



**TO:** HACLA Board of Commissioners  
**FROM:** Marisela Ocampo, Director of Housing Services *MO*  
**THROUGH:** Douglas Guthrie, President and CEO *Douglas Guthrie*  
**DATE:** Tuesday, March 22, 2022  
**SUBJECT:** Commissioners' Public Housing Update Request

---

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) received feedback from several of the Commissioners requesting us to address specific issues in public housing including; beautification, safety and security, parking, lease enforcement, grounds care/litter abatement, etc. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the challenges discussed below have been exacerbated. Housing Services continues to be deeply committed to improving the lives of our residents while providing them with quality housing.

### **Beautification and Common Area Renovations**

HACLA continues to address the physical needs of 14 public housing sites utilizing the Capital Fund Program (CFP) allocation at approximately \$21M annually. Housing Services maintains and improves facilities that support resident services and create a sense of community for our tenants including Resident Advisory Council (RAC) offices, Computer Learning Centers, community centers/gyms, health clinics, community gardens, playgrounds and outdoor sports areas. In conjunction with Strategic Initiatives, HACLA has the following renovations of common spaces planned for 2022 to substantially improve amenities offered to our residents. HACLA continues to identify other resources and funding opportunities throughout the year. Moreover, HACLA prioritizes beautification efforts while simultaneously implementing water conservation measures and installing drought tolerant landscaping.

<b>Common Areas Renovations</b>	
<b>Imperial</b>	<p>A "Campus Master Plan" for the Watts Empowerment Center and surrounding areas will identify the location and placement of amenities, access and connection to existing facilities, and design strategies to promote a safe environment and incorporate the goals of promoting accessibility, safety, and ease of monitoring for security. HACLA has multiple funds allocated for this project: \$811K Proposition A; \$300K Council District 15; \$802K CDBG/Red Eye Board and other funding to be identified. The project will include renovations to the playground and basketball courts, landscaping installation, signage, painting, lighting, regrading of baseball field, new grass, and a film and music studio.</p> <p>Imperial Skate Park renovation by the Skatepark Project is pending execution.</p>
<b>Imperial/Nickerson</b>	Awarded \$5 million Clean California Grant to install trash enclosures, replace trash bins and the hiring of residents to be "Green Ambassadors". Ambassadors will launch two (2) year educational and marketing campaigns promoting litter

### **Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles**

	reduction and quarterly beautifications at both sites (\$200K of these funds are allocated for five Asset Management scattered sites for trash abatement. An additional \$5 million in these funds was awarded for a litter abatement program and new parks at the new redeveloped Jordan location).
<b>Nickerson</b>	Nickerson Green Space Renovation to include new playground space and structures, picnic area, and walking paths. HACLA has multiple funds allocated for this project \$650K Measure A; \$1.4 million private donation and leveraging other funding sources. Also recently submitted a \$1.5 million Urban Greening Grant application to further leverage the project. Renovation of 2 Nickerson basketball courts by Project Backboard.
<b>Pueblo del Rio</b>	Renovation of the Pueblo del Rio Social Hall. \$770K Proposition A funds allocated to this project.
<b>Ramona</b>	Renovation of Alvarez Park “Green Connections Project”. North East Trees (NET) will plant 65 trees, install rain gardens and bioswales, an accessible ramp, low-flow irrigation, and a walking path. Legacy LA will rehabilitate the playground and play structures at the park.
<b>Mar Vista</b>	Preliminary discussions with Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI) to enhance Mar Vista and Ballona Creek area. Proposed plans include on-site fitness equipment, biofiltration systems, permeable paving, native drought tolerant landscaping, and additional lighting. Project contingent on funding.
<b>William Mead</b>	Substantial renovation of William Mead Computer lab, teen center and new Dodger Dreamfield completed in 2021.

<b>Beautification Projects (<i>italicized is completed</i>)</b>	
<b>Avalon-Gonzague</b>	<i>Paint, new windows, roofs, lights, signage and trash enclosures</i>
<b>Estrada Courts:</b>	New windows and trash enclosures
<b>Mar Vista Gardens</b>	<i>New Windows, paint, signage, and lighting</i>
<b>William Mead</b>	Combined <i>window rehabilitation</i> and window replacement. Due to planned redevelopment, the entire replacement of a window was limited based on need.
<b>Pueblo del Rio</b>	Paint, lights, signs, security doors, landscaping, roofs, new windows, trash enclosures, and renovation of the social hall

**Safety and Security Efforts**

In late 2020, HACLA had a few break-ins in various locations and after conducting an assessment, adopted security measures including extended fencing, new security alarms and other upgrades. In 2021, HACLA

installed additional lighting and fencing at Pico and Pueblo del Rio and lighting at Nickerson, Avalon, Gonzaque, Imperial and Ramona. The majority of the additional lighting and fencing was installed in the maintenance and management office areas. Additionally, new alarm systems were installed at all sites at various locations such as maintenance yards, management offices, social halls, community rooms and RAC offices. These efforts have proven successful at mitigating break-ins.

For 2022, HACLA has allocated funding for additional security upgrades at various sites. The \$250,000 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Safety and Security Grant will fund the installation of additional cameras and lighting at Estrada, Imperial, Mar Vista, Nickerson and Pueblo del Rio. An additional \$600,000 in CFP funds will be utilized to install Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) lights at Avalon, Gonzaque, Imperial, Mar Vista, Pico, Pico, Pueblo del Rio, Ramona and as needed. Camera and lighting needs were identified by Community Safety Partnership, residents, site staff and HACLA investigators. Staff continues to routinely conduct light surveys in the evening to maintain appropriate lighting and report issues to DWP.

### **Community Safety Partnership Program**

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) between HACLA and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) focuses on improving public safety, fostering police-community relationships, enriching resident's quality of life and increasing community engagement. There are eight (8) developments with CSP: Avalon, Gonzaque, Pueblo del Rio, Imperial, Jordan, Nickerson, Ramona and San Fernando. There are seventy police officers and seven (7) supervising Sergeants that collaborate intricately with HACLA site staff on a daily basis. HACLA actively responds to daily issues identified by CSP officers including needs identified through the Community Safety Action Committee (CSAC) meetings and the development of a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) planning tool. CPTED is utilized as a framework to focus on the premise that the effective use of public/private spaces can lead to a reduction in crime, reduction in calls to LAPD and an increase in the quality of life within a community. CPTED includes suggested improvements to lighting, security cameras, landscaping/fencing, speed bumps, parking etc. 2022 CPTED reports will be finalized soon. Additionally, CSAC meetings provide a useful forum for stakeholders to raise a number of site-specific issues relating to public safety. Some of the topics include brainstorming potential solutions to quality of life issues. A bi-weekly meeting is held between leadership at HACLA and CSP to further facilitate effective communication and follow-up.

### **Parking**

Currently Mar Vista and Avalon are the only sites that have at least one parking space per unit. Most of the public housing portfolio varies in the number of available parking spaces, from 53% available parking spaces versus units at Rancho San Pedro to a higher 92% at Gonzaque. Some of the parking challenges are alleviated with parking available on the city streets within the sites. Recognizing that parking is a challenge for our residents, in January 2022, HACLA staff met with representative from the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), the Mayor's Office and CD15 to conduct a walk-through of Jordan, Gonzaque, Nickerson and Imperial to evaluate the possibility of establishing a Preferential Parking District Permit

program. A Preferential Parking District is an area that has posted regulations limiting parking by vehicles without permits specific for that parking district in order to reduce the impact of non-resident parking. If this program was implemented in the future and effective, LADOT would enforce the parking in these city streets. LADOT is in the process of conducting a study to determine the feasibility of such a program in public housing sites as the program was not designed for communities such as HACLA's.

Additionally, HACLA performs regular parking enforcement at the sites in conjunction with CSP and LADOT. Residents are provided a warning before towing is conducted at the sites. Residents have been reminded that if they park in a red "emergency" zone or blue "accessibility" zone, they can be immediately towed. Residents and non-residents are also cited if they do not have a current parking permit on their automobile to park on HACLA property. As a courtesy, warning citations are also provided. HACLA continues to evaluate green space and available funding for the creation of additional parking.

### **Lease Enforcement**

Lease enforcement is an integral part of maintaining safe, quality housing for our residents. HACLA's last resort is eviction and our primary goal is to assist our residents and keep them housed. The legal team actively works with site staff and CSP to promote Lease compliance and enforcement. Staffing includes 2 unlawful detainer attorneys, 2 fraud investigators and one (1) paralegal. Fraud investigators review camera videos and collaborate with LAPD and site staff to investigate critical cases. Although the pandemic has slowed down court proceedings and investigations, we anticipate as the pandemic improves, processes will return to pre-pandemic levels.

Staffing is continuously being evaluated. For example, seeing the need for increased community engagement around security and crime at our sites, especially in Watts, a new Community Resource Specialist position was established and filled in early 2021. This staff has served successfully as a 24/7 liaison between HACLA, LAPD, and residents at various sites and the community at large, responding to incidents and facilitating peacekeeping activities. Additionally, a new Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Systems Coordinator was established this year, with recruitment currently in progress. This staff will, in collaboration with HACLA staff and outside partners, perform professional and analytical duties to support the efficiency and effectiveness of HACLA's CCTV and video surveillance systems.

Finally, site staff are an integral part of the strategy for Lease enforcement. Site staff consistently engage with the community via meetings, calls, flyers, monthly resident bulletins and appropriate signage. Residents are sent reminders and/or warning letters and perform or quit notices. Site staff also consistently and proactively conduct one-on-one meetings with families to counsel them and mitigate issues they are facing before it can lead to eviction.

### **Grounds Care**

Grounds care is critical in maintaining quality housing for residents. Especially during the pandemic, where households increasingly stayed home, the accumulation of trash has become a growing challenge. There is

also excessive dumping of bulky items by non-residents.

- Best practices in ground care includes extensive community outreach and “buy-in”, marketing campaigns, staffing and appropriate type of trash enclosures and pick-ups. To this end, HACLA has planned and prioritized new trash enclosures for Nickerson, Imperial, Pueblo del Rio, Avalon, Gonzaque and Estrada. Trash enclosures will eliminate the need to pull trash bins off the curb with a stinger truck on trash day, which will provide staff more time for litter abatement. The project will also improve ADA accessibility of the sidewalks and beautify each area. Additionally, the Green Ambassador program at Nickerson and Imperial will improve community outreach. Staff will continue to conduct meetings with residents to address the trash issue including a reminder that illegal dumping is a Lease violation and that they can schedule bulky item pick-ups with the City of Los Angeles Department of Sanitation (LASAN). Residents can report illegal dumping by contacting 311.
- On a daily basis, maintenance and ground staff remove outside dumping and litter from around trash stations, parking lots, streets, playgrounds, and grounds. Staff mows lawns, edges/prunes and trims vegetation usually weekly at various sites. Staff also conducts repairs and improvements of the grounds such as mitigating erosion, seeding etc. For 2022, 2 maintenance workers were added to Avalon/Gonzaque and Pueblo del Rio to improve litter abatement. We continue to evaluate staffing on an annual basis. The Work Source Center will manage a summer program that will place youth at various sites to assist in these efforts.
- As part of grounds care, site staff conducts ongoing education and enforcement of the Gardening Guidelines (Guidelines). All new tenants receive a copy and sign the Guidelines at the time they execute other leasing documents. HACLA recognizes that often times Lease regulations for residents can be cumbersome and we strive to provide tenants flexibility where practical including the opportunity to personalize their unit areas. Guidelines were established in 2017 after a few years of HACLA meeting with advocates, resident leaders and residents. The Guidelines allow and provide limits regarding planting in shrub beds, and keeping potted plants. Staff continues to enforce these Guidelines and to limit encroachment of resident items to common spaces.

### **Trash Pickup Frequency by the City of Los Angeles Department of Sanitation**

LASAN picks up trash at the public housing sites at least 2 times a week. The Cooperation Agreement between HACLA and the City of Los Angeles establishes the provision of city services, including refuse collection (LA Administrative Code Division 8 Chapter 6). Fees charges to residences (including those residing in HACLA) for services by LASAN are based on City Municipal Codes (LAMC 66.41).

Residents are charged the fee directly for refuse service via their Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) bill and are provided a monthly “allowance” by HUD to cover these costs as part of the rent calculation. HUD does not compensate PHAs for trash service in the funding formulas as it does for other utilities.

HACLA did reach out to LASAN and initial estimates to increase pick up by one day would be a costly \$3,500-\$5,500 a month per site and is not a charge that could be passed on to the residents as part of their monthly service fee. With the initiation of the trash enclosure program and other aforementioned initiatives, HACLA's current trash pickup schedule will remain the same. LASAN also provides large roll off bins for bulky items weekly or as needed. In addition to purchasing the bins, HACLA cleans, repaints and replaces trash bins as needed.

### **Cleaning of City Streets by the Bureau of Street Services**

Over 99% of the streets on our properties are considered City streets and the Bureau of Street Services (Bureau) has the responsibility for cleaning and maintaining them. Unfortunately, due to competing priorities and challenges in the City of Los Angeles, the Bureau does not prioritize the cleaning of city streets on HACLA properties. Staff is currently reaching out to the Bureau to initiate these services. When schedule permits, staff cleans various areas as available.

### **Next Steps**

#### **As we look forward to 2022, we anticipate:**

- Carrying out beautification and security upgrades funded for 2022
- Addressing the physical needs of the sites utilizing the Capital Fund program annual allocation
- Initiating trash enclosure projects where feasible and continuing to pursue grant opportunities
- Continuing site community clean ups and positive messaging around litter abatement through flyers, community meetings, events, signage and initiation of the Green Ambassadors and youth summer program
- Piloting improved cleaning of trash bins and stations with steam cleaning and extraction equipment. Currently in order to clean trash bins, the bins need to be hauled to the maintenance yard to dispose of toxic materials into a clarifier pit which takes substantial effort and time. This equipment will allow staff to steam clean trash and stations in-place
- Pilot small trash bins in high gathering areas
- Identify additional areas that would support CSP with "no trespassing" signs or other needed signage
- Continue filing online work orders with City 311 to assist with homeless encampments
- Implement improvements identified by the 2022 CPTED reports contingent on funding and feasibility
- Continue to assess staffing needs