of Asia, who ventured by land and sea. A day's work for some of these mobile agents may have been to follow a stand of seaweed in search of prey harbored by the [macroalgae](#), such as gulls, terns, snowy egrets, great blue herons, cormorants, and shore birds. With the lucky catch of a seal, sea lion, sea otter, whale or other large prey, the team may have taken a break to prepare their feast and celebrate. Otherwise, on the move.

Many were likely following the great submerged [kelp forest](#) that branches from Japan to Alaska and all the way down the Pacific coast to Baja California. No map or App needed. Destination to be discovered, with a sticky, submerged, seemingly endless floating welcome mat glowing in the sun. To the hunters, this seashore land mass was a fruitful path, not a continent and not a place bearing a European name. With families to feed, they endured and progressed, not looking for gold or equal rights, but just

day-by-day hunting and gathering along the coast, with more competition on their tracks. Yet the massive algae blades and bladders may have glistened in the eddies like gold in the sun. [Edible gold](#).

By then, other parts of Africa, Australia and Europe had already been explored and populated by different groups of our hominid species beginning around 100,000 years earlier. This newfound pathway, we now call 'America', promised more land, prey and fertile grounds for the needs of subsequent generations of adventurous and hungry people. There were no land developers or travel agents at the time, although neophyte farmers would have found fertile valleys of increasing value. No coyote guides. Navigation was touch and go, dead reckoning. The north star, the default GPS. Trekkers with an appetite finding their way across continents and seas, mountains and valleys and deserts in between.

Today we see travelers, truckers and trippers of all types, but when things get tough at home with mouths to feed, the default mode kicks in. Start trekking. Built into our genes like the instincts of our ancient ancestors. Maybe toting some seeds in your bags. Along with animal skins, finding shelter in harsh weather, like a cave, may keep you out of deep trouble. A [portable tent](#) in a backpack would help if you had a time machine? More likely, some may also have invented igloos made of ice or snow for lengthy hunting trips, much like the [Inuit](#) centuries ago. Tipis have been used by [Indigenous peoples of the Plains](#) for at least 5,000 years. They surely knew how to melt and drink snow for a good source of water to drink.

People are crafty when they need to be. Tools and weapons for hunting and cutting bones were likely standard gear, like those ancient tools first discovered in a cave in [Clovis, New Mexico](#). Living at the edge. Pathmaker interns wanted. A simple reality path: you move, you eat, or you die, painfully and slowly. They were brave, but they were prepared. Nomad trekking, a standard M.O. for at least 100,000 years. Maybe 1,000,000 years for hominids in general. We like being mobile and checking out the horizon from time to time. Incentives, goodies we discover along the way. Escape from competing tribes threatening your hunting turf. Not unlike [territorial lions](#). Ever try calming down growling arguments between feral cats in your backyard? Territorial claims on space and paths. More territories, more challengers. Maybe a cat whisperer could find a way to peace?

After the ice-age thaw, a significant expansion of humans during a warmer period seems to have played a role in the dramatic demise of large megafauna, including types of camels, horses and mammoths, like those found in the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles, for example. Debates about the original means and paths of human migration from Asia to America continue to this day, but there is no doubt about the existence of original settlements of First Peoples in America many thousands of years before any large European sail boats and war ships were ever launched, crafted or imagined.

Looks like the big beasts of the time made a big hit in original recipes, as well. Cooking meat over fire has been a custom for hominids for over [700,000 years](#), long before people came to America. Before that their ancestors ate raw meat for more than a million years, just like many wild predators do today. Like the feral cats who prey on and eat my backyard wild birds! But the felines also peril rats and other rodents, too, competing for the birdseeds. Cooking meat on a grill may have been invented by a Caribbean Indian tribe in modern times called the Taino, which grill they called the [barbacoa](#) and was documented back in 1526. Celebrate your summer BBQ feast with a nod to the Taino.

Don't know if they made tacos for their meaty BBQ snacks, however. But it's possible, since the Maya in Mexico used corn tortillas filled with peppers, squash and other goodies at least since 1,500 B.C. as

the first tacos in recorded history. [Burritos](#) made with flour tortillas may have originated during the Mexican Revolution invented by a vendor who transported his goods on a donkey. Native Americans in the Southwest also made burrito-like foods filled with beans and meat sauce. My grandfather claims to have invented a special very long and slender burrito wrapped in a large flower tortilla and deep-fried in real lard, which concoction may be loosely called a [chimichanga](#). Similar deep-fried burritos, usually shorter and wider, are otherwise claimed for origination in several other stories. You'll hear more about my grandfather's immigration from Mexico and his restaurant in Los Angeles below.

### Chiquihuite Cave

New evidence from the Chiquihuite Cave in Zacatecas, Mexico, as reported in 2018, establishes records that human inhabitants survived in this area even before the thaw, between 26,000 and 19,000 years ago, as described in [Smithsonian Magazine](#). Nearly 2,000 stone tools and pieces created through their manufacture have been found and documented by the Autonomous University of Zacatecas. This archaeological site is more than 2,740 meters above sea level, not necessarily a comfortable altitude for most of us today.

No big deal, unless your grandfather, father and his ancestors were originally from the Zacatecas area, as was my paternal lineage. No, my known family ancestry did not come from that cave, none that we can trace, that is. My father and grandfather migrated to California from Zacatecas with papers in the early 1900's, along with a handful of my Dad's siblings, a couple still surviving, my Dad being the eldest. They lived in the city of Zacatecas, which is located about 45 miles NE of Chiquihuite Cave.

Since no human DNA has yet to be found in the cave, archeologists continue to [debate](#) the significance of the findings. To avoid human contamination at the site, no visitors are currently allowed. You may wish to hold off on travel plans, but the city of Zacatecas is centered on bountiful gold and silver mines and was once a major player in the Mexican Revolution with the 1914 [Battle of Zacatecas](#). Natives made good use of the mining opportunities long before the European invasion. My grandfather was a merchant at the time of the Mexican Revolution in Zacatecas and was threatened by Pancho Villa if he sold goods to the wrong side of the revolution. This threat, and a large growing family to protect, motivated my grandfather to migrate north for safety. Sound familiar?

Research continues on the cave site findings by the Autonomous University of Zacatecas. Looking for human DNA. If they can't find human DNA in this cave, my hunch is that they may find a sacred burial ground in a nearby cave. Just a hunch. I am not an archeologist. Checking the DNA variations in current populations, especially among traditional native tribes throughout Mexico, may also provide some clues, especially if different patterns are clustered around Zacatecas. Something exciting to think about for my compadres. Talking about the roots of primal tribes in America. And probably more questions about their original journey.

In addition to the Zacatecas cave, the White Sands National Park in New Mexico has offered human footprints in the sand dated back to 21,000 years ago according to reports by [NPR](#) and [Nature](#) published recently in 2021. This also raises more questions about the route of migration and the means. Did they possibly have a way to walk on snow and ice and withstand the freezing temperatures of the time? Did the climate somehow funnel them to the Americas from the north? New Mexico is also near the Gulf of Mexico which offers more intrigue regarding possible ocean navigation from other continents, possibly Australia?

### Pre-Clovis Boat Navigators

Another established explanation is that the earliest First Peoples [traveled by boats](#) down the Pacific coast eventually settling as far south as South America, possibly a couple thousands of years or more prior to the foot trekkers. Before the glacier path was open, this may have been the only avenue down the coast. Just launch a boat or two down the coast to explore. Even slow boats from China can outpace dirt trail hikers. Naval trekkers, fishing for land, game and fish, of course, with coastal navigation and a few islands to explore along the way. Your GPS is simply the coastline and the sun setting to the right. Just watch out for emerging rocks and big tidal waves. Could be some trail trekkers may have witnessed boaters passing by over the centuries.

But if boat migration was already proven to be reliable, why would people take to the road? Lack of boat making materials or knowledge? Maybe the paths that opened with glacier melting were just too tempting to ignore? Tougher trekkers to the core! Adventures to new destinations along the inviting paths. Cultural preferences for different tribes. Real estate mavens for the plains? Interesting encounters between tribes were also possible. Scientists are currently investigating the Channel Islands off the California coast to see if ancient artifacts may show pre-Clovis evidence, as well.

You should beware of questionable offers to decode your DNA and determine your tribal ancestry for a small price, as discussed in [A New History of the First Peoples in the Americas](#), an article in The Atlantic published in 2017. Too early for the Chiquihuite Cave story or White Sands discoveries, by a year or two, but a good analysis of what DNA studies have accomplished, so far. Some DNA services also offer ethnic ancestry tracing for geographical areas around the globe called [genetic ancestry testing](#). It may be helpful to [investigate the quality](#) of these offers in an objective manner.

### Public Commonwealth Lands

#### Matrilineal Leadership

In their day, Native Americans didn't need to own parcels of land, or claim title to water or trees. In general, [farming land](#) was under the domain of tribes or clans, often with matrilineal leadership. Women also [toiled in the soil](#). No fences necessary. The entire continent was one big public park. Like the Garden of Eden, but in their culture, natural phenomena respected as a sacred deity unto itself. They just pitched a tipi tent wherever appropriate. Mobility on the trail before motor cars or mobile phones. However, [smoke signals](#) were helpful, at times of crisis. Something like landline phones we still use for emergencies. You know, a type of [Morse Code](#) with small and big smoke puffs for dots and dashes. There are also probably a few [telegraph cables](#) still traversing our ocean floors, although decommissioned years ago.

And the Natives protected, nurtured and shared all natural resources for the benefit of the commonwealth. Sustainable for all. Sharing vs. greed. They didn't have air conditioning, but they did have the [rain dance](#). Even when the clouds were stubborn, dancing was inspirational and brought people together, like many churches, temples and chapels do today. In the sanctuary of nature, conveying the language of drums and the heartbeats of drummers and dancers. Heart to heart, drums to thunder, the language of the Rain Force. *Our maize crops need water, please!*

This was before the days of gambling casinos on reservations and films about cowboys and Indians. These films were the attraction at the neighborhood movie house when I was a kid in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Echo Park, at a premium of 50 cents, back in the 1950's. The old Holly theater was

eventually converted to the Jensen Recreation Center. Maybe the ghost of *The Thing* still lurks in the hallways.

The original Asian explorers and those possibly from earlier explorations over thousands of years, successfully developed several civilizations and cultures in America numbering in the millions with sophisticated infrastructure including aqueducts, pyramids and bountiful fields of corn, squash, beans, cotton and [tobacco](#) before the invasion of Columbus and other disease-spreading Europeans. Unfortunately, [land ownership laws](#) imposed upon the Natives by U.S. governance limited the parcel size to acreage below the space needed for successful agriculture, which diminished the needed harvest and income therefrom.

### Machu Picchu Angel

About two decades ago, on a vacation journey to Machu Picchu in Peru with a couple of friends, I was amazed and fascinated by the architectural monuments built by the Inca Empire. Not called a park, but the [Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu](#). Yes, some of the original flora and fauna were disturbed, but now mostly enshrined and framed beautifully for all to see, or worship, if you're not afraid of heights.

I was also surprised when a teenage girl from a nearby school extended a hand to me as I climbed some steep stairs with no handrails from a terrace, with friendly llamas grazing nearby. [Llamas and alpacas](#), by the way, are Camelids and were domesticated by the Incas more than 5,000 years ago. Below the terrace was a chasm too steep and deep to ponder. As I carefully focused on each step, suddenly a hand appeared from above. A gentle, open hand.

I had to bravely convince myself to grasp this extended hand before looking away from the stairs below. No one in our travel party would fit the size and shape of this unfamiliar hand. I took an optimistic chance. A pleasant smile. She welcomed me as if I were her *tio*. I was simply astonished. As I described this pleasant encounter to my friends later that day, I remembered her as my Machu Picchu Angel, not to be associated with [Angel's Landing](#), a dangerous climb in the area.

I don't think the bus my Angel rode from her school that day could manage the winding trail of Angel's Landing. Nor did I give that trail a try. But there were many other magnificent structures, trails, climbs and scenes to explore, photograph and remember, as shown in the links above through the eyes of many travelers. And friendly people along the way, as well as domesticated llamas to enjoy as pets. My new Angel friend also offered some interesting insights about her education in a nearby village. The llamas kept busy foraging on grass sprouting on the terrace and passively posed for several selfies. A good trade-off.

No flags or anyone to conquer or colonize when the original migrants from Asia arrived, some 15,000 years earlier, other than a few other tribes at different times, like the cultures of Olmecs, Maya, Incas, Toltecs and Aztecs for example. Some of the [earliest farming domestications](#) in the Americas can be traced back to Andean cultures including peoples in Peru and Chile as far back as 11,000 years ago. Several tribal nations were also aggressive and domineering. And so were their ancestors from Asia in times past.

### Mesoamerica

But that's another story, as is the story of why today's Asians are considered foreign when they descended from the same ancestors of original Native Americans? Foreign to whom? Foreign to the foreigners? Welcome to [Mesoamerica](#)! Mesoamerica is one of only three regions of the world where

writing is known to have independently developed (the others being ancient [Sumer](#) and China). Over 1,000 [native languages](#) have prevailed among indigenous peoples in the Americas to present times. Lots of love there, too! Some [linguists are focused](#) on maintaining the life of many of these languages. Beats studying Russian as I did in college when Sputnik was a global challenge.

Over time, many tribes mixed their cultures and genes, more diversity of ideologies and bloodlines, more resilience and adaptability. These are all my ancestors, along with a mixture of Europeans and others. Diversity and an open, inquisitive mind. My inheritance, my power. Don't need a family tree document or DNA ancestry report to recognize my inherited wealth of knowledge and spirit. Not a mystery. My culture informs my DNA. My passport, the hand of my Machu Picchu Angel. Under the authority of human love and empathy. One step above the right to life, because it is borne by the wings of the human spirit. The Force of Love. As my lawyer brother declared: *Our institutions belong to the people!*

### Parks Aplenty

#### State Investments and Gifts

Modern American states have also prudently invested in public parks in the federal, state, county and local city domains, after having [deforested](#), fenced off and developed much of the premium land. By the time European explorers learned to navigate the seas with nearly indestructible sail boats, new explorers and settlers were accustomed to solid infrastructure, walls, castles, metallic weapons, geometric structures and a culture of domination by warfare, as well as colonization and slavery. They also sought freedom and equality and made an earnest effort to scribble such intents in our founding documents, though compromised by existing institutions among the colonies. Institutions that continue to simmer with unrest in parts of the South and Midwest. Democracy itself debatable, except for the plurality of human genes that vote with thunderous heartbeats, and when in unison can awaken massive slumbering rainclouds. The voice of freedom from the heart. Every march demonstrating a harmonic and thunderous heartbeat.

Notwithstanding such motives, perhaps the beauty of newly discovered islands and continental wonders, lakes and rivers inspired some leaders to check development in selected areas in favor of natural resource protection. Were it not for the leadership and accomplishments of national and state park advocates, investors and donors, public and private, including taxpayers, over many years, we would not be in a position to find any new, possibly unanticipated, applications for some of these lands.

In Los Angeles, for example, we are particularly grateful to [Griffith J. Griffith](#) who donated more than 4,500 acres to the [City of Los Angeles in 1896](#) as a public recreation ground for all the people — an ideal that has been challenged over the years. Griffith Park today also includes a couple of golf courses, an observatory, equestrian trails, tennis courts, a zoo and many other attractions for adults and children, including a summer boys camp. There is also a [Camp Hollywood-Land](#) for girls in Hollywood outside of the Griffith Park area. Due to COVID-19 these camps, and many others, may be temporarily closed.

### Parks Use Controversies

Controversies over the use of public park lands have existed over many years, for example regarding [mining exploitation and accessibility](#). [Privatizing campgrounds](#) in parks is also being debated as is the increasing numbers of [non-recreational campers](#), such as homeless folks and long-term campers, in wildlands.



The concern about homeless campers involves federal, state and local parks and is one which requires more discussion, including the proposals outlined herein and many initiatives by responsible parties, cities and states being debated today, a few of which we describe below.

Proposals and [protests](#) regarding homeless shelters are dynamic news events changing the landscape nearly every week, especially in California. The majority of local politicians in Los Angeles, for example, feel pressure from constituents to avoid scenes of unmanaged and unsightly tent settlements in parks, sidewalks and streets.

**This is intended to be an informative piece to advance the cause of equitable access to our parks and wildlands as well as 24/7 access to safe emergency shelters in widely distributed facilities to meet the local need for all people with or without means in a careful and sustainable manner.** Please consider any novel ideas we offer to be suggestions to stimulate your own ideas. We are glad to also promote many of the very useful and promising pilot projects already in progress as you will see below. Hopefully, you may find some of them worthy of your support and your vote when needed. Some we also criticize over issues of concern, such as safety, as you will see.

Touchy politics are also at play. What [rights and needs](#) do unhoused people claim? To better understand homelessness, we also touch upon factors related to poverty and urban density, often a smokescreen to justify gentrification. We cannot ignore the nearly daily reminders of climate change and the horrible black cloud of COVID-19 that smothers our daily routines with economic consequences. The historical mission of parks needs to be brought to the fore, as well, in addition to conflicts with the treatment of the First People in California. *We need to reexamine our priorities and update the role that our public parks can play in solving our societal needs.*

Numerous parks and nature conservation areas are devoted to preserving and protecting native flora and fauna, and our favorite migrating birds, native to the region and continental ecology. Habitats for specific endangered species are sometimes targeted. Hard to believe that some species need to [migrate](#) over a thousand miles every year just to survive, including swimmers, ungulates, and flyers. An annual commute over mountains and oceans. Maps tacked into the nervous system, including little bird brains. Natural DNA coders. Don't try the [one-eyed migration](#) trick used by some of our avian flyers on the I-405.

[Migrating seasonal farmworkers](#) also provide essential services and often experience housing insufficiencies. Annual migrating genes do not require feathers. [Human snowbirds](#) also migrate south during colder seasons. Our parks witness it all in confidence. Do your thing, hopefully with mutual care of the environment with open doors to our parks. No gates or restrictions displayed, at least until you may wish to camp overnight for extended periods in some areas.

### Lessons of Evolution

There is a lesson in evolution. One or more. In addition to the awe of species diversity and untethered engineering. Lessons on how to fly like mosquitoes, moths, bats, eagles and [pterosaurs](#). Maybe survival is important, after all? Not just survival of the fittest, but also survival teaches survival. Deliberately enlighten your children and your neighbors on how to grow their crops, even if they compete with yours on the market. How to breed improved crops or domesticate animals. *Not just monkey see monkey do, but also talk about it or write a paper and publish it.* But that, sometimes, may require a little decoding and an open mind. Like little toddlers who repeatedly ask *Why?*

While patents may protect intellectual property for a decade or two, they also reveal the secrets of novel claims in inventions to seed improvements by other imaginative inventors. *Reading patents is an education in itself.* The magic of ideas shared with the world. Once published, no secrets. A pool of intellectual DNA on paper and digital documents, [drawings included](#). That some have attempted to also [patent DNA in genes](#) created by nature is a testament only to human greed. Excessive greed, even if bequeathed to a noble charity, should be recognized as an embarrassment of intent. Especially when the sources of wealth may be based on unhealthy and unsustainable exploitations of consumers, workers, natural resources and the ecology. If it's not sustainable, it stinks! So does having to pay for potable water beyond the basic cost of service. Those who soil our water should be obliged to pay for its decontamination.

### Speciation in Our Hands

By breeding and domesticating flora and fauna, we get to shake hands with nature to favor new breeds or species we prefer. That's a special privilege. When I feed my favorite wild birds, am I nudging the natural selection of their species? Since we have all polluted our atmosphere for many decades, maybe we owe a little special support to species that may be threatened today. Some [migrating birds](#) may be on the threatened list, as well.

### Reviving Past Ecologies

Although we love our original native fauna, and their legacy of genes, there is not much interest in trying to revive the bones of relic mammoths by planting their DNA from tar pits into a petri dish. For good reason. Ecologies change and progress with evolution. Never perfect. Never duplicated, although patterns like ice-ages are somewhat predictable. At least they were more regular until recently, when our species started polluting the atmosphere with excretions of CO<sub>2</sub> and Methane from stuff we like to burn and cattle we like to farm. Fossil fuels with which we power most of our cars today represent a sustainability nightmare. Imagine a dinosaur with a harness pulling a tractor. Negative efficiency to the max. Who gets credit for delaying the next ice age? After taking bows, check your liability insurance policy.

When we think about protecting the environment, such as in the ways we manage large public parks and forests, we also have to consider the fate of some species that can do better or worse with the climate changes we foresee and witness with our daily weather almanac. [NASA](#) reports that arctic animals' movement patterns are shifting in different ways as the climate changes, for example. These ecosystem shifts may at least temporarily have detrimental impacts on the viability of several species, as well, unless successful adaptations are made. Mule deer and Bewick's swans have changed their migration routes in response to the changing climate in Wyoming as reported by [Scientific American](#). Marine migrations are also notable as reported by National Environmental Education Foundation ([NEEF](#)):

- More than 80% of earth's marine life is migrating to different places and changing their breeding and feeding patterns due to [warming waters](#).
- Ocean species are migrating in response to a [changing climate](#) 10 times faster than land species.
- Some marine species have migrated as much as 600 miles from where they were abundant just a few decades ago.
- 80% of ocean pollution comes from the land.

An unstable cause for Climate Change, such as fluctuating pollutants, may predict regional ecosystems with unprecedented changes and unreliable future estimates. Maybe we should hang on to those mammoth genes just in case they become congenial with future scenarios? Don't worry, the scientific community treasures every gene DNA sample, especially the earliest ancestors they can dig out of the ancient earth crust. Instead of farmers vs. wolves or bears, today we are more likely concerned about going back to rain dances when no clouds are visible on the horizon. Fruitless vines. We are also helpless in several parts of the globe with 1,000-year floods. Back to Noah's Ark.

DNA scientists are getting very crafty these days, so that we can pick only the genes we know to be beneficial from extinct species to be [spliced and patched with CRISPR into certain species](#). The idea is to help specific related species having difficulty adapting to climate change. It's cheating, I know. But we may need a few wild cards up our sleeves, just in case. Rear view cameras in our motor vehicles nowadays is also cheating, from my oldster point of view. But now I want one for my decades-old Chevy Suburban. As the climate changes, some people are also desperately looking for greener pastures, escape from harsh urban environments, pollution, civil unrest.

### Camping in Parks

#### *Tradition*

Camping in public parks has traditionally been invited and supported for recreational campers in many large federal and state parks and a few large city parks. But today the camping space is limited and usually some type of reservation process including fees for space must be followed. Day use parking may also be pricy and renting campsites may cost double digits of dollars per day, which fees help to pay for water, electricity, waste disposal and other amenities. Developed campgrounds in our parks offer the minimal amount of infrastructure that is confined to spaces that are carefully managed to protect the ecology as much as possible. We need to protect these natural resources, but we also need to enjoy and appreciate our inheritance. To become part and one with nature. Willfully. Actively. Not just in our dusty graves.

#### *Free Campsites – Dispersed Camping*

A few free campsites are available in some remote federal lands where reservations are not required. Since they are not organized as a developed campground, they are called [dispersed](#), and that they are. Campsites, absent campground or infrastructure. You may have to travel to each free campsite to determine whether space is available, however. The roads may be rough and risky for some vehicles. Infrastructure null, other than a narrow road to a nearly flat plot of land, not very close to a river. Reservation services are a costly endeavor and don't apply here. The [Forest Service](#) publishes an online [interactive map](#) of campgrounds and other open parks with trails and amenities for you to explore, including a few free campsites here and there.

Phone service in remote areas is also iffy, so be wary. Portable solar panels for campers may be existential, but charged batteries do not guarantee you can watch your favorite team in playoffs from a tent. For that, you will also need a signal compatible with your device receiver. If you search for 'free camping sites' on your mobile device app store, you may find a few offers with a number of listings. Be sure to check the reviews before exposing your wallet. What we have seen so far is not impressive. But that could change, especially if more satellites for broadband internet access in rural and wildland areas become available.

Even our free camping sites have rules that must be followed which pertain to the interests of recreational campers, not long-term or homeless occupants. [Dispersed camping rules](#) by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are published online. For example, one important rule: *To further protect your public lands, campers must not dispose of any refuse, hazardous materials, sewage, or in any manner pollute the surrounding area.* The length of stay in one area is also limited to 14 days within any 28-day period. Don't forget to bring your own tents or shelter, water bottles and waste bags, etc., but don't leave any artifacts or waste behind. In other words, it's OK to visit, but your days are numbered and footprints subject to forensic inspection if rules violated. Rangers watching. Wilderness and backcountry camping needs to be [carefully planned](#) for your own safety. Tips on [how to camp](#).

### *Yosemite Dilemma*

None of our parks seems to place a priority on preserving misplaced creatures of the homo sapiens type, dispersed or developed, although you are always invited to 'look but don't touch or take', unless you have a hunting or fishing license that applies. Perhaps we humans are not considered a native species, although there are also many Native Americans in homeless shelters and unsanctioned campgrounds, as well.

The Miwuk were the First People in the [Yosemite Mariposa](#) area. They were previously expelled from their land during the goldrush era. Sadly, John Muir found Yosemite's native residents, "[most ugly, and some of them altogether hideous.](#)" After years of debate they were recently [allowed to return](#) to the land they actually never left to build a ceremonial village, although not for occupation. Thanks to the enlightened view of the US National Park Service.

We don't expect beautiful bald eagles to pay for rent, nor the wild mustangs to pay for their foraging lands. When we rescue seals and whales on our shores and seas, we are proud to contribute to their care, no ID required. But maybe we figure that since our species is abundant in overpopulated areas, no need to pitch a little tent and shelter with amenities and sanitation for unhoused folks in our parks.

Animal scat is treated like a blessing, but human waste is unholy pollution, especially near a river. There are protocols to safely hide your [poop sin](#) in a cat hole in the wilderness soil. Mixing scat and feces in a plastic bag may constitute felonious violations. You have a right to life, but not in a park. Species discrimination unless you can pay your campsite fees. Or satisfy the eyes of people like John Muir.

Bird lovers can erect artificial [Bluebird nests](#) in some park trees, but placing a tent for unhoused humans is a no-no. Maybe someone can sneak in a treehouse with a couple of tree-huggers for distraction? Make sure the treehouse inhabitant wears a blue cloak for camouflage. Some tents nowadays are designed to look like tipis, a [tipi-tent](#). Nice-looking, most of them, but for the tent-affronted critic, probably won't fly.

## The Vision – Holistic Access

### Safe Shelter Now

We all know of unsanctioned public park homeless settlements and curbside shanty structures that have been dispersed every year or so in many parts of the country, especially in dense urban areas. Kicking them out of one park or street, only transplants most of them to another park or neighborhood, or beach or watershed, and some to the morgue. People can't fly like migrating birds. ***A better solution may be to provide a well-defined percentage of public park acreage in each jurisdiction to supporting designated [structured campgrounds](#) or [cabin communities](#), or both combined with infrastructure, sanitation, amenities and security for a limited time on an emergency basis. [Sanctioned](#) and***

**supported. Holistic access.** Helter-skelter camping encroachments not allowed unless they comply with existing [Dispersed Camping rules](#) in appropriate areas.

### Therapeutic Hospice

It is often a long, eventful journey to skid row. The damaged, unfortunate trekker now facing more threats and punishment without safe shelter. Exposed to heat, cold, hostile people, police, pandemics, handout measures. [PSTD](#) (Post Street Trauma Stress Disorder). Hope meter losing signal along the way. The pre-skid story was bad enough, then possibly revisited more than once. That some people feel safer in the streets or parks than in normal housing or institutional shelter is a testament to societal gaps of integrity.

The [Arc of Safety](#) may be the most accessible 24/7 place for healing and urgent shelter placement available. A hub of urgent housing and shelter providers with the CoC as well as a direct shelter host to those in need. All shelter spaces within the AoS are safe non-congregate rooms. Room service and concierge desk provided, as well as inhouse EMT care if needed.

Some people just don't have the personality, mental wellness or intelligence to solve the problems of our social norms. It happens. Skid happens. Some with [autistic tendencies](#) compounded by street hostilities. Ageing accelerated. To begin the forward path to recovery, [concierge healthcare](#) consultation and solutions may be the first step, including care for chronic ailments, rehabilitation, mental illness and whatever health problems that may be hindering progress and clouding hope for each individual.

Many need help to solve specific problems and maybe a little luck in finding a job with adequate compensation for affordable housing. To begin the next chapter of recovery and advancement, the need to recuperate from the ravages of the street and the aggregate of ailments, losses, failures and gravitational stress along the way is paramount. Parks can be a friendly, healthy environment for holistic healing if properly structured and organized. BYOT not in the picture we envision, much more. The host is the AoS and our parks with adequate shelter, structured tents, cabins and needed infrastructure, as well as food, counseling and much more. An escape from the streets. A natural grounding with the vigor of life.

Like my wild bird feeders at home. I feed them. They enrich and ground my life with their calls and antics. Teaching life, one wing flap at a time. Demonstrating liberty. No birdcage restrictions. Nor can we protect them from all the hawks and cats. But at least they have a perch to launch their life. Access to their nesting places and vital resources.

### Employment Fitness

Each jurisdiction can find practical solutions for space in designated areas and provide security to protect humans and the ecology equally. Since most homeless folks are unemployed or underemployed, we see our parks as potentially suitable for helping to enhance employment fitness in various ways. Organized tours and walks around the parks can invigorate a healthier lifestyle. Gymnastic devices and exercise machines in the park can help young and older folks improve their muscle tone and cardio fitness. Some [\\$Green machines](#) can also generate electricity and help to cover the costs of the encampment. An organized [bird walk](#) may be a good way to introduce more people to the beauty of nature all around us. Be more engaged with natural treasures in your environment.

Each park has natural resources to help those who have been experiencing homelessness to acquire a new and healthier perspective on future prospects. Some type of common meeting ground or amphitheater may be a motivational resource, as well. Give people a stage to show off their stuff or share their journey. Start each day with a purpose. Teach the teacher!

### Wilderness Therapy

To change your life, sometimes it helps to get away from your normal environment and wake up to nature every morning. Also known as Outdoor Behavioral Therapy, [Wilderness Therapy](#) leverages the natural beauty and challenges of nature with a focus on healthy behaviors under the guidance of professional therapists. [Drug addiction and alcohol rehab](#) providers have also incorporated wilderness retreats in their programs. An indoor shelter or hotel room may provide some degree of safety, which is important, but a motivational program venue may help to get you off your feet and get away from a few bad habits. Be immersed in nature, not just four walls and a bed. Wildlands are inspirational and fun, which is why so many housed people go camping and pay for it, some every year.

### Music – Dance Therapy

In addition to popular entertainment, music also has a therapeutic value for individuals and groups both for mental or mood altering treatments or combined with dance to also impact physical fitness holistically. According to [Dr. Annie Heidersheit](#), a board certified music therapist, “Music therapy is the use of music to address the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of a group or individual. It employs a variety of activities, such as listening to melodies, playing an instrument, drumming, writing songs, and guided imagery. Music therapy is appropriate for people of all ages, whether they are virtuosos or tone deaf, struggling with illnesses or totally healthy.”

[Dance and Music Therapy combined](#) offers health benefits for everyone. It can improve your cardiovascular health, muscle tone, balance, and coordination. Additionally, dance is an effective adjunct in the treatment of Alzheimer’s, dementia, and depression. These benefits allow the patient to need less pain medication in addition to lowering their blood pressure and heart rate, according to some experts.

Celebrating the cultural traditions of mixed ethnic identities in music and dance can also socially befriend the variety of urban trekkers we may encounter in our communities and parks. Some people may be motivated to learn a few steps and join the dance collective. [Traditional folk dances](#) also reflect the values and historical context of dance moves and purpose. Dances like the Fandango, originally from Spain, was accompanied by clapping, castanets, or guitars. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Spanish aristocracy found this to be a popular social pastime. Nowadays, the Fandango may also include Afro-Latin@ instrumentation and accentuated rhythms as well as a cross-border locus tradition in Friendship Park connecting peoples across San Diego and Tijuana, the [Fandango at the Wall](#). Hopefully, our spirits will also Fandango *through* the wall.

### Pet Companions

Since about [ten percent](#) of unhoused folks have pet companions, mostly dogs, the tent or cabin welcome mat should also offer a fresh water dish or two. A sleeping mat or crate to comfort your furry friend. Critter hygiene important as well. After the divorce or other losses that left you stumbling in the streets, a wagging tail is good therapy. A Doggie Park and playground next to a sanctioned homeless encampment would bring dog lovers together whether housed or not: A Doggie-People Park. Specially trained [Therapy Dogs](#) may also be a blessing to the encampment community who don’t currently have



their own pets. Some elderly or disabled folks may love this companionship even if not able to care for their 4-legged friends.

### Outdoor Yoga and Sports

[Outdoor yoga](#) and sports are great ways to exercise in a healthy environment surrounded by the vitality of nature. With social distancing the problems of pandemics can be minimized and therapeutic advantages optimized. Improving mental health by focused meditation can also help to prepare for a more productive and healthy life. [Tai Chi](#) is often enjoyed outdoors and frequently as a gentle martial art to benefit the health of people of all ages, including seniors. Perfect way to enjoy the outdoors and improve your vitality and physical coordination without breaking a sweat, which sweat steals your *chi*. Tai Chi focuses on breath and state of mind, making it similar to yoga, but better for seniors because it can [improve balance into old age](#). Some of my older tennis friends also struggle with balance, especially when serving the tennis ball. I have also lost my balance unexpectedly, at times.

Team sports help to create social bonding and promote cooperation, important for some who may have been socially isolated for a time and those with autistic tendencies. Friendly competition can also help to build self-confidence. Don't sit and waste in a tent or on a bench. Activate your life. A volleyball or basketball court on the premises would bring people together in fun ways, as well. [Pickleball courts](#) are smaller but allow for safe distancing between players. Some people may be autistic and don't know it. There are several [autism tests for adults](#) online to help you measure where you may fit on the autism spectrum.

### Environmental Education

Guided nature explorations are a valuable part of [Environmental Education](#) programs to teach how natural environments function, and particularly, how human beings can manage behavior and ecosystems to live sustainably. This model can also improve organic survival skills for people drawn together with common needs for housing in a sustainable manner. The campground may also serve as a laboratory for college students working on advanced degrees on human adaptations to climate change and housing disruptions. Some universities may be able to adopt a particular campground for their focused studies.

### Safe Cooking Stoves – Risky Fuel Pits

Good management can also help to prevent wildfires that are often caused by careless people trying to cook their meals or keep themselves warm. Providing a common cooking area with safely fueled stoves may be an existential resource, better and safer than just a fire pit. Another model may be to provide three meals a day to all inhabitants, perhaps the ideal solution, depending on the menu, as included in some [Sleeping Cabin Communities](#).

Both pay-for-camping campgrounds and homeless shelter communities would be safer by providing stoves and burners with safe propane or electric stoves and not allowing campers to bring their own fuels like charcoals or other combustibles. Roast your marshmallows over a propane stove. Great for BBQ grills, too! Save the charcoals for your safe backyard in town, not in our vulnerable forested parks. Even if it costs more to support safe camping stoves, the forest management budget may save on firefighting costs and other losses due to wildfires. Not to mention lives tragically lost each year. It's all about careful management. ***Place a nice BBQ grill with propane or [electric](#) burners atop the old fire pit.*** Adapt to Climate Change with smart infrastructure.

***Fire pits no-no! Safe fuels for stoves and burners si-si!***

Many public park managers already know how to keep campgrounds safe and what it costs to provide the necessary infrastructure and amenities. Some existing food banks may help to supply the recipe nutrients. We have space. We have resources. Providing cabins or tents for the inhabitants will improve the quality of care and safety for our guests, as well as an architectural standard to complement the surrounding communities, as well.

### Innovative Solutions and Empathy

Perhaps what we need now are more [innovative designs](#) for infrastructure and policy to fit the need in each community, each new structured campground community. We don't need a uniform standard for all areas except for the demonstration of a big heart to care for strangers with exceptional needs for emergency survival space. Courageous empathy like my [Machu Picchu Angel](#) who extended her hand to a total stranger. I guess no one taught her not to talk to strangers, let alone touch them. She probably figured this old guy needs a hand, and she extended hers. Nobody plans to be in the situation of sudden homelessness. I wasn't homeless, but I found myself in a strange land with magical landscapes. Nor do most people plan to encounter invisible microbial threats floating in the air, like COVID-19. Homelessness happens. COVID-19 happens. Loss of business revenue happens.

### Arc of Safety - Shelter ER

All the proposed and existing features, services, shelters, Tiny Cabins and encampments for the housing deprived, need to be presented as an invitation to those in need in special shelter placement stations and camps. These facilities, we dub the **Arc of Safety (AoS)**, will serve as a critical hospice to begin healing and should be widely distributed and decentralized in public facilities and parks throughout the city and county. ***Ideally, these should be 24/7 accessible places where people can walk in and ask for help.***

Think of the AoS as a temporary “**safety hospice**”, not a place necessarily for those with a terminal illness, although they will be welcomed, as well. “**Hospice**” is a term from medieval times which referred to a place where travelers could rest (from the same linguistic root as “hospitality”), a way station of sorts where a person might be cared for by their hosts. Pilgrims going home, if they can find it. Services may include those provided in assisted living housing, as well. Assisted living hospice with EMT care for the homeless at any age. More services and design elements will be described below.

### Homeless Count Data

With 60,000 unhoused people currently in 15 districts in Los Angeles, for example, we can simply do the math and divide 60,000 by 15 and determine that housing or safe shelters is required for 4,000 desperate people in each district on the average. If each AoS facility had a capacity of 100 guests, we would need 40 AoS facilities per district, depending on the capacity of other safe shelters available. However, instead of the average, a more accurate count by district shows more helpful numbers to work with for actually planning solutions, as shown below.

The 2020 [Homeless Count by Los Angeles City District](#) shows a considerable disparity between districts for the homeless counts listed by order of count number:

- 2 Districts with less than 1,000 homeless each, CDs 3 and 12
- 7 Districts having between 1,000 and 3,000 housing deprived residents, CDs 4, 5, 7, 2, 10, 15, 1
- 6 Districts with more than 3,000 each, CDs 11, 6, 13, 8, 9 and up to 7,617 for CD 14.

The County of Los Angeles has 5 Supervisorial Districts with homeless counts ranging from 4,711 in SD 4 to 22,754 in SD 2, more than four times greater, as detailed in the following report.

#### 2020 HOMELESS COUNT BY SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT

SD	Total	Unsheltered	Sheltered	Individuals	Family Members	Families	Unaccompanied Minors
SD 1	14527	10966	3561	12317	2205	690	5
SD 2	22754	14309	8445	17246	5484	1822	24
SD 3	14503	10920	3583	11790	2704	768	9
SD 4	4711	3911	800	4102	601	189	8
SD 5	7211	5984	1227	5766	1422	438	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>63706</b>	<b>46090</b>	<b>17616</b>	<b>51221</b>	<b>12416</b>	<b>3907</b>	<b>69</b>

There are eight [Service Planning Areas](#) in Los Angeles County which are organized by the CoC for planning the services and expenditures to mitigate unhoused cases throughout the county. In the table below, you will also note the disparities in homeless counts between SPA 4 with 17,121 homeless folks and SPA 3 with only 4,555 unhoused. Looking at the maps through the links, you will see that SPA 4 includes the main slum areas in downtown Los Angeles as does CD 14. The large counts for SD 2 are located in the southern portions of Los Angeles, however. Plenty to go around! Checking out these maps, turns out my house is in CD 1, SD 1 and SPA 4. The SPAs are not as Gerrymandered as are the CDs, especially CD 14 and a few others. SDs seem to have some purposeful boundaries, as well. Spread out the poverty? Racial, ethnic representation?

#### 2020 HOMELESS COUNT BY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

SPA	Total	Unsheltered	Sheltered	Individual	Family Members	Families	Unaccompanied Minors
Service Planning Area 1	4755	3918	837	3742	990	308	23
Service Planning Area 2	9108	6615	2493	6826	2280	629	2
Service Planning Area 3	4555	3027	1528	3615	940	283	0
Service Planning Area 4	17121	12454	4667	15160	1956	630	5
Service Planning Area 5	6009	5042	967	5208	795	249	6
Service Planning Area 6	13012	7891	5121	8899	4089	1370	24
Service Planning Area 7	4586	3631	955	4093	492	152	1
Service Planning Area 8	4560	3512	1048	3678	874	286	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>63706</b>	<b>46090</b>	<b>17616</b>	<b>51221</b>	<b>12416</b>	<b>3907</b>	<b>69</b>

The haves and the have nots. So, if you want to keep homeless stragglers and tents out of your streets and parks, you will need about 10 AoS facilities for every 1,000 homeless folks in your area, including a lot of food and care. Please remember, [crowded overnight shelters](#) only attract messy skid row populations in the streets, as well as many hazardous tents. Detailed periodic reports and maps for COVID-19 cases by [City of Los Angeles](#) give you a quick view of COVID-19 cases in each neighborhood and District in the County of Los Angeles. It's no surprise that the same Districts with more homeless people also have greater incidents of COVID-19 cases and deaths as shown on these maps. Not necessarily a cause and effect, but an important correlation to help shape solutions for both health crises.

[Corona Virus Locations in Los Angeles County](#) is reported by the Public Health Department for the county. The most recent report includes **Homeless Shelters** with one or more verified cases among the clients or staff. Among 27 listed observations, 55 homeless clients and 20 staff were reported as cases

and there were no deaths. The Midnight Mission stands out as the most worrisome place with 14 clients and 5 staff infected. Those with 5 client cases included Cloverfield, Hope of the Valley - Pacoima Winter Shelter, and Salvation Village. Cloverfield also had one staff member infection. At the 3 - client infection level, listed were The Salvation Army - Bell Shelter, Abundant Blessings From Above - St. Andrews Place, and Connections for Women Main Street. There were a couple more with only two client infections and the remainder had only one. The Salvation Army - Bell Shelter also had 8 staff member infections, the highest staff infections count among shelters.

***During these COVID times, all overnight shelters with beds sharing congregate spaces in the same room should be officially banned for health and safety. They do more harm than good for the unhoused and the community. The AoS is a healthy and sustainable alternative with single occupancy rooms for every guest. Hopefully, the dedicated people who provide these crowded dormitories will chip in and build a few AoS facilities, as well, or at least help with the food service. The sooner we build these AoS facilities, the sooner we can mitigate all the dangers of living in the streets and sleeping in crowded overnight shelters. If there are some tent industry lobbyists in our midst, let's politely give them the boot!***

### *Shelter Emergency*

The ***Arc of Safety - Shelter ER*** is a ***shelter emergency resource or triage*** where conditions of exposure or nutritional deprivation are diagnosed. First aid for any medical problems are addressed by EMTs and possibly referred to a hospital ER, if needed. Some people may simply be overexposed and in need of a blanket, a bowl of soup, and a safe place to sleep and recover for the night. People who need to flee from life-threatening situations need emergency shelter. Only non-congregate private rooms, cabins or camp sites will be offered in the AoS system of facilities. The AoS will physically and safely connect vital members of the CoC with unhoused clients as a hub on the frontlines of poverty and homelessness in a comfortable setting. ***No person should be deprived of a safe non-congregate shelter for more than 24 hours, regardless of their situation or status in society. Overnight crowded shelters not acceptable! Make that a golden rule. We love; therefore we safely shelter all in need. Civilization basics. Who we are. If you need a law, call it the Law of Love and Human Dignity. If you need an ideology, call it the Reconstruction Reformation where all people matter. All matter and all institutions belong to the people. Why? Because WE the people so declare!***

***What is a shelter emergency? Some examples:***

- ***It's a shelter emergency when your significant other is likely to kill you or harm your children.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when your parents abuse you and threaten your safety, or kick you out of your home.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when you are a foster child reaching the age of 18 with no job and no alternative home.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when you have been forced into prostitution and you have been threatened if you try to escape your bondage.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when you test positive to COVID-19 and wish to protect your family at home by finding separate temporary shelter.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when people in your crowded family home are sick with COVID-19 and you are at great risk of being infected with no safe place to protect yourself.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when you feel very ill, have difficulty breathing, and are struggling in unsanctioned encampments.***

- ***It's a shelter emergency when the sheriff knocks on your door to evict you.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when the city posts a sign to clear your tent from public streets.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when the only shelter available is an overnight dorm full of smelly people and infested with unsanitary conditions.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when your tent is cold, uncomfortable and located near unhealthy and dangerous people.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when you have skin cancer tumors on your face and you are struggling with the streets and tents.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when gang members in your community or your school are threatening you and you have no safe place to move away.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when you are a gang member who wishes to turn a new leaf away from gangs and unlawful behavior.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when your own home is too cold or too hot due to the weather and you do not have sufficient resources for safe heating or cooling.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when a fire or flood destroys your house or makes it unsafe and you need a safe place to stay during the recovery period.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when your vital house utilities are disabled and you need a safer place to live.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when you're injecting yourself with dirty needles and dangerous opioids and your family is unable or unwilling to help.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when you are old, unemployed and nobody loves you.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when you have forgotten where you live or lost your keys.***
- ***It's a shelter emergency when you are depressed and just need to get away from everything and everyone. Reset.***

### *Robotic Receptionist*

We envision a large, well ventilated waiting room to facilitate safe accessibility for all who enter, with ample space for social distancing. A [robotic receptionist](#), speaking various languages, will guide each guest to safe seating while introducing services available and asking the client for identifying information and purpose for the visit. Many [programming options](#) for this example and other brands are currently available. Concierge services. We name our robot: **iCU** (I-SEE-you), not to be confused with Intensive Care Units, although we aspire to provide Immediate Care Umbrella shelter services for the homeless. A Housing Deprived Client (HD Client) may have already been served in the past by others in the Continuum of Care for the local community. Photos and any identification documents will be important for coordination with CoC members. iCU will ask the client to pose for a couple of pictures with the robot's camera eyes.

The iCU robot will provide a fresh mask for COVID safety to each new guest, regardless of whether the guest currently is masked. The robot will ask each guest to bag his or her current mask in a disposable bag which the robot will provide, collect and safely discard. If our guest wishes to keep his or her mask, that's OK, too. iCU will use a non-contact thermometer to take the temperature of all incoming guests. A high temperature will immediately trigger the attention of an EMT for further care for this client in a separate room. iCU will also ask a few questions about other symptoms and health problems. If no medical care is immediately required, a pamphlet showing different types of facilities for care and shelter available for the unhoused will be given to each guest by iCU. The guest will be prompted to peruse this pamphlet while awaiting personal attention by warm-blooded staff.

To provide the best care and shelter available, it is also essential to determine the health status of each client with regards to COVID-19 experiences, vaccinations and tests, as well as other health problems currently or recently afflicting the client. The initial information received by the robot will be digitally documented and available to inform staff and CoC helpers.

### *Vaccination Central*

The Arc of Safety should also serve as **Vaccination Central** for the community at large to provide jabs by EMTs for all approved COVID-19 vaccinations. Providing jabs may hopefully also prevent more housing deprived cases in the future. Vetting vaccination history and providing testing will also improve health safety for the entire community. iCU may also help with COVID testing for the community. The iCU robot not only provides important services in a safe and efficient manner, but also will attract attention and motivate some people to take selfies with iCU. Clients without a camera may also ask iCU to use the robot camera for a selfie which can be emailed or printed in the AoS facility.

A client that has not been vaccinated and refuses vaccination, may be offered placement in a quarantine facility with non-congregate space either indoors or in special outdoor quarantine encampments. The HD Client should be informed that refusing vaccination will seriously reduce the likelihood of employment and participation in other social events and groups. AoS staff and agents will not be authorized to detain any visiting client for refusing to cooperate with vaccination or testing. But if a visitor refuses to wear a mask, he or she will be escorted by iCU to a patio or safe place for further services in isolation from other people. If a visitor uses aggressive behaviors or weapons that threaten any staff or person on premises for any reason, law enforcement personnel will be summoned.

### *Pandemic Safe Haven*

Large families with COVID-19 infected members have a 32 percent chance of secondary infections in the same household according to a recent study by the [University of North Carolina](#). Another study in [Wisconsin](#) bumps up the secondary infection rate to 53 percent. Large families are more common among Blacks and Hispanics which correlates with higher infection rates for these groups. For California and other states, several studies focus on [overcrowded households](#). Some infected children may have mild or undetectable symptoms. These ethnics are also more likely to work in essential jobs with dangerous infection hazards. The AoS will serve as a temporary safe haven to protect uninfected household members while the infected ones are hopefully recovering from the virus at home. Large family rooms can securely quarantine these household members. EMTs will test quarantined guests for the virus on a daily basis.

Likewise, people who test positive for COVID-19 may wish to protect their families by seeking a safe separate place to stay. Their condition with the virus will be carefully monitored by EMTs who will call for help if breathing becomes difficult. Registered nurses or other paramedics may also be employed full time if the number of cases becomes critical or patients demand more care. For everyone's protection, all new guests will also be tested daily for at least two weeks.

***Managing inter-family contact and social distancing for viral spread in sustainable ways, such as the AoS Pandemic Safe Haven, will provide a new dimension in public health measures in the new-normal age of pandemics. Sustainability with positive social values protected for the family by enabling continued intimate communication through phones or [proximate room balconies](#). Testing, monitoring and engaging in preliminary care and safe isolation for all guests, will put a damper on viral spread for the entire community, for this pandemic or the next one. Each food chain has a bottom. Are families the bottom of the viral spread food chain among humans, petri dish distributors?***



### *Safe Needle Exchange*

Some HD Clients may also need to resolve drug addiction problems requiring detoxification and rehab. Some of these detox or rehab services may be handled at the AoS with qualified therapists, or at appropriate Preferred Campgrounds for this purpose as well as referrals to external providers. [Safe needle exchange](#) services may also be provided by EMTs at the AoS. These are known to reduce infections and encourage treatment for addiction. This unhoused experience may be the end of the road for many homeless people. If we can't help them here, who can? Therapeutic hospice for those in need.

### *Employment Resume*

Once health urgencies are cleared, an initial employment resume will be drafted based on the work history, education and skills as presented by the client when interviewed by staff. The resume will also include COVID-19 vaccination status and the mobile phone number for the client, if available. Those declining vaccination may also provide a statement explaining their reason for refusal, if they wish. If the client is willing, this resume will be digitized and indexed online to be available to employers and the general public. A QR code will also be compiled to link to the online resume. The QR code may be displayed on patches that may be attached to AoS room doors, cabins, tents, hats or clothing with Velcro if the client is looking for work and so desires. All completely voluntary. Some groups of guests like musicians, actors, artists, dancers or day laborers may wish to show off their talents in [Preferred Campground Places](#).

### *Green Construction*

Green Construction design will feature good insulation and high quality ventilation, as well as blinds that automatically adjust to solar angles. Each guest room will include a balcony with an adjustable awning and [ample space for dining](#) with guests or interviews with helpers. [Solar panel railings](#) may also be a nice energy saving touch. For families, a number of rooms will be designed with larger quarters and adequate sleeping space for safe distancing.

The balconies will help to improve ventilation among family members, friends and guests. Friends and family can safely communicate in adjacent rooms across external balconies. If a family member becomes infected with a dangerous virus, the infected family member may be separated and placed in an adjacent room while recovering. Even when balconies are closed, high quality ventilation will keep the air clean and healthy. An optimal design for safe ventilation may consist of a [round structure surrounding an open courtyard](#). [Balconies will surround the outside](#) structure, whereas elevators and walkways will be tucked on the inside overlooking the courtyard. The elevators will also be designed with open ventilation. The courtyard may include a playground for the children and natural gardens and landscaping.

Variations for the circular structure and courtyard may include an oval shape or elliptical design. The dimensions of the plot of land available may better accommodate different structure shapes and sizes. Other factors, such as the needed number of shelter units planned may also dictate the height and number of floors for the structure. Of course, a row of structures side by side on a block or in a park may also provide more flexibility for the needed population to be served. Two or three Arc of Safety structures on Spring Street adjacent to the Los Angeles State Historic Park and near the river, may dress up the neighborhood, just as an example. Along the riverside, a number of other areas may be suitable from the beach all the way north to the San Fernando Valley.

### Room Service

Meals will be provided as room service, but some common grounds in open courtyard patios may also facilitate meals for individuals or small gatherings. Masking in public areas will be required when not eating. Each room will also feature a smart television set which will be used for conveying important information to guests as well as motivational and educational programs. A phone will also be provided to call for service or other needs from the AoS concierge desk. Each room will also be provided with broadband connectivity. Large auditoriums or indoor assemblies will not be necessary nor encouraged due to viral threats, especially with a wide door always open for anyone in the street, pandemics or no. Instead an ample outdoor amphitheater will be suitable in good weather for large assemblies, including motivational talks, entertainment or informational presentations.

Ample storage will be provided in closets and additional basement storage space for those with precious goodies they need for safe-keeping or for equipment they use for vending items or art they produce to market. The safest marketplace for these micro-entrepreneurs or artists may be included in [Preferred Campground Places](#) described below.

Each AoS facility will be designed to blend into the community architecture theme. When placed in a public park, it will also take on the ambiance of the natural environment. Although open 24/7, security will protect the guests and staff from unruly intruders late at night. It may require a week or two for most guests to heal from street trauma and abuse ([PSTD](#)) and be prepared to move on to more proactive programming for employment and sustainable housing provided in other available locations or bridge housing, either indoors or outdoors. During the healing period, guidance counselors, social workers and employment specialist will meet with the client to assess needs and opportunities.

A physical fitness gym in the AoS will be helpful to get each guest fit for normal life and for employment as a productive individual. Fitness trainers will be available to help each guest use the equipment safely. Offices for social workers, medical staff, employment counselors and other helpers will also be provided.

***The AoS will physically and safely connect vital members of the CoC with unhoused clients as a hub on the frontlines of poverty and homelessness in a comfortable setting. Consider the AoS to be a safe, accessible doorstep to services provided by all CoC service providers, not to replace these services but to augment safety and 24/7 accessibility for both providers and clients.***

### Hospitalization Pressure Relief

By providing a crowded household relief valve for people needing safe isolation, these AoS emergency shelter units will also provide a pressure relief valve for overcrowded hospitals, as well. Prevent or mitigate the need for hospitalizations by reducing the number one source of infections, crowded households. ***The only practical Non-Pharmaceutical Intervention (NPI) for the disease hazards of crowded households is accessible emergency shelter. Very accessible and very safe.***

Since we know this may take some time or years to build up, we suggest an emergency crisis alternative. [Structured Campgrounds](#) designed for this purpose may be quickly and economically dedicated for this purpose. Our CoC social workers can work specifically with crowded households and invite people who test positive for COVID-19 or other contagious diseases to isolate and quarantine in a designated campsite until testing is cleared. No BYOT allowed.

If this is done right, a professional public media campaign should also be deployed in several languages. In colder climates and seasons, non-congregate shelters should also be made accessible in large quantities specifically for this purpose. Compare the cost of one hospital emergency bed vs. the cost of

one emergency shelter room. Besides the costs, save a few more lives, as well. Protect your hospital staff from overwork stress and heartache.

No policy will work if we're not realistic with our logistical metrics, goals and objectives. But we need to start with a model that works with measurable results. Measure the absolute number of overcrowded households with factual decrements through shelters per treatment. Measure the number of COVID or other infections and those isolated in external shelters for each treated residence. Ask all residents if they have suffered from COVID infections in the past, and about their children. Keep tabs on any and all related or unrelated hospitalizations from treated households. Enumerate those sleeping in cars or tents simply to protect their household from infection. The shelters will also help to track and trace infections in synchrony with those involved with overcrowding referrals. Here we will also learn the outcomes of shelter isolations and determine the results of such treatment for the residents and any hospitals that were needed for care of our sheltered clients. The physical Green Construction model we propose above will more than likely optimize good results. But we need to start somewhere at this time of crisis as long as we provide safe non-congruent shelters.

We already know that secondary infections in crowded households are common. Children may be those most vulnerable and numerous in such residences. If canvassing a high density neighborhood door to door, be sure to record the physical spacing between each door and the quality of ventilation in hallways, stairways and elevators as a building inspection. Obtain coded occupancy limits and room counts per unit and tabulate actual residence counts for each. Our social workers should be on guard and expect that some residents may be infected unknowingly with mild or no symptoms. Social workers should also carry a good supply of KN95 face masks to open doors and keep everybody safe.

A number of suggested [Preferred Campground Places](#) are based on potential employment groups, cultural preferences, health status, security risks and geographical interests. It takes a community of caring people to make these special campgrounds actually happen. So far, it's just a vision, our vision. Do you see it, too?

### Family Struggle

Back in the Echo Park neighborhood of my youth, before COVID-19 – (BC-19), one time my parents ran out of money and our gas service at home was turned off. We had a little Italian deli store that was outcompeted by a new supermarket two blocks up Sunset Blvd. at Echo Park Ave. Their deli department was twice the size of our entire store. We lived right behind our little store on Sunset, mom-and-pop. As hungry boys, we ate probably half the goods on our store shelves.

On this unusual baren-stove day, guided by our parents, eagerly we walked a few blocks to Elysian Park, where picnic areas offered stoves fueled by gas. Less than a mile from our store and home. We carried our food and a big metal pot in a basket. One of the best picnics I can remember, although simply beans and tortillas. It takes a lot of fuel and time to cook a pot of beans. The park brought a natural and fun dimension to this event for my brothers and me. More recently, the location of our favorite picnic grounds near Elysian Park Ave. was consumed by the larger Vin Scully Ave., but more picnic areas are provided around the Dodger Stadium these days.

I remember another time my mother sadly informed us that all we had to eat that evening was bean soup. It wasn't all that tasty, but we laughed it off. My older brother also made a rhyme for his Boy Scouts meeting with "*Bean soup, bean soup, walla walla bing bang.*" It was a big hit with his Scouts troop. But now I wonder how sad my parents probably felt for all of us being in this desperate

situation. During these hard times, they also asked us kids to go around the neighborhood and petition our neighbors for bottles and cans with a deposit.

When we knocked on doors with a shopping bag in hand, most people were kind and courteous, and they gave what they could. This actually made me feel good about our kind neighbors. Nobody warned us about any potential threats when knocking on neighbors' doors. Maybe they were not considered "strangers"? But, we were warned not to step into our neighbors' homes. The people who opened the doors were mostly smiling women, as I recall. We understood the value of money, but we didn't understand our quest for redeemable bottles and cans as something related to poverty. Nor, at our age, did we know anything about poverty as a status or condition. But we could mentally ingest the difference between bean soup and a bean burrito.

Yes, there were arguments at home over finances and income, but we never had to live in a tent or a car. Well, we didn't have a car at the time. We lost our house and store in Echo Park due to late rental payments, but we found more housing in Northeast Los Angeles before eviction, in Eagle Rock. The cold streets were closer than I knew at the time. I remain grateful to [Los Angeles Recreation and Parks](#) for providing such beautiful and resourceful picnic areas throughout the city. They saved our day! We moved on, generally well fed, if not over-fed.

As I look at my old neighborhood on Google Satellite, on [Sunset Blvd. and Echo Park Ave.](#), I see that the old supermarket that took us down, the *Pioneer Supermarket*, has evaporated. Just a parking lot with a Walgreens is all that is visible on that corner block. I have mixed feelings about that. Maybe the lot was actually too small for the class of supermarkets we see today. Reportedly, the soaring expense of [workers' compensation insurance costs](#) closed it down in 2004 when Walgreens garnered the lease.

Our old store down the street is now all boarded up with graffiti on display, and so are several other buildings on the same block. Small family store, gobbled up by big family store, erased by Walgreens. Over the years I've seen our old store change hands and purposes many times. It may likely be revived another time once the pandemic marketplace reseeds itself. Soon, I hope, for the community to bounce back.

Fortunately for our family, my mother eventually became a reliable income provider as a legal secretary for the County Counsel of Los Angeles. A terrific accomplishment that secured the financial future for our little family of my parents and three mischievous boys for many years. Thank goodness civil service jobs actually became civil around those days in the County of Los Angeles, as well. My Mom could type over 100 words-per-minute and memorized the spelling of hundreds of legal terms even before Word Perfect or any word processors were available.

My mother's family has roots in the Sonoran Desert region of Arizona. At least one family photo portrays a female ancestor wearing native garbs. Like my Dad's family, my maternal ancestors also included merchants, including a proprietor of a [saloon](#) in Arizona. My mother's example of success in civil service also inspired all three of us boys to enjoy a job or two with civil service towards the beginning of our careers, mostly in Los Angeles County. But that's another story.

My father was more of an inspirational dreamer who could think like a lawyer and speak like a preacher. He was proud to have the family name of Magallanes on the maternal side of his family. [Ferdinand Magellan \(Magallanes\)](#), the Portuguese explorer. An inspiration, if not an ancestor. Very low credit score for my dad, however. Dreaming doesn't pay the rent. Despite our

financial ups and downs, all this time my parents found a way to keep us kids in Catholic schools so that the three of us could get a better education and go to college, someday. Which we did.

Perhaps my greatest material blessing to date is that I still live comfortably in the same nearly 100-year-old home my mother purchased for the family in the 1960's. \$10,000. Almost twice the size of our previous home across the street. \$6,000, purchased eight years earlier. We were one of the first few Mexican American families on our block in NE Los Angeles at the time. She wisely and heartfully understood the importance for the family of having a sustainable roof over our head.

I'm a mama's boy. And I feel more secure surrounded by lath and plaster (no drywall) and the old redwood 2x4s. These were the required building studs in those days, which durable boards have respectfully grasped my occasional nails and screws over the years. Like the firm handshake from an old friend. My oldest friend, a sculpture of redwood studs and plaster, that still lives, somehow, and keeps me busy just keeping it up, painting, roofing, etc. To me, it's like a living treehouse, a work of art in progress. Like me, I guess. A work in progress. Deferred maintenance.

### Homeless Crisis – Chavez Ravine

***They're going to be there anyway, so why not make it safer and healthier for the unhoused and everyone else? Especially during a pandemic, this one or the next one. A safe buffer zone to intercept radical migrations from any and all directions including local and distant homelands.*** More recently I've noticed a number of homeless people trying to survive in the Elysian Park hills, hidden behind shrubs, in view of the Dodger Stadium. Not too far from our old family picnic areas as a child.

In those childhood days, there was no Dodger Stadium in Chavez Ravine, nor were there any noticeable homeless tents in Elysian Park hills. [Chavez Ravine](#) was a thriving mostly Mexican American community for several decades. Instead of public housing, as promised when the city exercised eminent domain, the people were replaced by the Dodger Stadium in 1959. A place to go for cheap entertainment when you're juggling rent and utility bills. Since the city of Los Angeles is at fault for switching public benefit with a profit-making sport stadium development, looks like the city is encumbered to provide public housing space comparable to what was given to [Walter O'Malley](#) to his own benefit for only a small consideration. Thanks, Los Angeles, whoever you are (wingless angels?), for helping the fat cats instead of our low-income renters, many of whom may be unhoused on our streets and parks today. Accountability. Missing 300 acres of affordable public housing.

Los Angeles nowadays is a panoply of classic architecture, sprawling suburbia, giant cityscapes, commercial signs in a hundred languages, and homeless tents just about everywhere you look. Learn a new language or two just by cruising the streets. Maybe your dashcam will translate. Today we also have many more towering high-rises and countless homeless tents just blocks away. From [Elysian Park viewpoints](#) you can marvel at great scenes of the cityscape and shift your glance to witness evidence of human make-shift dwellings in the bushes. *Are homeless tent dwellers somehow nurturing the roots of these giant skyscrapers?* Perhaps their waste precedes them with fertilizer as campers huddle in the shadows of these massive obelisks.

### Shanty Town Capital

***Does it take 50,000 unhoused, unsheltered, food-insecure people visibly struggling in our streets and tents in one city, before we realize that **ten starving people is ten too many**? Is our history and world history insensitive to suffering? Is destitute poverty the norm? Is comfortably surviving, even as an essential worker, something exceptional, one in a thousand?***

Recognizing that there is always a bottom to the struggling journeys of people among potential job providers and business opportunities, does the bottom have to ultimately result in undignified desolation and unhealthy suffering in the streets, alleys and exposed wildlands?

***In every tennis match, there is always a loser. But there is, or should be, also a support system, to dust off, heal your wounds, and get back on your feet. Not in the legal courts, but in the tennis courts. Fair play!***

With all the fingers in the pie, heavy betters on commercial and residential real estate, a wide variety of industries with marketing leadership centered in the region, there should be enough untethered coinage about to at least participate in the needed investments for safe and attractive emergency shelter with high quality non-congregate units throughout the region and suburbs.

If designed properly to meet the needs and attract the willing participation of the tens of thousands currently dwelling in tents, streets and cars, there should be no need to impose unfair restrictions on campers, since the tent dwellers would voluntarily fold up their tents and line up to shelter in the safe facilities offered. These facilities should also qualify for approval by the critical eyes of wary residents and real estate interests who are becoming increasingly demoralized by the perspective of this ***Shanty Town Capital*** of our nation. The logistics of one such ideal model may be contained in the [Arc of Safety](#) proposal described herein.

### Words Matter

Words matter. In our modern nomenclature ‘development’ seems to be concomitant with artificial structures related to market profit and productivity: houses, business structures, roads, shopping malls, sports stadiums, mines, factories, weapons, etc.. The only way to ‘improve’ a place is to defile its natural essence. Can you improve a space having natural springs without any contamination or pollution? ***Perhaps a tent or tipi is the cleanest alternative to occupy a space with little or no natural contamination.*** Can we not improve a place by cleaning up all the pollutants, waste and invasive plants and animals we can identify in the area? Is land development congruent with human development? I digress.

### Structured Campgrounds Infrastructure

Let’s make our public parks sustainably accessible for all creatures, plants and humans and make them accessible, as well. Many of the items listed below are normally included in public park developed campgrounds, and others are special for homeless situations in selected park areas and partitioned with appropriate signage:

- Location, location, location: Accessibility, nice views, lots of green vegetation, at least a little shade important. Not near rivers, riparian ecosystems or other sensitive or dangerous areas. Avoid those areas rated with high wildfire hazard risks and any other hazards, such as dangerous flora and fauna nearby. Avoid proximity to freeways and industrial pollution.
- [Green construction](#) and power grid independence with solar panels and vertical wind turbines, aided by exercise equipment that also generate electricity. Some machines may give credit to logged-in members with an account for added benefits. Workout incentives.
- For remote areas, some type of public transportation should also be provided for needed trips to the store or to access medical care and social services when needed, perhaps daily or periodically to special destinations or transit connections.



- Reception area for visitors seeking emergency shelter where access applications can be initiated on-the-spot. No phone or transportation needed. First-aid provided, if needed.
- Each campsite will have uniform spacing and uniform tents or cabins provided by the park or land manager with adequate setback space between occupied areas of at least 4 feet, also uniformly applied. Each campground may design the facilities with architectural schemes appropriate for the environment and occupants' needs.
- No occupants will be permitted to bring their own tent materials or other structures into the campsite or to materially modify or expand the provided tent or cabin. No squatters allowed.
- QR code patches on tents, cabins or clothing will be provided for those who wish to display a link to their personal resume for employment. [QR codes on resumes](#) have shown enhanced job attainment efficacy. Some campers may also wish to use the QR code to provide other personal information of interest to family or potential donors, including photos and other background data. The use of a QR code should be discretionary on the part of the camper. These data may also be indexed online if requested by the individual camper. The agency that is responsible for each campground should also monitor the display of any QR codes in the encampment to avoid [fraudulent claims and petitions](#).
- [Prepaid Phones](#) may be necessary for those with no mobile accounts in order to facilitate employment opportunities, along with the resume linked to the QR code. A specific campsite address for receiving paper correspondence for each camper may also be helpful for securing employment opportunities.
- In addition to park rangers with frequent patrols, each designated campground area should also have a panic button station with a phone to connect with 9-1-1 emergency phone services.
- The surrounding neighborhoods would feel safer if fire extinguishers were also distributed around each camp.
- Campground lighting for all common spaces, benches and cooking areas as needed.
- Common cooking area with safe green [electric BBQs](#) and stoves may be an existential resource, better and safer than just a fire pit. No charcoals or other solid fuels allowed.
- Common meeting room or amphitheater for motivational discussions or entertainment. Comfortable and safe places to hang around and socialize, play cards or dominoes.
- Common food storage, pantries, refrigerators and freezers including an ice-dispensing facility.
- Alternative prepared food service three times a day, as provided by several sleeping cabin communities may preclude the need for cooking facilities and food storage.
- Safe electric outlets installed in each campsite space.
- A public battery-charging station for phones would also be a necessity.
- Hopefully, we can plug in adequate Wi-Fi connections and hot spots, as well, to help keep us all connected, including the necessary broadband satellite signal sources throughout the country.
- Potable water taps for each campsite space.
- Adequate portable toilets.
- Adequate private shower stalls.
- Coin-operated laundromat for the campground to help with hygiene.
- Exercise devices and fitness machines to promote a healthy lifestyle and employment fitness,
- Nearby pickleball or volleyball courts would help for exercise and social recreation,
- Trash pickup services.

- Obviously, we *do not need* rangers to enforce drug abuse violations, especially in preferred campgrounds for addicted or substance abuse people, but we do need to be watchful for unhealthy narcotic symptoms, and provide care as needed.
- Some encampments may require protected areas for smoking or vaping, depending on the type of preferred needs designated for the campground.
- A special patrol of social workers and health service providers would be more appropriately assigned to provide care to these special camp dwellers.
- We need a special troop of social service rangers, not police, unless they're caring. Help and healing without harsh correction is more sustainable in the long run.
- One of the critical needs for most homeless folks is access to secure storage in a locker for their valuable belongings.
- In special campgrounds for artists or vendors, adequate frontage, storage and display areas will be provided within reasonable limits and safety requirements.
- Some type of postal mailing address box at the campgrounds would help to correspond with family and potential employers, apply for federal or state benefits, or even register to vote for qualified citizens. Although temporary, it's a real place, not just a bed in an overnight shelter. *Vote for affordable housing and better, safer shelter around the town and in our parks!*
- Other concerns about dangerous possessions and behaviors are also listed in [Comprehensive Space Occupation Standards](#).

Your campsite is not just a hideout or a refuge for shelter, but a very special personal program position. Designed for [your particular needs](#), mentally, physically and economically. A place to press the restart button for the next chapter of your life. Space and safety are important, but also essential are motivational and guidance people and a stimulating environment to give you a little boost when you are down in the dumps.

Hopefully each camp will also have a unique name that guests can claim as a temporary home with pride. The beautiful natural environment will help to clear unfortunate nightmares of the past. Each occupant will be an active participant with the goal of supporting progress for one and all. A position of importance. A responsibility. A survival rescue team member. Your job is primarily to heal, reorganize and get that employment or sustainable subsistence you need with adequate housing. Do what you can to motivate your team members, as well. Revive your self-confidence. I am who I am! I claim my temporary space!

### Preferred Campground Places

Performing artists and vendors may prefer special locations and flexible space allotments. Some families with children, disabled folks, and drug addicts or alcoholics may need campground communities that allow and support different requirements. ***One big tent or campground, even with a big heart, doesn't necessarily work for all people.*** Preferred Campground Places for various communities with special needs may include the following:

- Families with children and women may feel safer and prefer specialized campsite facilities.
- Domestic violence situations may require emergency care for women and adequate security protection.

- Runaway children or minors may benefit by safe shelter grouped by age and supervised accordingly.
- A [Doggie-People Park](#) may be fun and help to solve logistical problems for those who thrive on seeing wagging tails every day. Play areas may be integrated or placed side-by-side with the camping area. Other pets may be included if they are compatible and safe for the holistic campground population.
- Campers that are currently employed may prefer a campground within reasonable proximity to their employment.
- Those currently enrolled in school may prefer a campground within reasonable proximity to their school or college.
- Unemployed people eager and able to work, who may need training or intern opportunities, may benefit by special grouping and personal employment services. Their resumes may be patched with a QR code on their cap or tent to link via smart phone for more information on the Web. The resume should at least include a [mobile phone number](#) especially if no permanent address or email link is available. Performing artists and day laborers may benefit from special groupings suggested below.
- Artists and vendors may be afforded enhanced space limits and frontage to display their goods, as long as they comply with permits and the special spacing limits allotted.
- Performing Artists, including musicians, singers, actors, acrobats, dancers, rappers, DJs, circus performers, magicians and others, may benefit by an encampment that includes a stage or amphitheater and studios where they can practice their art and crafts and perform for potential employers for events or gigs. Special resumes linked to visible QR codes will facilitate the exchange of critical information, especially when indexed online, including the vital mobile phone number.
- Day Laborers, who may be located for hire in some [special parks](#) or Home Depot parking lots, are often [unhoused and desperate](#) for any work at any price. Paid by contract for each job, not protected against hazardous work or extended hours. Providing special shelter locations for groups of people willing and able for day labor, often highly skilled, will benefit the laborers as well as those looking for help on jobs at their homes or for contractors on construction sites. Mobile phone numbers linked to QR codes and indexed online, the best way to keep the wheels rolling. Need a crew to cut a firebreak for a wildfire? Need quick hands for harvest? Bring a bus or two to load your capable help here. Campers may also help to maintain the encampment and surrounding park areas. These services may also provide a way to show off special skills.
- Nannies, baby sitters, senior sitters, house sitters, house cleaners, also need special resumes with detailed employment histories and credentials for some clients. In between jobs, it's likely that many of these specialists may be housing deprived. Grouping them in special campgrounds may provide a convenient way for contacting these people face to face for an interview. QR coded resumes will also elicit more interest, especially if indexed online.
- Disabled folks may need help with mobility and other therapeutic care.
- People with mental or emotional problems may benefit by specialized care, such as Wilderness Therapy. Those with severe autism, claustrophobic or xenophobic tendencies or schizophrenia, for example, may also benefit by special grouping and care.
- Drug addicts and alcoholics often need medical treatment, detoxification, rehabilitation, and therapy, some of which may be provided while encamped, including Wilderness Therapy, depending on careful diagnosis. Addictions using needles can also lead to serious infections

with contaminated syringes. Clean [needle exchange programs](#) are provided in many large cities including Los Angeles and should also be provided by the Arc of Safety.

- Smoking, whether legal or illegal in various public areas, may need special allowances and isolation in special campgrounds while those with smoking or vaping habits are trying to overcome such dependencies. The isolation will also help to protect other non-smokers from smoke fumes pollution. The outdoor environment will at least dilute the danger for some smokers, as well. If smoking allowed, special fire hazard precautions need to be established within the infrastructure. Another option would be to allow smoking only in protected spaces within the campground.
- Earmarked quarantine campgrounds may provide an exclusive safety bubble for those recently exposed to or recovering from contagious diseases like COVID-19. *New potential occupants in any group may also need to be quarantined and tested while their needs and preferences are assessed especially while the pandemic is out of control.*
- People who feel uncomfortable with masking in any congregate setting, may be grouped in a special outdoor quarantine setting campground provided with frequent temperature checks and other testing for infections of various types. Visitors will be warned with signs about the risks of occupants who may not be protected with masks.
- [Arc of Safety](#) (AoS) invitational campgrounds may be located in or near park areas, wildlands, watersheds and other accessible public lands that possibly are already occupied with unsafe and unsanctioned encampments. These are intended to provide an introduction to safer alternatives for those who have rejected options such as crowded overnight congregate shelters or restrictions on pets or other items. Like other AoS facilities, these campgrounds will be open 24/7 with an invitation for all newcomers who need housing help, although security fencing and gates may be necessary to ensure safety for all. Tents and cabins will be offered on the house including all nutrients and water you need to survive and thrive. Before being placed in other Preferred Campground Places, clients will be tested for COVID-19, provided needed vaccinations, and complete a safety quarantine for at least two weeks. Outreach and vetting with a smile.
- People with chronic ailments or skin cancer, as well as aging folks, who may only be able to work a few hours a day in unstressful jobs may benefit by proximity with other elders and special care, as well as limited sun exposure.
- People recently released from prison or on parole or having a record of a felonious criminal offense of some type, including violent crimes or sex offenses, may need to be separated for safety and provided more security for their own protection, as well.
- People with renown gang histories or touting gang-related tattoos may need to be sensitively separated from rival gangs, unless able and willing to integrate peacefully.
- Some culturally or linguistically dependent folks may benefit by mutual company, although mixed cultural groups would principally be preferable. Can we all try to learn a new language or two, or at least a few essential words to get along, make new friends?
- Some [refugees](#) officially accepted with minimal support in the US, may be placed in sponsored housing and subsequently a few may become unable to manage sustainable housing. Documented and other asylum-seeking immigrants may also struggle with economic challenges. These folks do not necessarily need special grouping or isolation as they may likely blend into other Preferred Campground Places.

- Asylum seekers detained along the border by the [Border Patrol](#) may be housed or secured temporarily with the assistance of the Department of Homeland Security in their own facilities along the border. The CBP and DHS have ample resources and federal lands for housing and detention facilities without using public parks for this purpose.
  - Some people with an LGBTQ gender orientation may feel safer with other special gender oriented people. This may be selected by their own stated preferences for grouping.
- Special Campgrounds Features

### *Garden of Eden*

In addition to ordinary developed campsite amenities, a few orange, apple or avocado trees would be beneficial as supplemental nutrition for all species in the area, depending on the local climate and ecosystem. [Acorns](#) from oak trees were also once a part of traditional California Natives' diets. Enjoy a few edibles on trees or vines like blackberries or [other wild plants](#) (with caution), or possibly some fishing opportunities for proteins. Just walking around the park to enjoy the trees, birds and natural environment will help to nurture and heal the souls of misplaced people, if not threatened by eviction or unkind policing.

Maybe these campers can also help to feed our favored migrating birds that are suffering from climate change food insecurity along with people? In some areas, campers may be expected to help with park maintenance and other chores around the campgrounds. The work may be organized into small crews to help build a sense of community. Recreational activities and tours may also be encouraged and supported. How about a volleyball or pickleball tournament between campgrounds? Maybe we can help to develop more talent for the upcoming Olympics [LA28](#), and be prepared to show off a shiny and healthy city?

### *Camping Access Reception*

Invite new unhoused visitors to access camping or shelter opportunities with an information booth in a facility at every campground location. Provide pamphlets and assistance to initiate participation in the available shelter campgrounds and other facilities suitable for the needs and interests of unhoused visitors. On-the-spot access. No phone or transportation needed. Empty wallet access. Start here. No need to go downtown. First-aid provided, if needed.

### *Park Service Opportunities*

Possibly, some experience and training in the park may lead to gainful employment opportunities down the line, by offering [formal internships](#). In some western states, clearing brush for [wildfire hazard mitigation](#) may be a natural opportunity for those fit for the job, including farmworkers in off-season periods who often endure scanty housing on farms even while employed. These are hard and hazardous jobs, but may lead to good careers in the near and distant future, especially with climate change.

## Upstart Occupations and Challenges

### *Essential Work Leadership*

For today's Americans, our ancestors from many parts of the world are a source of pride. Let me also brag a little about my heritage. My grandfather from Zacatecas used to say "[Every job deserves respect](#)." He also employed a lot of family members in his popular restaurant in Boyle Heights which he built up from a fruit stand, across the street from a Los Angeles Times printing facility on Soto Street. A successful storekeeper in Zacatecas, back in the 1920s, he knew how to sell things and organize a business. As a kid, watching my grandfather at the restaurant, mostly very busy in the kitchen, I learned

restaurants are a lot of work, even for the owner. There were times when some of our relatives worked the valley farm fields, as well, even those in college, when needed.

For many [Latinos](#), the challenge of hard work in kitchens or in acres of farm fields under the sun is nothing new. House cleaning for women, some serving as nannies. House construction for men, many also as gardeners. When I was growing up in Los Angeles, most gardeners were of Asian descent. Now mostly Latinos. Not sure who won or lost that contest? Maybe win-win. In my youth, the people with badges who ticketed me at times were all white, and so were the firemen (no ladies) visible in the streets. Much more diversity today, thank goodness, although some attitudes still need adjustments, fine tuning. Unfriendly guns.

Being an entrepreneur food truck chef is in our genes, as well, in competition with many other people of color. Leadership as a labor organizer for farmworkers stands out as a major accomplishment for my ethnic community. More leaders apparently needed here today. Still looking for a food truck or diner with a refried bean and chorizo burrito to match my Grandpa's invention, however. Reluctantly, I may have to settle for a common chimichanga. Now, I hear veggie tacos may be on the menu. Cross-cultural cuisine. Can you transplant a pig? Does holy water help?

What's interesting about this family is that the first generation Trekker - 1, my dear Grandpa, in some ways did just as well or better with his entrepreneurship and creativity, back in the 1940-1950's, than many of his children and grandchildren. The War economy may have helped. My Dad and one of his brothers also became welders to build warships in San Pedro. With flat feet, drafted in service to the war effort. My Dad became a top welder, as well, designing jigs to speed up production. When we were growing up, years later, he would brag about his war effort craftsmanship. He designed and built a jig to weld hull steel plating in one quick operation. We had some of his old helmets in storage, but he never taught us to weld. Although I did learn to weld for an upstart business later on. Grandpa was a highly respected role model for our family.

We also learned that if we don't get a college education, we may end up washing dishes for 50 cents an hour in those days. Even after eminent domain forced him to find another location for his restaurant and a new home residence property, he was able to end up with several rental properties and a new spot for Cookie's Café that continued to cater to previously devoted clientele and attract even more new customers. My Dad also helped Grandpa with legal arguments to get a better deal with eminent domain.

My Dad's generation Trekkers - 2, my uncles and aunts, did pretty well for themselves also, owning homes and rental properties. Including my CPA uncle Cookie, his kids also getting into the accounting and law business, and siblings marrying into productive families as professionals or entrepreneurs. One of my in-law uncles was actually a high level park service manager in the suburbs of Montebello, if I remember correctly.

As the third generation, Trekkers - 3, myself, brothers and cousins, we did well to push the educational ceiling for our family, having several lawyers, an administrative judge, teachers, a published poet, a nurse with a Ph.D. in nursing from UCLA, on my Mother's side, and just beautiful people. For myself, with my B.A., I did well as a college administrator and subsequently a computer language coder. I bought one of the first IBM PCs when I worked at UCLA. Started learning coding with dBase on my own at home. At times I worked with my attorney brother's legal briefs word processing and my other brother's mortgage business to track clients and investors. I also worked with other companies like



credit card processors and banks, interfacing with large databases. A lot of interesting work. Trekking into [cyberspace](#). With all these Ph. D.s, and J.D.s in the family, a simple B.A. like mine and others in the family doesn't get credit worthiness. But, it's a great way to just start step one of your life. My B.A. is proudly displayed in my memory. Full disclosure, a couple of cousins fell the hard way with mental problems and substance abuse.

I am also proud of a Trekkers - 4 nephew who graduated from Annapolis to become a Navy pilot. Later a successful pilot with major airlines. A niece with a Ph.D. from Columbia University in Latin American Literature. Beautiful people. One nephew dear to me was a pilot of a private aircraft who died tragically along with five passengers. Mechanical failure from 200 feet elevation on takeoff. Before getting his pilot credentials he lived with me and spent a lot of time helping me remodel my home. He scattered his old dog Darby's ashes along the backyard terrace he artfully bricked. Later he moved on and was happily married and had a young daughter. A great future, we all expected. I miss him. His daughter misses him much more after the accidental tragedy.

As a grandpa myself, I am also entitled to brag about my granddaughter, the Trekkers 5 next generation (how time flies), who just graduated from medical school in Nevada and is now in residence as an emergency room doctor in Texas. The first medical doctor in our family in the U.S.A. Talented and brave to take on the stress and threats of COVID-19 patients in Texas, of all places. I give full credit to my daughter who devotedly supported the education of her daughter, my granddaughter, all these years. In Mexico, we also have notable ancestors on my grandmother's side including two medical doctors in Mexico City, my great-great uncles. These ancestors also have been very successful in other entrepreneurial endeavors in Mexico.

All this just to demonstrate that diversity and resilience is abundant in many immigrant families like ours from Mexico as well as families from many other countries and cultures, as well. Many shades of black, brown, red, yellow and blends with all, including white. Our family of families includes a variety of faiths and races, as well. We've had our struggles, some discussed below, but we persevered and moved on beyond the challenges. Still trekking, sometimes from one suburb to another. One state to another. More babies on the way.

### Cookie's Cafe

My grandfather's *Cookie's Cafe* restaurant's original location was gobbled up by the Pomona Freeway ([CA-60](#)), as was my Grandpa's home, a few blocks north on Soto Street. I remember the chicken coop that Grandma tended in the home's backyard. My cousins lived down the street. Many celebrations including Christmas every year, the whole family participating. That freeway and others crisscrossing the area also eliminated a lot of affordable housing.

But, I'll never forget the famous Refried Burrito which my grandfather claimed was his invention. Refried burrito with eggs on the side was our family favorite Sunday brunch. Servings were always delicious and plentiful! A huge, deep-fried flour tortilla burrito more than a foot long, crispy and crunchy, served on an oval dish to fit. Contents refried beans with chorizo. Lots of real lard in deep skillet. Longer and thinner than the popular chimichangas you may find today. Not squared off on the ends. More crunchy, as well.

No cookies on the menu, nor were they needed. *Cookie* was the nickname for one of my youngest uncles. He became a CPA accountant, after serving in the military. His accountancy business served the E.L.A. business community including my younger brother's law firm located on the same main

street. My mother daringly tried to reproduce Grandpa's refried burrito recipe which treat was shared by the family for traditional gatherings over decades. I was always eager to help in the kitchen, and sample, of course. Well done, Mom! Put this mega-burrito on the menu for the homeless, as well.

### Trek to Boyle Heights

One time, when my Dad was on a business trip, my Mom told us we had to walk all the way from our home in Echo Park to Boyle Heights for dinner at *Cookie's Café*. My Dad travelled a lot on business, this time to the Philippines. I can visualize walking with my Mom and two brothers, down Sunset Blvd., which turned into Brooklyn Avenue (now named Cesar E. Chavez Ave.), and then right turn to Soto Street for a few more blocks, where we had a great dinner at Grandpa's restaurant. No one complained about the walk, although long (4 miles), uneventful, and somewhat boring. We were accustomed to walking over a mile each way to school every day, for several years. Guess we didn't have a car in those days, to boot. Not homeless, but foodless that day. Nice visit. Grandpa drove us back afterwards and also brought goodies to replenish our paltry pantry. Love you Grandpa!

First, safe tent or cabin shelter, nutrition and healing, then work out better housing solutions and employment, if needed. Refried burritos may be a little greasy for some, but they help to heal the spirit. Soul food. Taquitos may be a good substitute, in a pinch, with a good salsa. There are a lot of people struggling for housing and scraping out a living with vendor carts or fruit stands, like my Grandpa before he built the restaurant. Special campgrounds may be designed to support micro-entrepreneurs until they move up the ladder to acquire a food truck or a restaurant and thrive with adequate housing and more.

Some of the unhoused campers may already be in school or training for employment. Many of us find it difficult to believe that such huge numbers of unsheltered people exist. Believe also that they are part of your family, our family. If we can protect bears, mountain lions, wolves and coyotes who live in or near our dwellings and farms, we should be able to protect a few misplaced humans, as well. We don't want to force the homeless to eat coyotes. Sadly, some may also become victims of these unfriendly canines, as well. *Coyote bites human barbeques coyote.*

### Economic Sinkholes

Whether first generation or tenth, looks like we have more people, more resources and deeper [economic sinkholes](#) and seismic faults where economic crises may trigger some to lose their income and housing footing. A deceptive, luring minefield. Depth of the economic sinkhole for individuals increases in proportion to [available housing costs](#). Higher rent costs, greater risks. Lower wages for entry level jobs only adds to the likelihood of sinking down the quicksand.

Hidden [homeless traps or paths](#) start with events like a divorce, bad investments, bankruptcy, [drug addiction](#), gambling habits, mental illness, pandemic infection, criminal offense and many other sometimes unexpected events and tragedies. Experiencing economic insecurity and homelessness often induces new or increased substance dependency, lubricating the slide downhill, reducing fitness for employment of any kind. The streets introduce temptations for more dangerous drugs. A low credit score or late rent payments, may hinder your next rental application.

Like a [black hole](#) in space, impossible for many to escape the homeless path. Watch your step and vaccinate if you can, even if you have good health insurance, which seldom covers loss of income. Don't listen to fake news from imposters about [dangerous vaccinations](#). Don't panic, think survival. Avoid the traps and avoid becoming a part of tented street scenes. Easy to enter. Difficult to climb out of the

pit. The longer you remain without an address, the deeper your legs entrench in the bottomless quicksand. Your worst friends may have helped you down the wrong path. Your best friends may help you see the light. But, it's up to you to make the first move forward and upward.

Although [debtors' prisons](#) have formally been abolished, many states add fines and fees to people convicted of crimes that they can never afford to pay. Just having a felony conviction on your record can limit your employability for many jobs. Ex-cons are likely to experience homelessness [ten times more frequently](#) than the general public. ***Homelessness exacerbates recidivism for ex-offenders.*** Events like weather disasters and [pandemics](#) may rapidly stifle the economic viability of large segments of the population and catapult some to the gutter. In 2020, wildfires in America have burned and damaged nearly [17,700 structures](#), many in California. ***Attention seismologists, economists, and caring people: Economic seismic faults and sinkholes need your attention! Do you have a ladder to climb out of these sinkholes? A parachute when our dream clouds burst?***

Ask for help, even if you find it difficult to love yourself, or to care for anyone. Many of us are going through difficult times these days. Just feeling nervous about unprecedented events can get us into trouble. Take a deep breath. Relax. Take a walk in the park or a nice hiking trail. Smile at strangers. Volunteer to help others. Be cool.

### Not In My Backyard (NIMB)

#### A Dark Reality

NIMB (Not In My Backyard) is only natural, mainly because unmanaged helter-skelter tents tend to be messy and often hazardous to the community. But the same people who complain are mostly supportive of some type of practical solution in care of the homeless. While more affordable housing is awaiting, what's practical may be more care and services to manage those areas designated for sanctioned homeless campgrounds or cabin communities. ***Keep people safe, keep the ecology safe, and diligently manage the designated [structured campgrounds](#) for capacity, sanitation, and compliance with necessary standards. Make it look nice and clean, too, including daily inspections! The Garden of Eden with careful gardeners.***

Not every park will be blessed with a designated structured homeless campground when carefully planned. No carte blanche access for encroachers. No BYOT. Perhaps some new park areas will be devoted primarily for exclusive shelter encampments with all the services and safeguards required. It will be rational to include some designated campgrounds near urban centers where important resources are located. With accessible transportation, a few remote areas may be capable of providing more available acreage and additional natural bounty and beauty. Some campers may move from one campground to another over time based on healing progress, employment opportunities and resources available. A carefully managed system with full accountability for every resident by name and every campsite space by address.

Special [Preferred Campground Places](#) for groups with particular needs may be provided, as well. *Every camper should be vetted and approved for placement in an assigned tent space or cabin appropriate to his or her needs and preferences, and must abide by all the pertinent rules.* Hopefully, we can figure out a way to clear our downtown skid row streets and many parks with disorganized tents by gently moving the unhoused to suitable structured camping spaces. *Environments healthier both physically and emotionally for those experiencing a housing crisis.*

A geometric and architectural puzzle that needs to be solved, even if we need more parks for this purpose and other types of safe and suitable shelter spaces and infrastructure. Like a mountain cabin lodge or two for safe shelters in Elysian Park, Griffith Park, Debs Park or the newer [Los Angeles State Historic Park](#), for example. Nominate a large park in your favorite areas, as well. In colder climates and seasons, solid cabin structures will safely provide shelter more comfortably than tents, and will be designed to complement the park environment, as well. Igloos not needed here. Envision a beautiful organic and sustainable campground that all will appreciate.

### Overnight Routine

An overnight shelter is just that, overnight. 6:00 AM and you're out! They often provide an evening dinner and breakfast before the invitation ends. Even if the day brings rain, snow, chilling temps or the opposite extreme of burning solar radiation. Unsheltered in the day. Sleep indoors then wander or hunker down outdoors in streets, alleys or parks. Some overnightrers resorting to daytime tents just to survive the day. Not sustainable. Not healthy. The exceptions are a few providers who offer [Winter Shelter](#) throughout the day, including meals. On hot days, you're on your own, except for a few community cooling centers with AC. A few special [types of shelters](#) are available in some areas.

### Skin Cancer

I saw one poor homeless soul on a TV news clip recently who was obviously suffering from several large [Squamous Cell](#) cancer growths on his cheeks. It brought me to tears, since I have also been treated for Squamous Cell and Basal Cell carcinoma, requiring [office surgery](#). I didn't know those tumors I saw on TV could grow so large. Hope somebody helped him. But he's not the only homeless skin cancer victim, like this case in [San Diego](#) and another one in [Portland](#), for example. There are also concerns that [Climate Change](#) and increased UVR intensity therefrom, may also add to skin cancer threats, especially melanoma, as the radiation increases. For your own protection, walk your dog in the shade or early morning. Lots of sunscreen. [Dogs](#) can suffer from skin cancer, too, especially in their ears and around their nose. I got it in my ear, as well as on my cheek and scalp. It's not fun. Too much tennis over the years, I suppose. Like some of my tennis buddies also getting skin cancer treatments.

Don't worry about me, at least I have good care and a healthy lifestyle with a roof over my head. Climate change is not kind to the unhoused, however, especially the [elderly](#), or anyone needing to linger or work in the streets, on rooftops or in open fields. Essential workers we all depend upon. Uncomfortable and dangerous job environments. I also worry about all the surfers, including some youngsters in my family, who may not be as careful as they should be, like me in my youth. A study in Australia indicates that surfers are [three times](#) more likely to acquire melanoma skin cancer than non-surfers. Overexposure to solar radiation was dangerous in my youth, but today it's even more destructive to human tissue.

### Goals and Standards

The goal of establishing a certain percentage of park acreage to homeless encampments in each jurisdiction is to formally and heartfully acknowledge that the homeless own a part of our parks, just like everyone else. ***Most likely they have been taxpayers for many years of their lives. All folks deserve a softer, safer landing place when wings and shelter all suddenly collapse: space for a tipi tent or sleeping cabin, if nothing else.*** This may also provide a safer buffer zone for the local community, as well. Win-win holistic accommodations.

Let's hope we also seriously examine what the standards for homeless encampments should include regarding safety, sanitation, capacity per acre, social services, amenities and so forth. The standards already established for developed campgrounds in our parks will provide a good model to start with. Yes, it will be costly. But so is the cleanup and neighborhood degradation when necessary services or standards are neither defined nor managed or even anticipated.

### Inhumane Violations of Human Rights

New categories for building and safety standards regarding survival space tents and cabins should now be on the drawing boards for serious discussion by architects, urban planners, engineers, technicians and community stakeholders wherever homelessness crises occur. For example, how much safety setback space between tents is necessary? Maximum dimensions of tents or shanty structures? Maximum population density for any occupied areas? Metrics for deaths by exposure are predictable. Add to that threat: food insecurity, unsanitary conditions and communal violence. Someone is or should be held accountable especially in large, departmentalized urban regions governance. Are you one who is partly responsible in some way? ***Who is responsible for the spread of viral infections from crowded overnight shelters?***

We have eyes, cameras and networks, but we pretend we don't see, or we simply obscure the media screen as if it were some type of porn. Not my problem. Possibly just too much information to comprehend or deal with. Much of the information is useless without measurable standards. How many just yesterday died of exposure and homelessness in your neighborhood? Let's be real. Neuropathy is not an excuse.

Let's say this and think about it: ***Unhoused exposed populations and many subject to substandard housing are not natural or expected without immediate safe shelter or remedy in any modern or developed metropolis or state.*** *Although the problem is not new, it has grown unchecked like a cancer to impact the health and future horizons of families and isolated elders in most major urban centers throughout the US.* For example, families living in cars experience educational challenges for the next generation. Intimacy at a price. Crowded multi-generation households all infected with COVID-19. Environmental justice starts with the intimate environment of your dwelling, or whatever shelter is accessible. A beautiful day is not so friendly if there is no shade or shelter from the elements.

In 2018, a U.N. official visited San Francisco on a world tour examining housing conditions. She was shocked by what she saw and concluded in an [official report](#) to the U.N. that what she saw on the streets of San Francisco "*constitutes cruel and inhuman treatment and is a violation of multiple human rights, including rights to life, housing, health, water, and sanitation*" by the city.

The [Martin v. City of Boise](#) case that was recently settled, rules that overnight sleeping in public places cannot be forbidden if adequate shelter spaces are not available. The settlement included supporting more overnight shelter spaces in Boise and a commitment to provide more available housing. We do not know if the [Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals](#) may be satisfied in future cases of this type by sanctioning safe survival spaces with tents and cabins. But the case does provide a general legal framework for laws, precedents and possibly standards for sanctioned safe outdoor camping that may apply when and if they become available with sufficient capacity. [Appeals](#) to the court are likely to change the findings or rulings, or stay their executions. Very likely, many of the helter-skelter campers may be willing to voluntarily move to such sanctioned camping facilities unless they are unable to abide by the rules and standards, or are simply looking for a permanent housing or camping alternative with no rules, costs and limitations, which some people do actually prefer.

In the 2021 case of [Fountain Valley v. Mary Wood](#), the city cited this 75-year-old lady with four misdemeanor charges for living in a tent in Mile Square Park. Mary responded in defense that sleeping indoors with strangers, as offered by the City Manager, is a danger to her at her age and suffering from heart problems, especially during a pandemic. The jury agreed with Mary's argument presented by a public defender for Orange County, Daniel Maher. Although Mary is officially cleared of her charges and allowed to continue living in this park, the City Manager intends to continue prosecuting similar cases in the future.

### Pilot Shelter Programs

#### Investments by Los Angeles

In Los Angeles, the Mayor has proposed safe and clean shelters for the homeless in each district which will preclude the need for camping in parks and streets. A \$20 million fund will assure that unprecedented services, 24-hour security, mental health experts, employment specialists and anti-addiction experts will be committed to each new shelter site, as reported by [KQED](#).

This proposal may be more effective, we believe, if at least some of these new shelters will be located in or near public parks so that the homeless participants will have a nice place to hang out when they are not in the shelter or a nearby library. Something like a rustic mountain cabin, well ventilated for safety, might work to dress up a park area. Including a kitchen would be nice, as well.

#### Bridge Home

A [Bridge Home](#) project is already in progress throughout the city of Los Angeles which offers shelter as a bridge to stable housing solutions for those served. The focus of each facility pertains to local needs in each district.

#### Sleeping Cabins

[Sleeping Cabins](#), made of durable prefabricated materials, are currently being installed in various parks and public spaces in Los Angeles which will provide more security than tents for those who are currently unhoused. These cabins include secure door locks and keys and just enough space for a couple of beds and safe storage for a few belongings. In some areas, priority access may be given to vulnerable elders. The cabin community will also be provided three meals a day and other vital services to ultimately access sustainable housing.

#### Project Roomkey

For those who may be vulnerable to COVID-19, such as unhoused elderly folks aged 65 or older, [Project Roomkey](#) is a temporary non-congregate resource in hotels. Once approved and enrolled, services will be provided to find other long-term housing solutions. This is a statewide program coordinated by Los Angeles and many other cities and counties in California.

#### Overnight Shelters Alternatives

*Homeless people are particularly selective about shelters and areas that offer more safety and comfort and ways to protect their belongings. Survival mode.* Providing more overnight shelter beds may be a solution, but some campers complain about available shelters with [unsafe conditions](#), closely packed beds and sometimes infestations with bedbugs, lice, rats, mold and other unhealthy vectors. Many feel that outdoor camping is safer than beds packed in poorly ventilated building spaces. COVID-19 makes the health risks for overnight shelters even greater. Alternative outdoor tent space availability,



however, is frequently unreliable especially in most areas that are not sanctioned. *If you were in their shoes, what level of safety and sanitation would you look for?*

*Reviews conducted at 60 shelters funded by LAHSA last year found more than half -- 33 -- were not filling all of their beds. Overall, LAHSA-funded shelters had a 78 percent utilization rate, well below the 90 percent required in their contracts*, as reported in the same KQED story mentioned above. Finding an available bed is one problem. Finding a safe and clean bed and environment, another. Hence more people sleeping in sidewalks, alleys, parks and trains, tents or no.

[Sleeping cabins](#) with community services should be attractive to most campers for added safety unless they are in possession of too much precious stuff to fit into the tiny cabin storage space. Tents may be fairly large, but do not provide lock and key security. Placing cabin communities in parks, as planned for a couple of areas, can be the best of both worlds by being able to step out of your secure cabin door and talk with the birds and squirrels.

Adding a couple of custom decor exterior panels with an address on the front of each cabin may help to connect with the surrounding natural environment or to portray personal expressions. Depending on the demand and supply for Sleeping Cabins, there will most likely be a need for additional conforming tents for more homeless people to integrate with the cabin community. Several hundred or even a couple thousand cabins will not quite meet the needs for 48,000 unsheltered homeless in Los Angeles County, in addition to 18,000 homeless that are sheltered, according to the [2020 Homeless Count](#). *Priorities to protect unhoused seniors and women in secure cabins may be necessary*. Looks like a mismatch of logarithmic scale between the needed numbers and planned solution. A good model to test as a pilot, nonetheless. Three meals a day, including a burrito or two, sounds good to me. Adding a few secure storage lockers for the community would make this model more sustainable.

In a public park, tents and cabins can also be nicely arranged and kept clean with good management. Hedges can also add privacy for tent dwellers and landscaping appeal, as long as security cameras can see around the hedges. When a campground is sanctioned we expect that standards for safety and sanitation will be specified including occupancy limits, for example, and those standards will be supported and enforced through local government funding sources. Daily inspections absolutely necessary with specific codified standards.

### Numbers

Pilot programs look good on paper, until you do the math. Let us look at 48,000 unhoused and unsheltered people just in our Los Angeles streets and parks today, plus another 18,000 unhoused with some type of shelter. And so many more uncounted souls living in substandard spaces. We need safe places to shelter, heal and help these numbers of real flesh and blood to solve personal problems and secure sustainable housing. Whether in intimate cabins or tents or larger congregate structures and Bridge homes, we need sufficient resources and adequate space to meet these needs NOW! *Not mañana! If Los Angeles is a laboratory for change, hopefully it's more than just finding spaces for thousands of dead bodies. On a daily basis nearly four unhoused people die in our streets from hypothermia and exposure according to the medical examiner. More than 1,000 each year. Death rates increasing as described by [L.A.TACO](#).*

It's not rational to imagine all these people with different needs and preferences to be safely sheltered and provided an optimistic future path in tightly clustered tents, shanty towns or in crowded and unhealthy overnight bed spaces. Instead, concierge service is essential for each person currently

experiencing a very rough journey. Before the Bridge Home, while more accommodations are on the drawing boards, we need immediate safe shelter for all in need. A sheltered path, mostly in safe, outdoor protected spaces, featuring an orientation to the Bridge.

### Planning Space Acreage for Campgrounds

#### Case Study Los Angeles

Setting a percentage of park acreage for homeless camping designation in each jurisdiction is also the first step for careful design and management. Consider the percentage to be a minimum starting point for planning. To determine what logic to base as a percentage of park acreage for this purpose, let us start with the obvious metrics of unsanctioned homeless encampments or isolated shelters currently scattered in our parks, wildlands or on public pavements.

The counts help to inform the total required space and special preferred categories to embrace in various areas. For example, with 48,000 unsheltered homeless bodies at  $16' \times 16' = 256$  sq. ft. each, we can plan for 12,288,000 sq. ft. or about 282 acres, which comes to about 5.6% of Griffith Park's 4,500 acres. Maybe somebody can beatify old Mr. Griffith as the saint of homeless folks, as long as they use the park for recreational enjoyment, of course, during the day. But not near the Boy's Camp, just for safety.

For different views and considerably more space, the [Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#) covers 156,671 acres and includes many accessible parks all around Los Angeles county. Dividing 282 acres by 156,671 yields less than one percent or 0.18% of the acreage in the Santa Monica Recreation Area. Lots of space to work with, as needed to expand over time. No need to be stingy with our homeless folks. In some areas, larger spacing per tent may be important for some campers. Using [Sleeping Cabins](#), as currently being tested in some areas, instead of tents may condense the space needed, depending on their setback spacing. But let's plan it carefully. These Mega-Parks with thousands of acres each should be thought of as backup reserves beyond those smaller parks with only a few acres in urban areas.

#### Math Variables

These numbers will help you do the math. Make your own local standards for spacing and setbacks, etc.

- One **Tent Space** of  $16' \times 16' = 256$  sq. ft. which allows for expected 2' setback on each side or 4' between tent space edges side by side. Larger or smaller squares or rectangles may be considered for different needs or layouts. More setback space may enhance privacy and safety.
- **One Acre** of 43560 sq. ft. / 256 sq. ft. = **170 Tent Spaces per acre**.
- **Acres Needed** to minimally provide tent space for unhoused-unsheltered folks in any area equals **Unsheltered Count / 170** assuming 256 sq. ft. per tent space and setback.
- Divide Acres Needed, in the above calculation, by your park jurisdiction's **Total Acreage** to compile the **Percent of your parks' Acreage Needed** for shelter tent space. Multiply the quotient by 100 for a percentage.

#### Los Angeles County Parks

For Los Angeles County, for example, the following table of Parks & Recreation Areas breaks down the acreage by jurisdiction as published by [Los Angeles Almanac](#). Remember that all we need for 48,000 tents is 282 acres total, based on safety planning standards under control by responsible jurisdictions. We did the math to calculate and add the 3<sup>rd</sup> column for this table. Note that the City of

Los Angeles parks has the capacity to safely arrange 65,997 tents using only 1% of the city's existing park space, for example. This capacity is also larger than all the space needed for 48,000 unsheltered homeless and almost equal to the total when adding 18,000 spaces for currently sheltered homeless in the [recent count](#), totaling 66,000 unhoused. For each campground, additional space and services may be required for [safety and sanitation infrastructure](#).

Parks & Recreation Areas in Los Angeles County	Acreage	1% Acreage Tent Capacity**
Federal*	812,057*	1,380,497
State	46,375	78,838
County	65,528	111,398
City of Los Angeles	38,822	65,997
City of Long Beach	3,123	5,309
City of Glendale	2,076	3,529

\* Federal park and recreational acreage includes the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area that overlaps into Ventura County (total 156,670 acres). Of this, the National Park Service manages only 23,620 acres, the California Dept. of Parks & Recreation manages another 42,000 acres and the rest is managed by local agency, university and private park and conservation concerns. Federal acreage above also includes that of the Angeles National Forest (655,387 acres) managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

\*\* 1% Acreage Tent Capacity is calculated by dividing one acre by 256 sq. ft. = 170 tents capacity per acre. Take one percent of the total parks acreage and multiply by 170 tents per acre.

Source: [National Park Service](#), [U.S. Forest Service](#), [California Dept. of Parks & Recreation](#), [Los Angeles County Dept. of Parks & Recreation](#) and [The Trust for Public Land](#).

Although the **City of Los Angeles** is the nation's second most populous city and ranks eighth among the nation's largest cities for number of parkland acres, at 9.9 parkland acres per 1,000 residents, it ranks 62nd among the largest U.S. cities for acres per residents. Los Angeles further ranks fifth in California, behind Irvine (34.2 acres per 1k residents), San Diego (32.9), San Jose (15.8) and Riverside (11.5).

***Planning begins with needs assessments, maps of existing parks, acreage available for new parks, preferred places for special categories of need, and lastly budgetary restraints including possible funding availability.***

### Inter-Jurisdictional Planning

The [Continuum of Care](#) (CoC) coordination model, invited for federal funding support, is essential. The enhanced inclusion of other stakeholders and agencies we suggest below should also be integrated with the CoC. Since total acreage on federal lands is larger than other jurisdictions, the camping space percentage for homeless campgrounds will best be coordinated with inter-jurisdictional planning agents, including federal, state, county and municipal parks. Some states may need to depend on more federal land than other states. Likely, federal parks and state parks closest to municipal boundaries or Wildland

Urban Interface ([WUI](#)) areas will be more strategically useful. Committing acreage is one thing, providing the infrastructure and resources that are needed to actually treat the occupants properly and keep everyone safe, is another. Similar perspectives apply to smaller jurisdictions like counties and cities, as well. The [Department of the Interior](#) is a key resource to help plan and support this project, as is the [Bureau of Land Management](#) and the [National Park Service](#), in addition to the park service for each state. Some cities and counties have their own [Housing Search](#) department to help find affordable housing.

### Local Community Advisory Committee

Coordination with [Community Wildfire Protection Planning](#) groups will provide a natural symbiotic relationship, as well, especially with an eye on engaging with local community stakeholders and gatekeepers. Establishing a local community advisory committee for each sanctioned homeless campground or cabin community, may be useful, as well. Let's roll up our sleeves and get involved. Hopefully, environmental groups and homeless advocates will join the local panels to figure out the best way to keep the people and ecology safe and thriving in a sustainable manner.

The planned numbers will be expected to change in either direction periodically, based on need and performance each year, and properly accounted for by responsible governance. If dedicated campgrounds and cabin communities are at times underutilized by the unhoused, the vacant spaces may be at least temporarily enjoyed by paying campers. Nothing lost or wasted. The more facilities, the better. Plan and build for present and future needs. Attractive and safe spaces with tents or cabins will always be in demand. A sound investment in infrastructure. ***Let's hope our unhoused clients will quickly find sustainable housing to allow recreational clients to come aboard. Let's expect it. Plan for it. But we can't heartlessly leave them out in the sun and cold in the meantime.***

When assessing the numbers of unhoused, not only campers should be counted, but also those sleeping on benches including train car sleepers and abandoned building dwellers. Vehicle sleepers need [safe parking spaces](#) as well, but not necessarily with tents or within parks. Location is critical since many of these vehicle sleepers are employed and may have children in local schools. The excessive cost of housing and the low level of minimum wages may be the critical problem for many of the vehicle dwellers, some with more than one job and yet unable to afford the rent.

Due to housing evictions, economic disasters like pandemics, loss of employment, loss of income from illness or family disruption, abuse by caregivers or parents, or even a nasty divorce, some people just need emergent housing or a place to camp out. Some women may need a fire escape to flee from a violent partner. Some of us may just need a safe place to unwind from the torments of life in our current environment. Recently it was reported that as many as 20% of community college students and 5% of University of California students are experiencing homelessness in California according to the UCLA [Daily Bruin](#). Economists may also project increases and decreases in various [occupational categories](#) as well as housing supply and demand to inform anticipated unhoused planning expectations. We don't need to wait for counting noses on skid row to prepare in advance.

### Affordable Housing Planning

Planning for more affordable housing should be based on the numbers of residents in each area that have low incomes. Simply put, if the number of affordable housing units is lower than the number of low-income family residents in a particular area, we can expect more people in the streets, unhoused, camping or occupying other generally substandard alternatives. With the help of expert economists and

researchers such as [California Housing Partnership](#), we can plan appropriately for affordable housing needs. Some of the areas reported include [Los Angeles](#), [San Francisco](#), [San Diego](#), [Santa Clara](#), [Orange](#), [Riverside](#), [Sacramento](#), [San Bernardino](#) and [Ventura](#). This is just a partial list. You can also search for other county and city reports over different periods.

If you're concerned about homeless campers in your city or county, look up how many affordable housing units are needed in your city or county and ask your representatives what plans are on the drawing board to meet the unmet demand for affordable housing. For a national view by state, the National Low Income Housing Coalition ([NLIHC](#)) collects and presents similar affordable housing needs and availability for low-income households with online access for every state in the U.S. They also include helpful resources for advocacy to take action in your state. All the numbers and facts you need are clearly presented and easy to access. There are no mysteries except for accountability when affordable housing is lacking.

### Tenure Planning

Length of stay or tenure for campground occupation for individual campers should be driven primarily on the goal of achieving sustainable housing. This may also be related to their groupings by need, whether the term of tenure is fixed or flexible. A Housing Stability Plan ([HSP](#)) is an essential tool when fully endorsed by each person:

- Those already employed may need the availability of affordable housing which may not exist in the near term in some areas. Improved wages, if available, may also be a solution. The new [Child Tax Credit](#) may help for some families.
- The unemployed may find it difficult to find a job since many employers do not hire unhoused people with no address or those with criminal records. Job training for specific occupations and internships may be part of the solution.
- Those with substance abuse dependencies may need treatment which solution may take time and distinct types of therapy.
- In general, each person on the streets or under tents may benefit by an individual Housing Stability Plan (HSP) for progress towards housing, with careful assessments and realistic timelines for each step to make things real for each person and the helping community involved.

The terms *Emergency Shelter*, *Supportive Housing* and *Transitional Housing* are applied in various solutions and proposals discussed in the efforts to keep people from sleeping in the streets. For example, the California Department of Housing and Community Development provides information for [People Experiencing Homelessness](#) and presents these types of programs:

- **Emergency shelter** is defined as “housing with minimal supportive services for homeless persons that is limited to occupancy of six months or less by a homeless person. No individual or household may be denied emergency shelter because of an inability to pay.” (See Gov. Code, § 65582, subd. (d) and Health and Safety Code, § 50801, subd. (e).)
- **Supportive housing** is defined as “housing with no limit on length of stay, that is occupied by the target population, and that is linked to onsite or offsite service that assists the supportive housing resident in retaining the housing, improving his or her health status, and maximizing his or her ability to live and, when possible, work in the community.” (Gov. Code, § 65582, subd. (g).)
- **Transitional housing** is defined as “buildings configured as rental housing developments, but operated under program requirements that require the termination of assistance and

recirculating of the assisted unit to another eligible program recipient at a predetermined future point in time that shall be no less than six months from the beginning of the assistance.” (Gov. Code, § 65582, subd. (j).)

Various outdoor tent solutions and cabins discussed in this paper would most likely apply to the category of Emergency shelter as defined above. [Funding resources](#) and links for related programs are also provided. Related [Federal resources](#) for grants are provided by Health and Human Services..

The [National Coalition for the Homeless](#) reported in 2009 that *The average length of stay in emergency shelter was 69 days for single men, 51 days for single women, and 70 days for families. For those staying in transitional housing, the average stay for single men was 175 days, 196 days for single women, and 223 days for families. Permanent supportive housing had the longest average stay, with 556 days for single men, 571 days for single women, and 604 days for women (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2008).*

## Advocacy for Safe Survival Space

### Activate Your Vision

To get involved, you may want to join one of the groups of ‘[homeless shelter activists](#)’ in your area by searching these keywords. In Los Angeles, where I live, there are at least three City Council Members, [Mike Bonin](#), [Mark Ridley-Thomas](#) and [Kevin DeLeon](#) who support [designated sanctioned homeless campgrounds](#) or [cabin communities](#) but only in certain parks and other public lands as a temporary emergency solution. If you wish to get involved in your area, there are six broad choices in current policy conversations, some of which may be compatibly combined:

1. [NIMB](#) Current status quo: Allow people to continue to camp in **unsanctioned and unmanaged** areas in parks, sidewalks, beaches, watersheds and anywhere they can pitch a tent due to inadequate housing and emergency shelter spaces, often in inhumane conditions, and frequently remove them and force them to find other similar spaces when neighbors complain, or tragedies occur. Not a plan but a side-step, knee-jerk power play and costly approach that often criminalizes people simply for being indigent,
2. [Restrict helter-skelter homeless camps](#) that hinder safe access and passage on public streets and sidewalks, near parks, schools and other specified areas, as imposed by a new ordinance of the City of Los Angeles (July 29, 2021). Now being implemented,
3. Establish [comprehensive space occupancy safety standards](#) for both sanctioned and impromptu, unsanctioned shanty town or tent settlements, to standardize maximum size of tents or structures, minimum setback space between structures or tents, maximum occupancy by area, prohibition of fuels, explosives, fires or lethal weapons of any type, and so forth, currently not on the books as far as we know,
4. Provide safe emergency shelter and a therapeutic hospice for all in need with the [Arc of Safety](#) (AoS) as an alternative to dangerous overnight shelter hellholes. No BYOT needed. New concept to be addressed in the near future, hopefully. Compatible and inclusive with the next item,
5. Designate appropriate and adequate [structured campgrounds](#) or [sleeping cabin communities](#), **sanctioned and managed** for temporary camping shelter in selected parks or other public grounds with adequate safety, sanitation and management to sustain the integrity of the neighborhood and surrounding ecology, in ways like those suggested herein, and other ways



until we can provide sufficient safe emergency shelter or extended housing in a sustainable manner. Only partially supported in a few areas,

6. Provide adequate and **accessible - affordable housing** with immediate placement for all those currently camping or sleeping in unauthorized and unhealthy places, requiring a bank of available and good quality housing spaces to occupy whenever needed. The ideal humane solution for those who have at least some source of income or can qualify for aid.
7. Those with no stable income or suffering from chronic ailments with no disability benefits may need more help and temporary survival space, such as proposed above in option 4,
8. Your Vision. Here's the table. Take your place. Get involved. How can we motivate and help people experiencing homelessness to climb out of their impoverished or unhealthy situation?

**Every tent or cabin takes space. Every structured tent or cabin community even more space and infrastructure. The people out there are not trying to make a political statement. They are just looking for a place to sleep, to weather the storm. Yes, they also need to breathe and eat, etc. Let's not politicize hunger and chilled bones or sunburnt skin.**

### Cost Benefit Analysis

A pilot program in East Hollywood may cost as much as \$2,663 per person per month, according to a report by the City Administrative Officer and noted in an informative story on [KCRW.com](https://www.kcrw.com). This includes an outdoor food pantry and a shower stall. The parking lot-turned-campground can accommodate as many as 120 people at a time in 12-foot by 12-foot squares for each tent, marked by white lines painted on the asphalt. Is this the necessary cost of safe tent - survival space? Safe for campers, safe for the community, safe for the environment and ecology? Compare this with campsite spaces in some of our public parks which require payments for about \$35 a day, amounting to a little over \$1,000 a month. Clearly we need to understand who is paying for what and the ultimate quality of life we need to sustain. Perhaps some of the homeless may afford to pay \$1,000 a month for safe and adequate camping space? Food and other services would cost more. Can Los Angeles afford to pay \$2,663 x 48,000 a month to meet the needs of our current burden of unsheltered people? Some would argue that a hotel room at \$100 a day is cheaper. Does that include food and rehabilitation services?

Costs like these or even higher are also underwritten by the City of San Francisco for a similar homeless encampment in the civic center, both administered with the help of [Urban Alchemy](https://www.urbanalchemy.com) which San Francisco installation they call the [Safe Sleeping Village](https://www.sfdph.org/dph/eha/sleepingvillage/). According to the [California Housing Partnership](https://www.californiahousingpartnership.org), 23,765 low-income renter households in San Francisco do not have access to an affordable home. Similar projects are also proposed by Los Angeles leaders for several park areas. Yes, California has more homeless people than [any other state](https://www.anyotherstate.com), but this state also embraces more people overall and more resources to apply to solving this unhealthy problem, *including the wit and determination of our unhoused folks*. Human resources that should be protected and put to work ASAP!

### Sleeping Cabin Communities

A cluster of tiny 2-bed, 8' x 8', prefabricated sleeping cabins with secure doors, heating and air-conditioning are being erected as [Pallet Communities](https://www.palletcommunities.com) in Northeast Los Angeles, not far from the [Arroyo Seco Parkway](https://www.arroyosecoparkway.com). Doggie park and tennis courts close by. Lots of homeless folks have dogs and some may like a tennis game at times, as well. Many unsanctioned homeless tents are found in the same area. No plumbing, bathroom or kitchen provided in these tiny non-congregate sleeping spaces, but needed services and food are included. These Pallet Shelters like those in [Redondo Beach](https://www.redondo.beach), [North Hollywood](https://www.northhollywood.com), [Echo Park](https://www.echo.park) and [other locations](https://www.otherlocations.com) are designed as a gateway to housing services in a space that is safe from

intrusion and exposure to crowded [overnight shelters](#) with dozens of beds. Cost of structures from the [Pallet](#) company start at \$5,495 for the 64-sq. ft. model. Assembly is quick and durability of materials expected to last at least ten years. The larger 100-sq. ft. model can accommodate up to four beds. See a [virtual tour](#).

Services and amenities provided for the Los Angeles Pallet Shelter communities' residents include:

- Meals
- Showers
- Case management
- Housing navigation
- Housing placement
- Job training
- Mental health services
- Laundry
- Dog run

### Park Management Perspective

In 2017, the National Recreation and Parks Association ([NRPA](#)) conducted a 25-question survey to gain an understanding of the views and actions of park and recreation departments and other local government agencies toward the homeless population across the country. Of the sixty-five park and recreation agencies who responded to the survey, only one in six urban park and recreation agency directors report that their agency is working to serve better and provide regular programming for their communities' homeless population, as presented in [Homelessness in Parks: A Summary of Key Findings from an NRPA Research Survey](#).

Accordingly, most urban park and recreation agencies do not permit people to encamp on public land overnight, with more than half of agencies permitted to remove people with little or no notice for loitering and similar offenses. Three in four park and recreation agencies are using, or are considering the inclusion of, design and infrastructure elements that discourage people from staying overnight in parks. In this report, the NRPA does not take a direct advocacy position, but does demonstrate sensitivity to the homeless in their presentation and provides additional useful information. Any advocate needs to be realistic and informed about current policies and gatekeepers in your jurisdiction of concern, whether for or against homeless camps in parks.

### Not In My Park (NIMP)

#### Dedicated Park Areas

**Let me confess**, I used to complain about homeless tents and people close to my favorite public tennis courts in Northeast Los Angeles. NIMP (Not In My Park)! I was concerned one time when my tennis partner engaged in a hostile argument with a familiar homeless chap over banter he took as offensive. There was also adjacent acreage set aside for a doggie park, which we also enjoyed with family pets, and

also a very large [Audubon Center](#) just across the way in the spacious [Debs Park](#). Enjoyed hiking there several times. A number of homeless tents were also scattered beneath trees in park areas or next to the freeway.

Across the Arroyo Seco river, you can see the [Southwest Museum of the American Indian](#) which preserves artifacts of American Indians living in the Southwest region and cultivating the lands for thousands of years, which museum I have enjoyed and shared with my family and friends numerous times. My home is less than a mile from this museum, just over the hill, so to speak, hiking distance. The [Autry Museum](#), a few miles away in Griffith Park (near the Zoo), now more carefully protects many of the items originally stored in this museum in new facilities ultimately planned for a special place in [Burbank](#).

Don't know if some of the current tented inhabitants in the area are descendants of these original land improvers who expertly protected the ecology that they valued, such as the [Tongva Tribe](#), for example. There was a large tipi structure nearby for a few years. Looked more like a movie prop. A recent report on Native American homelessness by the [Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission](#) indicates that about one percent of the homeless in the county are of Native American lineage. But community representatives believe that the data significantly underestimate the actual homeless count. This area is home to the largest population of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN) in the United States (roughly 157,517 according to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate). Based on results from the [Healthy LA Natives study](#), 14% of AIAN survey respondents were homeless, and 20% of AIAN survey respondents were temporarily homeless.

### Los Pobladores

In 1781, *El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora Reina de los Ángeles sobre El Río Porciúncula* (Los Angeles ...) was immigrated by forty-four settlers from Sonora and Sinaloa, escorted by Spanish military guards, with the mission of providing goods and support for the Spanish military and the anticipated populations of new settlers. The 1781 census casts the adult [pobladores](#) as:

- 1 [Peninsular](#) (Spaniard born in Spain)
- 1 [Criollo](#) (Spaniard born in New Spain)
- 1 [Mestizo](#) (mixed Spanish and Indian)
- 2 [Negros](#) (blacks of full [African](#) ancestry)
- 8 [Mulattos](#) (mixed Spanish and black)
- 9 [Indios](#) (American Indians)

The Spaniards and Missionaries found the Tongva people to be useful for laborious work such as building irrigation ditches along the Los Angeles river known as the [zanja](#). Native tribes in Los Angeles and other areas like Owens Valley were keen on water management traditionally for centuries. But, sadly they were largely engaged as [slaves or indentured servants](#). The colonial way. The missionary way. Forced conversion to Christianity. [St. Junipero Serra](#)?

No, my ancestors were not included among these ambitious pobladores trekkers, but my trip to Machu Picchu was accompanied by a good friend from my college days who happens to be a proud descendant of one of the forty-four pobladores. Her pobladores ancestor was a bracero Mestizo with the family

name Moreno. My college friend is a devoted civil rights attorney, often working with housing issues, a community organizer, and a world traveler. She has also been another angel and an inspiration to me over the years. And I'm sure there are many other success stories among the numerous pobladores descendants. It's a small world, especially with genealogical connections. The historical web of genes.

Every year around Labor Day, many proud descendants of Los Pobladores participate in the [Historic Walk of Los Pobladores](#) from the [Mission San Gabriel Archangel Church](#) to the [Olvera Street](#) Plaza in downtown Los Angeles. One year, I was invited to join with my traveling partner on this nine-mile trek, along with several hundred others, to honor her ancestors and company. A Los Pobladores Plaque mounted in the plaza lists the names of all the Pobladores.

The establishment of the Mission San Gabriel Archangel in September of 1771, by Padre Serra, preceded the founding of the Pueblo of Los Angeles in New Spain by 10 years to the week. New Spain was accompanied by New England around that time, just across the continent. Lots of Europeans grabbing colonial lands in all parts of the Americas. This day was an educational experience for me, and significant moment, like a family ritual shared with my friend. Admittedly, our feet and legs were not quite prepared for nine miles on pavement, but my friend and I made it OK after a couple of breaks to rest along the way. I was more prepared a few years earlier for our Machu Picchu trip, and fit for hiking the steep trails at the time, thank goodness!

Over the intervening 240 years after the Spanish settlement, many more trekkers, many more babies. Military guards and our Border Patrol today tend to discourage new cross-border settlers, however. But they keep on coming, regardless. Hard to break old habits. Mexican independence declared from [Spain in 1810](#) and France defeated in 1862, until the United States grabbed all the land it could from coast to coast, including California, of course, and other southern states. Some call it [Manifest Destiny](#), others witness obvious greed and imperialism, including genocide of the First Peoples, [often lynched](#), like Blacks, Latinos and Asians. As populations expanded, flag colors replaced by the full spectrum of colors in one or two generations. Artificial border lines imposed by political agendas across natural habitation paths and ecosystem migration turfs.

People, flora and fauna left to adapt somehow to unnatural borders and barriers, indignant weapons and racial or ethnic insults inflicted along the way. Natural resources owned and exploited unsustainably by unnatural industries bowing allegiance only to Wall Street. The people not seated at the board room table. Nor anyone to represent food chain level 1, the first bottom level essential source for all we eat. At the top of the food chain, the rationalized excuse for wars and violence, including economic sanctions, are simply labeled "*American interests.*" But don't ask about what interests or for which Americans? Disregard the value of some for the benefit of others, whether internal or external to our borders.

Looking at all the ways we earmark our public lands for different needs, and at times desecrating [sacred lands](#) of the past, I finally realized, if we could set aside designated spaces for dogs and birds and other precious critters donated by nature, as well as ancient forests and museums, why not also just a little space for people who lost their way? We have also found spaces for large public baseball, football and soccer fields, as well as swimming pools and track facilities. An average 18-hole golf course with fairways and roughs covers about 150 acres in the U.S.A. On a national scale, there were a projected 1,408,412 total acres of maintained turf for golf in the U.S. in 2015, including both public and private facilities, based on a study by [Golf Course Superintendents Association of America](#).

### Restricted Camping Areas

A [new ordinance](#) is currently being implemented by the Los Angeles City Council that allows the city to *"maintain passable sidewalks and access points by preventing sitting, sleeping, lying, storing personal property or otherwise obstructing the public right-of-way within two feet of any fire hydrant or fire plug, or within five feet of any operational or utilizable entrance or exit, or within 10 feet of a loading dock or driveway, or in a manner that interferes with any activity for which the city has issued a permit, or in a manner that restricts accessible passage as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, or anywhere within a street, including bike paths..."*

According to Council Member Gill Cedillo as stated in an official email to district constituents, the recent ordinance he voted to approve on July 1, 2021, would:

- Allow the City Council to restrict sleeping, lying, and storing items near a variety of public facilities like parks and libraries, including freeways and homeless shelters
- Prohibit tents and encampments from blocking sidewalks in ways that prevent wheelchairs users from traveling on them, in violation of the Federal Americans With Disabilities Act.
- Prohibit people from sitting, sleeping or storing property on a public street or walkway that is within five feet of a building's usable entrance or within 10 feet of a driveway
- Require 14 days' notice, with signs posted in an area, that camping is barred in a particular location and seek to have homeless people comply voluntarily.
- Prohibit sleeping and camping around licensed schools, preschools, and daycare facilities.
- Require the city to create a "street engagement strategy" within 30 days that would limit interactions between law enforcement and homeless people except in certain cases, such as when a crime is being committed.
- Grant the council the power to prohibit camping at locations that pose an ongoing threat to public safety due to fires, violent crime, or other hazardous conditions.

Another vote for final approval of this ordinance by the City Council was held and approved in the last week of July 2021. The Mayor [Eric Garcetti provided his signature](#) to approve the ordinance on July 29, 2021.

### Comprehensive Space Occupation Standards

Although the restrictive ordinance above may improve safety to some extent in certain places, it may also inadvertently give license to campers to continue to endanger the surrounding communities in areas not specifically restricted, including similar or greater threats. What is lacking is a set of comprehensive public space occupancy standards for safety measures regarding the dimensions, quality and contents of any tents or materials placed in public spaces whether in parks, sidewalks or other places not specifically restricted by this new ordinance or any other ordinance that simply limits the location of camping structures in specific public areas.

A comprehensive safety regimen for public space occupancy may also be necessary at the state level, due to our overwhelming threats of wildfires especially in western states. Unrestricted areas may otherwise become a greater liability for the community and city administration. *Minimal safety standards may also need to be applied to all unsanctioned and sanctioned campsites in public areas*

*regardless of location. To be sanctioned within the state, all campgrounds and campsites must minimally comply with these space occupation standards once established by legislation. Unsanctioned campsites or settlements on public grounds anywhere in the state must also comply, or be subject to correction or dispersal.*

Some concerns to evaluate for new standards regarding the safety of unsanctioned and sanctioned camping materials or contents to allow or prohibit in any public space encampments may include:

- Possession or use of burners, stoves or fuels for fires of any type for any purpose
- Possession or use of any explosives, fireworks or lethal weapons
- Maximum space limits in three dimensions that may be blocked or hindered from passage in public spaces by any camping structure or shelter, or parts connected thereto, whether in streets, sidewalks, parks, beaches, riverbeds, forests or wildlands
- Maximum weight of any materials or objects individually or collectively to be placed in public spaces or contained within camping or shelter spaces
- Minimum clear safety setback space in three dimensions between any tents or obstructive materials and any other tent or building, structure or flammable plants, trees, fuels of any type
- Occupancy density limits for any area with camping or shelter materials in public spaces
- Unsanitary storage or spillage of waste or any other hazardous materials
- Camping facilities within 100 ft. proximity to rivers, riparian ecologies or lakes that may be polluted by waste or trash from campers
- Use of electric power connections without permission
- Possession or use of power or welding tools that may cause dangerous sparks

In addition to restrictions on camping near schools, other places to restrict may be children's playgrounds or other sensitive areas including ecological reservation areas and rivers, for example. In general, the Federal rules for [Dispersed Camping](#) should also apply as appropriate. More importantly, once the 14-day notice of restrictions by the Los Angeles ordinance is expired, daily inspections and immediate corrections need to be enforced. Supervision of corrections should be conducted without any criminal penalties or evictions unless of a felonious nature. *Adequate portable toilets also need to be provided for sanitation by local land management wherever needed along trails and roads within a reasonable period of time of noticeable population settlement events or increasing hiking or cycling traffic. Potable water taps and fountains should be supplied where possible, including access for wild animals and pets.*

## Affordable Housing Demand

### Housing Accessibility

The City of Los Angeles is noted for having [more unsheltered homeless](#) residents than any other city in the nation, but also the [largest publicly owned golf course system](#) in the nation, with 19 golf courses at 17 different facilities. One developer, [Daniel Dunham](#), has suggested that one could fit 15,000 units — homes for about 50,000 people — on the 200-acre golf course site at Rancho Park, which is also within walking distance from two Metro Rail train stations currently in construction. Golfers may complain “Not In My Golf Course” (NIMGC), but another golf course is very close by. More golf courses, more skyscrapers, more homeless tents in our streets and parks. Hmm? The [California Housing Partnership Corporation](#) reports that Los Angeles County would need 509,404 units of affordable housing to meet current demand. Maybe 15,000 new units would help for a start, as long as they are affordable. More



than half of the 48,000 tents we need for the unsheltered could fit comfortably on that space, as well, maybe a few in the roughs. Captive audience. Hardhats required, but possible benefits or tips for retrieving misdirected golf balls?

We also earmark playgrounds for kids and hiking trails for adults, as well as equestrian trails and remote campgrounds in our mountains and seashores. Each space having appropriate safety standards and protective infrastructure and amenities. All paid for and owned by the people. We also pay the salaries for those who make and enforce the rules to open or close the doors for the homeless. We all own this with our votes and taxes paid.

Where do people go when the game is over, or the library closes? Let's be real. People need space, too, just to live. Few decades ago, I remember encountering a young man sleeping on a park bench near tennis courts where I practiced in the North Hollywood area. His tennis bag was next to him. A real 'tennis bum', so to speak, who I noted was on the same bench in the early mornings on several occasions. No tent. Never had a chance to talk with him, but I thought that scene may someday be my fate, as well. Maybe he turned out to be a pro? So far, I'm good. Not a pro and not homeless. But here in the City of Angels, no backup guarantee even for safe tent space. We do have a good number of nice tennis courts, however, as well as public golf courses. But you just can't sleep there. Sorry.

### Saving a Boat

#### *The Three Musketeers*

As a kid, in the same community where we watched the Cisco Kid and Roy Rogers movies, we also enjoyed the nearby Echo Park facilities and an occasional ride in boats on the lake. We also had fun throwing a line to fish, once in a while. Too small to eat. A beautiful park with tennis courts and other facilities, as well.

One time my brothers and I got into a little (*good and fun*) trouble when we rescued a boat that lost its docking and floated to the shore in the late afternoon. Did somebody steal it? We would walk through the park on our way back and forth to school every day. A one-mile walk to start the day. We carefully boarded the boat and found some floorboards to paddle the boat to the dock. Using the floorboards as paddles was my brilliant idea. A little slow, but it got us to our destination. We were greeted with a scolding from the park manager at the dock who simply couldn't understand our cause. No congratulations, no reward for finding and returning a lost boat! At least he didn't call the police, but he threatened to do so if we didn't give him the phone number for our parents at home.

But, in our minds, we were proud that we saved the boat! What do you, as kids, expect from a dumb, unthinking adult? I'm sure Walt Disney would do better. I give my older brother credit for his leadership in directing our trio to save the boat. He had great vision and a good heart even for a 10-year-old. Not too many kids at 10 or younger years can brag about safely saving a lost boat in a lake. The three of us, [\*The Three Musketeers\*](#), we called ourselves, got our feet wet, literally, to protect an important community resource. Mission accomplished for the day! We would always ritualistically share *The Three Musketeers* candy bar in three parts with this name as our logo. We did also enjoy a little mischief at times, I must confess. Mischief with a little ingenuity!

#### *Echo Park Encampment*

More than half a century later, in 2021 a large settlement of unsanctioned campers was forcefully removed from the [Echo Park Encampment](#), but fortunately most of the unhoused were placed in clean temporary housing. The cleanup of trash and human waste from more than 60-100 tents was

costly. Over a two-year period the community was initially supportive of helping these people survive. Two deaths later, the city called it quits. This was **My Park** for several precious years in my youth. Glad that it has been cleaned up and revived. It wasn't [boats](#), but tents that were the issue this time. Either way, both tents and boats may be vital for protection either from the water below or the elements above. More sustainable policies in Los Angeles are now being debated. Whether in tents, boats, benches, airport lounges or metro train seats, each unhoused person needs safe survival space in a sustainable manner. But it has to be planned and managed carefully for the benefit of all. I don't own the City of Angeles, but after all these years, this is my home. These are my people. Angels or no. I like it here. Hoping we can make it a little safer for everyone, housed or unhoused!

### One-Way Walk to Park Bench

#### *Not a Good Day*

Back in my college days, I had my ups and downs. This day very depressed, girlfriend rejection, home environment issues, many uncertainties. I was thinking about sleeping on a park bench in the beautiful [Fern Dell Park](#) near Hollywood and connected with Griffith Park trails. I would often take walks in Fern Dell and take pictures just to enjoy the natural beauty. Occasionally someone would be sleeping on a bench. No tents in those days, back in the '60s. I thought if I could survive one night on a bench, maybe I could experience a new reality. My girlfriend also attended a nearby college which was only a couple of blocks below this fantasy park. But my thoughts were mostly centered on this new adventure. A new environment.

So I started taking potentially a one way nine-mile walk from Highland Park to Fern Dell Park. Just wielding a backpack with water and a few provisions to get by. An experiment. An exploratory journey. Hoping for maybe a new vision of some sort. An escape. Halfway up Los Feliz Blvd. someone called my name from up above, top of a telephone pole, of all places. I have never been a celebrity of any sort and the voice was vaguely familiar. A lineman for the phone company, my friend Bruce, who played lead guitar in our recent band. I had never seen him at work or in uniform before.

#### *Lineman Angel*

Awkwardly, I tried to answer his inquisitive questions by saying *I'm just taking a walk. No problem.* Kept walking more briskly. What are the odds that my old guitarist friend would be on a pole above my path on this particular day? Or that he would even notice me as he was busy at work? Guess Bruce didn't buy my casual explanation about taking a walk because about fifteen minutes later my Dad and family members tracked me down while still trekking on Los Feliz.

I really couldn't think of any good argument to resist my dad's invitation to drive me back home. Nor did I ever really explain my situation to anyone, actually. But I guess Bruce and my dad had enough love in their hearts to save me from one night of loneliness on a park bench, or worse. Bruce, another angel in my life, my *Lineman Angel*. Thank you Bruce.

I wonder why my Dad didn't try a little more to initiate a deeper discussion about my problems at the time. But, he was helpful, nonetheless, and in his final years, I also became his helper and therapist of sorts. I actually talked him into walking at one time, when he firmly believed he was paralyzed. He didn't want to move from his bed in the psychiatric clinic. I suggested he should try to move his legs, even if there is a little pain. The doctor thought he was permanently mentally disabled. I knew he had at least one more round to live a normal life. I told the doctor that my dad may have to overcome dependency on some pain killers he had been taking. Soon after, he braved the pain and walked with a

limp. Not a miracle. Just love. He spent a few more years tending to Mom in various care facilities for Alzheimer's. We all need help from time to time. If Bruce needs help, I also owe him one, as well. I've also learned by now that gravity takes its toll on my bones, as well. Try to keep moving, nonetheless. Good things happen, too!

### *Emergency Pre-Tent Rescue*

Don't think I want to try that one-way walk again. Dead man walking. Especially in a city like Los Angeles. But, other people who may be depressed could possibly benefit from some kind of advice on practical considerations for choosing a park bench to sleep on, finding a tolerant community, or how to survive and protect yourself in the jungle of homeless encampments. A place to start the conversation and consider the options available. Better than learning the hard way. Good friends or angels like Bruce may be on the line. Is there such a thing as a **smart homeless camping app**? Not to report them as a problem, but for potential walkers to get advice and counseling to hopefully avoid slipping off the edge of the curb.

Best way to reduce unhoused people sleeping in streets and parks may be to *provide emergency shelter services **before** they find their first sleeping bench or doorway or buy their first tent and sleeping bag.* The ideal **one-stop-rescue** would respond to a phone call or mobile app chat 24-hours a day with a van to pick up the misplaced person or family with their belongings and route them directly to emergency shelter. Immediate eviction transfer. Quick domestic violence rescue. A Lineman Angel.

### *Emergency Shelter 2-1-1*

Most of us know what it's like when we suffer from an injury or accident at home or on the road and need urgent care, clinical help or a trip to the nearest emergency room at the hospital. Suddenly losing your shelter, your home, or having to flee from a life-threatening situation is also a time when you need an emergency survival space. There are some [2-1-1 resources](#) for health and human services including homeless crises in many areas that you can call or link online to find out what shelter may be available. Services for renters facing eviction are available, as well. Clearly, many more emergency shelter spaces and beds are currently needed, especially in the western states, preferably including daytime shelter, as well. Each sanctioned homeless tent-cabin resource in our parks or public places needs to be hooked up to such emergency services, as well. *Open the door or the tent flap!*

### *Hospitality vs. Hostility*

***When a person feels safe and connected, he or she is less likely to be a threat to anyone else. More likely to join a caring community. Treating people like enemies may actually create new enemies and more hostility. Hospitality vs. hostility. Hospitality and care may be safer and more sustainable for all. [Hugging strangers](#) may not be safe today, but a little smile may warm a person's heart.***

Casting people out to the unprotected streets is inhumane. A morbid caste. We know that. Let's embrace all people who find themselves stumbling on our pavements, alleys, parks and riverbeds. That's not a good way to live or to die. Is land development and profiteering more important than human development and sustainability? Is **Public Park Purity** a sustainable value with or without human involvement and management? Can we find a better balance? The only walls that may block holistic accessibility to natural spaces are not in the wild but may reside in a few closed hearts. ***Looking for a golden gate with no tolls or trolls. And a few smiles. Strangers welcomed.***

## Time Lapse Conclusions

### Human Progress Synopsis

#### Agricultural Revolution

Although wild [grains and cereals](#) were collected and eaten from at least 105,000 years ago, it took another 90,000 years or so for the [domestication of grains](#) to become a modus operandi to replace, or at least compete with, hunting and gathering in areas of western Asia. The profound efficiency and productivity of such agriculture sponsored the organization of larger populations and cultural groups, and the development of infrastructure and leadership by kings and monarchs throughout the region. Some of the [first semi-permanent homes](#) were built in central Turkey around 9,500 years ago.

Key to sustainable productivity in the agricultural civilization is cooperation and coordination between workers and managers and those involved in distributing the raw resources and the harvested goods. Everyone else not directly involved in agriculture have to be fed, as well. Food distribution. When this cooperation falters, the mill wheels slow down or stall. A practical problem that gets complicated by modern systems of governance, politics, management and finance.

#### Free-Market Economy

A free-market economy works for everyone who has a job, goods to sell, a productive farm, a successful business, or small enterprise as simple as a vending cart. Fresh oranges on a street corner. A talent who can create art, music or catchy videos that has some kind of market or popularity. Ardent athletes can make it to the spotlight at least for a time. But, even successful people sometimes hit bottom. Market values change. Some never get the education or training needed to get a footing in any available jobs or business opportunities. There are also some folks unwittingly deprived of an adequate education to begin with. Women or blacks deprived of any schooling to enforce the lowest working caste. [Apartheid](#). While struggling in the free-for-all urban marketplace, some left out of the loop. Not enough beans in the pot. No table. Rat traps for dinner. Street figs for dessert.

#### *Unpicked Grapes*

A free-market economy also tends to be leaky. Some products get left on the shelf beyond their shelf life. Unpicked grapes. Fallen avocados. On the labor market there is also a shelf life for individual workers. The economy works well for banks and corporations, the GDP. Maybe enough for a good defense budget and mediocre health services, if you're covered by an also leaky health umbrella.

But the warehouse of underpaid and unemployed people grows and increasingly smells like a morgue. People struggling in tents. Growing populations of hearty people are great for the economy, but wages have no healthy bottom.

The cost of safety also increases as does the aging and impoverished populations. Increased density yields greater pandemic threats and pressures to a critical level of augmented anxiety and intolerance. Masks are scary. Deadly consequences for mistakes. Blame somebody, some group. Give them a social network hashtag.

Finding ways to provide a little comforting space in our routine environments may embrace holistic healing. Wave hello from a safe distance. Gesture a kiss or a heart hug. The higher costs of safety today, including the huge damages from climate change, must be evaluated in the balance with a leaky policy system with obvious unsustainable factors and blatant corruption among decision makers and many voters alike. Collective accomplishments. Popular mistakes. A winning team like sheep jumping off a

cliff. Proudly! Damn the mask! Maybe some mask protestors will find an acceptable logo they can defiantly display on their masks?

### *Welfare*

Welfare is a thing of the past in this America. People need an incentive to work for poverty wages. Skyscraper offices need to be cleaned. Essential workers at risk. But they did save Food Stamps, now called [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#). As long as you have some form of ID, you won't die of starvation. The former Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) when I was a social worker, was replaced with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Five year limit. [Work participation effort requirements](#). Insuring at least some essential workers are available. ***Essential workers are not disposable workers. Tell that to your state Attorney General.***

Without an address to receive your benefits card, no go. There's also no supplemental housing assistance program where you can establish your address. Dump diving. A tent in the streets where people can watch you wither and die, unless they wish to help. Hopefully they won't attack your tent. Some people find the black market more accessible for trade. In any free market, nothing is actually free, unless you steal it. That happens, too. Any available land to grow your own crops? Some people have even found some vacant lots in town to grow a few green edibles, including [nutritious weeds](#).

Although this has been labeled the [Agricultural Revolution](#), the subsequent modernization in agriculture with machines replacing horses replacing people pulling plows, furthered the [Industrial Revolution](#), as well. Clearly the industrial revolution led to urbanization, especially when mechanized plows displaced farm laborers, leading them to seeking employment in the cities. Robots not in the food chain. Urbanization ultimately led to more condensed populations and a percentage of people with nowhere to go especially when affordable housing or adequate employment wages were not available. Essentially not sustainable wages. Large numbers of unemployed from time to time. [Unemployment Insurance](#) can be a great benefit depending on how it is calculated and distributed.

### *Urban Renewal*

Like my Grandpa's restaurant and home in Boyle Heights replaced by freeways, and like the Chavez Ravine community replaced by the Dodger Stadium, [Urban Renewal](#) has been the latest Federally funded policy to replace low-cost housing with either commercial developments, freeways or low-density, higher-priced housing, during my life-time. I must also confess that while a busy-body in [Long Beach](#) decades ago, I was also an advocate and was proud to see low-income neighborhoods upgraded to fancy commercial strips and modern housing styles. I also invested in a couple of houses in Long Beach that made a little profit. I thought it was beneficial to the entire community. Never did I think about the trend of shrinking the total amount of affordable housing units where people work.

Urban renewal may improve the city tax base, but may often result in more people living in the streets. Unless the city is held accountable to meet the demand for affordable housing. City coffers and land developers' bank accounts vs. affordable housing availability for the people. Profit-making land development and urban renewal, financed by unwitting taxpayers, including those in substandard housing. [Inclusionary Zoning](#) (IZ) is a policy matrix that attempts to balance the interests of developers and low income families displaced by redevelopment. Apparently the inherent flexibility and lack of accountability have left too many people in the streets despite marginal IZ applications in places like Los Angeles and other California cities. Long Beach leaders are now considering [sanctioning encampments](#) for homeless folks. Hopefully they also consider establishing safety standards for sanctioned encampments.

Moving Native Americans to reservations caused harsh lifestyle impacts and economic trauma on the lives of Natives but little influence on increasing urban density, except in recent times when many were urbanized and relocated to places like [Los Angeles](#) and [other areas](#). But at least the reservation lands were mostly preserved, that is, until gambling casinos became the trend. Balance that negative with the improvements of [wind energy farms on many reservations](#), which only harm a few eagles or condors, and you have some kind of trade-off when it comes to climate change and ecological preservation. Economic survival, we know, is often not pretty, even on some Native American reservations today, but sustainability is existential.

Can't keep them on the farm. Can't go back to the farm. Only a limited number of hearty souls can work the farms which jobs diminish, year by year. Climate change, no help. Robotics? Social media platforms? Not suggesting that anyone actually planned or predicted these phenomena, nor could they. No doubt the [population cyphers](#) will only increase, absent an unthinkable catastrophe, which potential disaster would not benefit either the people or the corporations' bottom lines. Did [Malthus](#) have an AI computer? Planning thoughtfully for more than 20 years ahead is the best alternative for both states and corporations. Looking for some type of AI algorithm that can help to predict and plan what's next, especially regarding food distribution, housing needs and other existential resources.

### Cross-Climate Leverage?

What's sustainable for a 1 M population may not work proportionally for 100 M or 300 M people sucking up more oxygen, land and foodstuffs than we're able to sustainably produce and protect with previously successful measures and techniques. Our Natives didn't have to deal with Climate Change. Politics and war tools are anti-intellectual and counter-productive over time. No cross-climate leverage.  $1000\text{ M} \neq 1\text{ B}$ . You can't double the water and fertilizer on a crop and expect it to double the produce. Diminishing returns. You can't leap-frog new moisture from snow machines. Nature doesn't work that way.

Ecological limits are real. Natural processes rarely scale geometrically. Even my old slide-rule won't help. More farmland is scarce without knocking out precious forests. We either stop now, or create new science and policies for the very predictable future. One lesson from past cultures in America is absolutely relevant, however. Our future depends on how we respect and care for all natural resources. Existential. One modern lesson we may have yet to learn, however: Some primeval resources are better left to their final resting places. RIP.

The [2020 Census](#) shows both density and diversity on the incline. Los Angeles and New York still bulging, along with Phoenix with the fastest growth. The top five largest cities in the country are now New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston and Phoenix. Rural populations continue to decline. Hispanics are now the largest ethnic group in California, and all the population growth in the U.S. in the last decade came from those identifying themselves as Hispanic, Asian, Black and more than one race. Diversity on the rise. Family love counts, with or without [abortion restrictions](#).

### Climate Change Damage Control

#### Food Bankruptcy

***How long will it take to diligently clean up the massive messes of dangerous waste in our lands, seas and atmosphere we've already excreted and bequeathed to the next generation? Where do people go when their skies are obscured with pollutants? To which country do people migrate when their shores***



***sink below sea level? Which food bank do people reach for when their farm fields become unproductive? Are food banks sustainable against Climate Change? Food bankruptcy?***

If you're uncomfortable with excessive homelessness and exotic migrants, be aware that planning in ignorance is dangerous, not planning at all could be disastrous, accommodation and employment may be the best win-win alternative. Most of these folks really want to work. Just find them a suitable job and a place to stay! If nothing else, essential workers are needed in many industries and may deserve [extra hazard pay](#). Sadly, some people would be glad to just see them die!

If you feel that way, just ask yourself why? Do you actually want to feel safer? Is hate, mistrust and naming enemies your solution? Charge your heart with love, after taking a deep breath. Maybe two slow breaths. Then vocalize: ***I love you!*** Practice these words in the mirror, just for fun. It could become a habit. Do some aerobic workouts to strengthen those heart and lung muscles, pushing and pulling the blood of love and the breath of hope.

Loving yourself will also bolster your heart's capacity to love others too. *Love is a bit corny, but can also be fun! (Stay safe).* As the new 2020 census shows, families matter. Deadly slave ships, ugly killing machines, unnecessary incarceration and nauseum, and urban pandemic mayhem, ultimately upended by beautiful family building algorithms. Don't fight it, join the *family of families*. Love your neighbor. Everyone invited. Start a neighborhood love club. Organize your block. Could it be that someone on your block is at the edge of economic despair? Neighborhood watch with a heart. When you meet a stranger and smile, he or she is no longer strange. *Your smile, powerful, transformative.*

#### Predictions

Climate change is already actively pushing people to migrate around the world. Mostly towards lands with historically comfortable climates and bountiful ecologies. According to Brookings [The climate crisis, migration and refugees](#): *In 2018, the World Bank estimated that three regions (Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia) will generate 143 million more climate migrants by 2050.<sup>[3]</sup> In 2017, 68.5 million people were forcibly displaced, more than at any point in human history. While it is difficult to estimate, approximately one-third of these (22.5 million<sup>[4]</sup> to 24 million<sup>[5]</sup> people) were forced to move by "sudden onset" weather events—flooding, forest fires after droughts, and intensified storms. While the remaining two-thirds of displacements are the results of other humanitarian crises, it is becoming obvious that climate change is contributing to so-called slow onset events such as desertification, sea-level rise, ocean acidification, air pollution, rain pattern shifts and loss of biodiversity.<sup>[6]</sup> This deterioration will exacerbate many humanitarian crises and may lead to more people being on the move.*

[Another 2018 study](#), published in the Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists, suggests that 1 in 12 Americans in the Southern half of the country will move toward California, the Mountain West or the Northwest over the next 45 years because of climate influences alone. Don't know if they took in the affordable housing crises or western wildfires in their planning forecasts. However they do declare that *these studies ignore the fact that migration will be dampened by changes in wage rates and housing prices as a result of migration.*

Apparently global warming is the only phenomenon that has recently motivated world leaders and politicians, and even a few corporations, to at least *attempt* to plan for up to 20-40 years or more in advance. A time-span beyond the term of office for most politicians, except for our current [POTUS](#), and a handful of [others](#). People need jobs. People need space for survival. They come to California and New York for a reason. This pressure for ***safe survival space*** will only increase in the foreseeable

future. The ancient migrations across the Bering Strait from Asia were not an accident, nor were they part of a conspiracy. Just looking for food. Some today also looking for freedom and equal rights. Let the historians and anthropologists explain exactly how it happened. But today, if we don't like seeing helter-skelter tents where we live and recreate, or smelling human excrement on our sidewalks, let's make some realistic plans, **NOW**.

### Perspective

#### Existential Progress

***Safe survival space – tents – cabins > healing > shelter > jobs > income > sustainable housing. In that order. These needs are not new. Only the numbers increase, year by year, partly due to increased mobility and population density which also factors in the deadly pandemic, on top of climate change.***

#### Objectives

##### *Follow the Footprints*

Whether trying to solve the immediate crisis of thousands of unsheltered people in our streets and parks, or planning for the next pandemic, or both, we need to include safe survival spaces, safe bubbles for those unsafely exposed and for unexpected migrants, whether authorized or emergent, using resources such as [Arc of Safety](#) shelters, [Structured Campgrounds](#) or [Cabin Communities](#).

*Overnight congregate sleeping shelters generally do not keep people off the hazardous streets during the day. Unhealthy skid row incubators. Important services and resources for the needy and unhoused should be decentralized and tightly localized for everybody's safety. Decentralize away from downtown or civic center. Much like neighborhood churches, community centers and parks or golf courses. **One model may be to place safely spaced overnight shelter structures with kitchens, foodbanks and food handouts in the same area or adjacent to parks with sanctioned homeless encampments.** Purposeful design. Maybe near some public housing? Steppingstones. Eminent housing. The Arc of Safety also adds urgent shelter with EMT staffing, 24/7 accessibility, employment resumes linked to QR codes, and much more to provide healing while employment services and sustainable housing resources are explored.*

During pandemics, outdoor spaces are safer for everyone with proper spacing and natural ventilation to help with COVID-19 and most other contagious and endemic threats, such as the flu. The natural environment may also be a source of physical and holistic healing in itself *if access is carefully planned, managed and prepared*. Looks like the amount of park space needed for emergency shelter campgrounds may be one percent of the total park acreage or less on average in California and other western states. Needed infrastructure may double that space depending on existing resources. That's where costs will especially need support and careful planning.

Anticipate the threats of global mobility exacerbated by climate change and disparate resource distribution. Let's plan to use our resources prudently. We have a lot of beautiful public land in urban areas as well as state and federal public parks. This planning is critical for places like New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and similar magnets of wealth, including average-sized communities like Boise, and people in many towns and suburbs throughout the globe. Let's not forget smaller villages and rural areas that may not boast their own building and safety agency.

***The burden of Los Angeles may serve as a teaching point for places around the globe. Learn from our mistakes. Get involved with our pilot programs to elevate our unhoused people from sleeping bags in the streets. Still struggling today. Learning the hard way. Visibly atrocious. But the many angelic***

***well-wishers in the City of Angels are on the move in unison! Feel the [drumbeats](#)! The international [Son Jarocho](#) unites the hearts of cultures across the globe with Fandango spirits.***

Some of these places are the point of origin or a target of migration, or both, for different needs. The kaleidoscope of folk. Transportation access and speed only add another logarithmic dimension, despite walls, laws, costs, and other hinderances along the way. Social media now can instantly coordinate a plan to migrate thousands of people suffering from a climate disaster to specific global targets, such as the [Haitian crisis](#) asylum seekers along our Texas border.

People travel and explore. People move. Some are kicked out or evicted from their current residence. Eminent Domain. People flee. People migrate. People trek on foot for hundreds of miles. Way beyond my family's hungry 4 - mile hike for food as kids from Echo Park to Boyle Heights. At least we had no coyotes or drug cartels to rob us on our path, or worse. Some brave people today take on the recreational challenge of hiking the entire [Pacific Crest Trail](#) from Oregon through California in one season. Yes, it can be done. Tougher trail trekkers! No sea shore kelp to munch on, but bountiful [natureescaping](#) vistas.

Seems like, as a child, the City of Angels, El Pueblo de Los Angeles, was safer and more beautiful than today, even with all the fancy art galleries, concert halls, giant sports stadiums, modern shopping malls, spires of concrete and green expanses of golf courses. A rail system for essential workers. An airport to escape. Everybody going nowhere faster. My little home, my refuge. My angels in my heart. City not prepared for COVID-19, understandably.

But no excuse for Climate Change and the dearth of affordable housing, forcing even more people to share their germs in crowded spaces indoors and scrimmaging shoulder to shoulder for turf outdoors. From a few unfortunates sleeping on streetcar benches in my youth, to conglomerations of tents, pallets and waste on nearly every other block. We don't expect utopia, but we do expect big cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York to be planned. We have planning engineers, standards, codes and inspections, but what are we planning for? If it's safety, safety for whom? Where is the safe non-congregate emergency shelter for 50,000 homeless people?

***Objective: Develop sustainable models of homeless support and shelters with decentralized distribution away from major urban centers for inclusive use of neighborhood public areas, parks and adjacent public housing, foodbanks and other supportive services, avoiding the use of risky congregate overnight shelters.***

### [Overcrowded Households](#)

Overcrowded households during an airborne pandemic become an exponential lever. Essential workers double up when jobs are lost often due to the pandemic. Low wages squeeze more bodies onto the floor and add to more unhoused. Hispanics, Blacks and women bear the brunt of this misfortune. No relief pressure valve available other than the treacherous streets. To save your family from COVID-19 when you test positive, your choices are to sleep in the car or pop a tent. Not a plan, but clearly predictable.

***Objective: Develop sufficient numbers of accessible emergency non-congregate shelter units to absorb the large numbers of dislocated bodies due to economic misfortunes, pandemic victims, or other unsafe situations. For each emergency shelter unit, such as in the proposed Pandemic Safe Haven, access may intervene in the infection numbers in the household by twice the count sheltered.***

### *Unexpected People Placement Planning*

When we plan for residential developments, we also need to plan for undeveloped, unimproved residences and emergent camping. These are predictable, whether or not desirable, and need to be carefully planned, as well. *It's not just urban planning, it's people placement planning.* People need survival space whether or not they have a job or are simply fleeing from a deadly situation or just got a divorce. Different situations may require different types of survival space infrastructure. Planning with a big human heart and an informed intellect. Defensive and proactive and sustainable over the foreseeable future.

New standards for increased density in residential zones in cities will be a terrific resource. But how long will it take to impact the grounds where people are currently stumbling for food and shelter? *Planning for skid row is planning for unsafe, if not deadly situations, both for the unhoused and the city at large. We need to plan for replacing a centralized skid row with safely dispersed adequate shelters wherever and whenever needed. Plan for reality on the other side of fancy developments. A new model for modern urbanities. Reality vs. ideal. Side by side.*

Our military national defense also plans for unexpected and unwanted events like hidden submarines in unlikely areas, just in case, as well as novel pandemics and the unrest from Climate Change. For the unhoused, the only weapons we need are nail guns and construction power tools for housing and shelters. Maybe we should pop a tipi-lodge on our moon to welcome those strange UFOs we see darting around? With at least 20-feet social distancing just in case! A keg of beer might make a good peace offering. *The Peace Force be with you!* Are they hungry space trekkers? Maybe a couple of crispy refried burritos would put them in a better mood.

**Objective: Establish minimal safety standards at the state level for any and all types of human occupations of public spaces and provide support for necessary infrastructure.**

### *Preppers*

More seriously, our Homeland Security may need to underwrite a study on how many people can survive with the hunting and gathering skills of the past and new prepper techniques and tools, in our forests, parks and wildlands, if somehow our infrastructure or power grid were to suddenly collapse for an extended period of time? Which areas would optimally support the lives of more people? Should we begin to enrich our wildlands with edibles, just in case? A few [disaster preppers](#) may have some answers. Preppers and trekkers seeking survival. Plan B - Basic Outdoor Survival.

Plan for poverty and inadequate affordable housing, not because it's desired, but due to obvious feet in the streets, until our institutions and policies radically change, which changes may take some time. Plan for what's real and now, regardless of politics. Avoid chaotic protests in the streets. ***You can't lock up 50,000 unsheltered people in Los Angeles. Jail cells are not safe shelters. Make space for poverty. Healthy space.*** We know how to plan for wealth. Let's learn how to plan for healthy environments for emergency human survival space. Essential for cleaner urban streets and parks for everyone, as well. Safe survival space cannot be imposed on stragglers, whether indoors or outdoors. If it's not attractive, healthy and safe, they'll look around for better options. More trekking. Free-market feet.

**Objective: Be prepared for increasing demand for long-term camping in parks and wildlands and develop the anticipated required infrastructure for safety and health at federal and state levels.**

If we don't seriously take charge of planning for adequate affordable housing, in spite of political lobbying and pressure from land developers, all we can expect is more unhoused people in our streets, tents or no tents. Smart developers can make loads of profits by building beautiful and very affordable housing. Especially with new higher density standards that will also include better ventilation and spacious balconies.

**Objective: Develop increasing numbers of affordable and very affordable housing, as well as public housing with inclusive high density communities wherever needed. Don't compromise safe ventilation standards.**

### *Disenfranchised*

Be real. We know that low income families need affordable housing, some need very affordable housing. But what about all those with no income at all? People with bad habits they can't break? People with no documents? Those who are mentally disabled? Where do they go? Do we want the unemployable and disenfranchised to be the only ones left stumbling on our streets or hiding in the bushes? Do we want weed smokers to light up our wildlands because of restrictions in town? I have recently witnessed people light up vape cigs on a public train and share their smokes on the [B-Line](#) in Los Angeles! No surveillance cams. Where else do they go? Is that safe for the community? If we want to help them, can we at least make them feel safe and welcomed somewhere in certain public spaces? Can we find a safe place for the untouchables, as well, whoever they may be? What's the plan for the chronically unhoused or [underhoused](#)? What's the housing plan for the [2028 Olympics](#) in Los Angeles? Are we going to hide our 50,000 homeless on the backside of the island of Catalina?

**Objective: Provide adequate housing solutions and safe non-congregate shelter for the struggling disenfranchised. No need for unsightly BYOT.**

### *PSTSD*

The sooner we can guide a street dweller to safer shelter, the better the prognosis for healing and recovery. Time is of the essence. Exposure is a cumulative insult to health hour by hour, day by day. The daily mortality rate in Los Angeles averages to four lives per day. Your [skin never forgets](#) when UV rays leave hidden scars beneath the dermis. Pollution, smoke, smog and particulates from street traffic also [contribute to lung diseases](#) like emphysema and COPD. Post Street Trauma Stress Disorder (**PSTSD**) is what we call the aggregate of all these [homeless street traumas](#) including constantly being in fear of threats and assaults by the community and people in uniform. No lock on your door. No door. Sleeping well with street noise and trucks whizzing by your toes must be difficult, as well. Another toll on your psyche and sense of wellbeing.

Every new homeless street dweller or park camper should be invited to 24/7 safe shelter by the Continuum of Care with the accessible hub at [Arc of Safety](#) open doors facilities. Immediate care, first aid and the safest shelter available in single-occupancy rooms, away from the streets and dangerous encampments.

By providing a safer cushion at the end of the economic survival gauntlet, we may also reduce the panic borne behavior leading to stealing apples from the forbidden tree, or joining gangs to sell black market drugs. The sooner we can provide addicted people detox and therapy, the desperation and risky behavior to acquire substances their bodies crave will be mitigated. An ounce of prevention.

**Objective: Provide [safe](#) and [therapeutic](#) shelter with 24/7 accessibility for all street dwellers and unsanctioned park dwellers. Emergency shelter care. One direct solution, the [Arc of Safety](#).**

### *Innovative Empathy*

Finally, what does a safe and sustainable structured campground or cabin community in a public park look like? Your vision. A dream job for architects. An excellent [STEAM](#) project. One excellent model of a Cabin Community in the [Arroyo Seco Park](#) is partially supported by private contributions. Where else can we safely protect these people, and allow them some dignified, safe space where they can heal, or is this the end of the line?

*Fencing and walls may change the path, but rarely do they change the ultimate destination.* New restrictions for homeless camping in selected areas of Los Angeles will forbid any obstruction that hinders streets and sidewalks. Which makes sense. But they also prevent camping in or near parks. Adding injury to insult. We need to dialogue with unhoused people in parks, streets, beaches, watersheds, or wherever they are. We can't help them by excluding them. But their make-shift shelters also need to comply with minimal safety standards.

The unhoused poor will not willingly abandon their holdout spaces of hope in frontline streets and parks unless they are assured of safer alternatives. Their shabby sheds and threads are precious possessions for day-by-day survival. What better options can we offer them with all due respect?

Do we blindfold the Statue of Liberty after covering up her [chains](#)? Sick thought -- maybe we should rededicate our parks as cemeteries: *"You can't live here, but it's OK if you die trying. Just dig your own grave, please!"* And generously provide a shovel and a body bag to protect the park from people. Wouldn't it be nice if my Machu Picchu Angel would reappear in the City of Angels? Maybe the beautiful [Santa Monica Mountains](#) will draw her closer. Since St. Monica is a [patron saint of alcoholics](#), maybe she can inspire more temperance among our homeless, as well, while hiking in the Santa Monica Mountains. A couple of crispy refried burritos may also help to start the day sans vino. Feed the soul with food and love. Like mama did.

***It doesn't take a rocket scientist or AI to figure out where these blimps of untethered people are headed. We see their shadows and their tracks. But it may take more than your average politician to understand the most prudent and humanitarian way to support their needs and employ their talents safely and sustainably. Asking, giving and holistic plus sum sustainable for all. Garden of Eden Equity. Beyond and above the bottom line, like the global family we are. What does knocking on a tent flap in a forest sound like when no ears are listening?***

### Focus on Priorities

- Safe shelter does not directly provide housing, but it prevents people from dying in our streets and parks and deters from unsightly encampments, while providing time for sustainable employment and housing solutions.
- Healthy and practical, 24/7 accessible shelters, like the Arc of Safety, will likely attract unhoused clients away from messy encampments without costly and questionable legalistic and punitive restrictions. As proposed, the AoS will also deal directly with health problems, such as pandemics, that contribute to homelessness.
- Affordable housing solutions are necessary but cannot solve all poverty and behavioral problems that factor in people struggling to survive with vendor carts, art they produce, or essential labor they may provide on an occasional basis. Appropriate space, license and safe shelter is necessary for innovative micro-entrepreneurs.



- Some types of safe shelters, housing or humanitarian institutions are needed to protect people from dying in our streets regardless of employability, mental health or even the will to survive.
- At state and county levels, our parks need to move away from unsafe fuels in camp sites and fire pits and replace with sustainable electric BBQs, stoves and heaters powered by renewable energy sources.
- State level standards, for unplanned people occupying wildlands and parks, need to address safety, wildfire hazard mitigation, sanitation, density and environmental protection.

## Epilogue

### Afterthoughts

*On what side of the Himalayas were your ancient ancestors born? How important is that legacy to you at this time?*

*Shall we respect our ancestors and teachers who gave us life, magic genes and culture? Pay it forward. Share your lessons and love.*

*Have you found a path that sustains a healthy spirit for you and your community? Are you connected with the free-market commonwealth of human love?*

*Ever wonder about the value of life? Before there were poets or thinkers or prophets or slave masters or bankers, did life have any real value? We have talked about reproduction as an essential practice, the Force of Love. With our limited life-spans, life and evolution would have snuffed out with every nascent attempt to prolong the existence any organism with potential anima, without some type of reproduction. So we can deduce that at least for all our living things on Planet 3, procreating the life we have is built into our vital list of essential to-do's.*

*Protecting our own life against predators is also in the genes of every animal and plant. If your defenses don't pass the gauntlet of threats, your species may be in the high extinction risk category. Some complex social creatures also have benefited by nurturing a family structure to help enhance the learning and acculturation of complex behaviors. Longer healthy lives enhances learning and protecting family structures. Teaching health and medicine and sustainable ways to have fun. Learning how to make peace with competing tribes. Our species is also a team of tribes and families.*

*But poets, thinkers and prophets like to think in a more romantic or spiritual plane. Anthropologists have also found a visible type of grief in the behaviors of several animal species when family or intimate others die, as described in the article "[The truth about animal grief](#)". Some say grief is the price we pay for love. So, if this is too much to ponder, feel safe to bet on life! Protect it while you can! Don't just let it be, make love happen for you, your family and your family of families. Possibly helping a stranger or two struggling with survival on the trail, if you can. Starting with a smile.*

### Thank You

*Thank you for participating in my journey and that of so many trekkers, each with stories that need to be told. Every journey matters. Wishing you a healthy home, safe journey and lots of love and respect. From my heart muscles to yours. The Force of Love be with you. May your journey be safe and fruitful and someday end with peace and comfort, with loved ones by your side, as we all deserve. People do not*

*choose to be born, and should not have to beg to survive. Be remembered as you live. Peace is good.  
Love existential and fun.*