



OVERVIEW

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE # 24

WINTER 2002

Overview and Underview

As noted above, this publication is known as the Overview. In our commitment to provide varying views of neighborhood issues we have included the underview of the Shakespeare Bridge. This rarely noticed and long neglected area has recently become the focus of efforts to clean up graffiti and rid the bridge's underworld of undesirable elements.

Photo & Caption by Bruce Carroll

Perfecting the Bridge

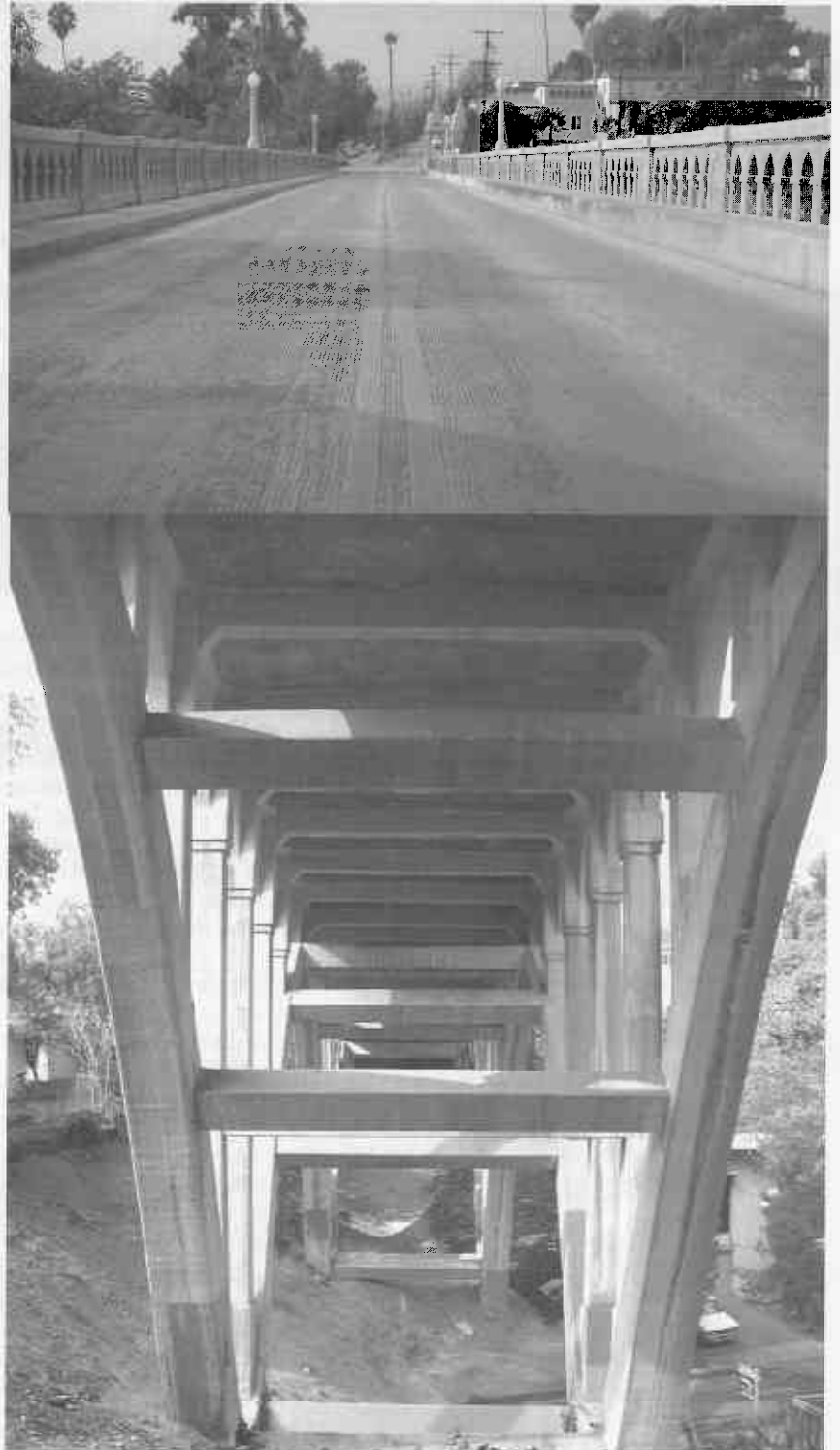
by Shirley Mims

There is a breathtaking view of the Shakespeare Bridge underneath it at the end of Monon Street. From there you can look up at its magnificent arches and see the whole bridge in its grandeur. Monon is a quiet street off of Tracy Street which has probably seen more foot traffic than cars. In recent years the area underneath the bridge had fallen to neglect and loitering. Kids were using it as a hang out spot. There was a lot of graffiti. A homeless camp showed up on the slope. Neighbors made reports of drug dealings and occasional fires.

By the request of neighbors of both Franklin Hills and Los Feliz, Los Angeles City Councilman Tom LaBonge and his staff, the Department of Public Works, local schools, and the LAPD are working together with us to clean up and beautify the area under the bridge.

The project started in January with several meetings between neighbors,

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Letter from the President

by Charley Mims

Friends and neighbors:

As we go into this holiday season we have plenty for which to be thankful. I sincerely hope that you and your family and friends are healthy and prosperous.

We have just survived the attempts of the secessionists to divide our neighborhood and our City. We remain united in the City of Los Angeles and in our neighborhood. The vote to keep our City whole was by an overwhelming margin, greater than two to one. Now is the time for all of us to come together and return to those volunteer activities and projects which improve our block, our neighborhood, our community and our great City.



The Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council (GGPNC) which includes our area was certified by the City Department of Neighborhood Empowerment last June. The end of October saw the election of ten members to the Board of the GGPNC. For District A (north of Los Feliz Blvd.) Cheryl Johnson and Bernadette Soter were elected. For District B (east of Vermont Avenue) Jacqueline Kerr and Andrew Westall were elected. For District C (from Vermont Avenue to Commonwealth) Dora Herrera and Meredith Patten were elected. From District D (east of Commonwealth and north of the Franklin Hills area) Yvette Bryant and James Balesh were elected. From District E (the Franklin Hills area and westerly to Commonwealth/Hoover) Joseph Hahn and Charley Mims were elected. Cheryl and Bernadette are longtime neighborhood activists. Jacqueline is a neighborhood activist and Andrew is a political activist who currently works for the Speaker of the Assembly. Meredith Patten is new to the area and brings a lot of enthusiasm, while Dora is active in the community and is a manager/owner of Yuca's Hut on Hillhurst. Yvette is relatively new to the area and brings leadership skills and enthusiasm, while James is an attorney and active in other volunteer groups. Joseph is also an attorney who spearheaded the successful efforts to string holiday lights on the Shakespeare Bridge last year. Charley is active in his neighborhood (and I am always looking for more neighbors to volunteer a little time and energy to improve our area!).

The elected GGPNC Board has the responsibility to appoint the final nine Board members to complete the first regular Board for the GGPNC. We all hope to increase the cooperation within our community and our partnership and communication with City officials and departments to the betterment of our area. Please participate.

In addition to our work to get the GGPNC organized and off and running, the Franklin Hills Residents Association's volunteers have continued to improve our neighborhood in many ways. Past President Ricardo Gomez has been appointed to Chair a Nuisance Abatement Committee. Ricardo is concentrating on bulky item removals in cooperation with Commissioner Janice Wood of the Board of Public Works and Councilman Tom LaBonge. He met with the Commissioner and Councilman LaBonge to get information on City budget priorities to rid our neighborhood of the unsightly couches and other bulky items that our neighbors leave in front of their residences without calling the Bureau of Sanitation to pick them up. Ricardo found out that the City plans to increase the number of crews devoted to picking up these nuisance items. Another area that Ricardo has been helpful in is testifying at Planning Department hearings on illegal zoning practices of a few local auto body shops. He was successful in his efforts to convince the City to NOT grant variances to allow illegal building and other activities that harm the neighborhood.

Joseph Hahn is once again leading the effort to string holiday lighting on the Shakespeare Bridge. As mentioned earlier, Joseph has also just been elected to represent our area on the Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council. I will have the pleasure of working with Joseph on this important neighborhood project. We plan to bring to bear the combined efforts of all groups within the Council area to improve our neighborhoods and to create better communication with City officials and the dreaded bureaucrats!

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Garden Art

by Foongy Lee

The Franklin Hills Residents Association community garden on the grounds of the Lycee Internationale de Los Angeles flourishes and grows. Even here in Southern California, gardens are about changing seasons. Recently, Norm Harriton stepped down as garden coordinator, and Tori Kjer took his place. We will continue to benefit from Norm's friendly leadership and gardening savvy.

We have seen other changes in our gardeners and our garden plots. Babies have been born and adopted. Children have grown. People have moved out of our city and new people have arrived.

Everyone has a unique style, something unusual to contribute. Some of us garden chaotically, other are structured and precise. Some of us prefer flowers, the taller the better. One member plans on devoting her entire plot to corn next summer. Another gardener grew a zucchini the size of a large muffler. Okra flowers in several plots with creamy yellow petals and magenta centers were unexpectedly beautiful and prolific. Two of our gardeners installed competing irrigation systems on timers. They offhandedly discussed water pressure and dispersal while secretly planning advances in their system design. A tomato blight, which quickly spread to all plots but one, was the subject of a staggering number of conversations. In June we mourned our tomato crop and envied the gardener of the one successful plot. I became so obsessed with tomatoes that I dreamed about them—juicy, succulent, filled with the flavor of the earth and sun.

In July a kitten we named Balzac joined us. She basked in the sun on the paths and stretched in the shade cast by our vegetables. She is a three-legged, one-eyed, gray striped beauty, and she practices her feline instincts undeterred by her handicaps. We took her to the vet and members contribute cans of cat food.



Many of the fall plantings are in. We expect onions, fennel, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, squash, and more. Please feel free to stroll by and see our progress. We are located at the Sanborn cul-de-sac below the Shakespeare bridge. All the plots are currently occupied, but there is a short waiting list. If you are interested in adding your name, please contact Tori Kjer at 213-482-2160. We will gratefully accept any donations of cat food or veterinarian expenses for Balzac.

Attacking Graffiti

by Eric Frase



After a spike in graffiti vandalism in July and August, particularly on the western perimeter of the Hills, it seems that our neighborhood has established a reputation of "zero-tolerance" regarding the antics of local taggers. By removing graffiti within hours of its occurrence, involving our Senior Lead Officers from Northeast and (do NOT try this at home) confronting the guilty teens face-to-face in the dark of night, the flurry of IFT and FHC tags that scarred the vicinity of Fountain, Talmadge, Myra, and even the Shakespeare Bridge, came to a halt.

In 2001, the Franklin Hills were bombarded by hundreds of scrawls, large and small, by the IFT tagging crew. After documenting many of their tags before removal, the FHRA Graffiti Abatement Committee passed this information on to Officer Colenzo from Northeast's PACE unit. Using some of our information, police officers were able to catch several IFT members tagging a stairway one morning near Marshall High School last year and the appearance of IFT tags suddenly came to a stop.

The year 2002 saw the emergence of a new crew - FHC. According to Officer Colenzo this was a local group of kids calling themselves Franklin Hills Criminals. Officer Colenzo thought these were kids just "talking tough" and were not gang-related. This summer IFT and FHC tags began appearing more frequently throughout the area, often written next to each other, and apparently were being done in tandem. One evening, around midnight, a resident spotted a small group of youth spraying IFT and FHC tags on Myra near Cumberland. Several area residents went out and confronted the teenage boys and attempted to apprehend them while several of the offenders ran away into an apartment building at Myra and Sunset Drive. One of the boys said that FHC stood for Franklin Hills Crips. Within a week or so of this incident, a resident in the area of Sunset Dr. and Talmadge spotted after-

school tagging in that area and alerted the police. L.A.P.D. officers followed the trail of spray painted evidence up Talmadge to Franklin, and eventually stopped several youths at the east end of the Bridge who were "packing paint" as well as homework. After additional FHC and IFT tagging was witnessed again on Myra during the night, a neighbor contacted one of Franklin Hills' SLOs and the police paid another visit to the apartment at Myra and Sunset that seemed to be harboring the group of kids who were relentlessly defacing our neighborhood. It is unknown if any arrests took place or what became of the adult in that apartment who was aware their under-age charges were out after curfew, but the rash of graffiti by IFT and FHC has come to a sudden stop.

This is another example of how community involvement, such as direct reaction by residents, like painting out graffiti after work (and to the extreme, confronting ne'r-do-wells), and working with our community resources, such as L.A.P.D. Northeast, brings change to your neighborhood much more quickly (and is easier) than trying to form a whole new city.

(FHRA Board member Eric Frase chairs the Graffiti Abatement Committee. To be kept abreast of graffiti abatement efforts and news send your e-mail or phone number to him in care of FHRA@franklinhills.org or the FHRA message line at 323-664-7247.)

Northeast Division News



As you know, Chief Pomeroy is leaving the Los Angeles Police Department after serving the city for 31 years. His goals while serving as the interim Chief for the past six

months were to unify the department toward a single purpose: make the LAPD a better place to work, improve morale and to increase recruitment and retention. The department he now retires from is a more competent and stable organization. Many thanks and happy retirement wishes.

We welcome William Bratton as the new Chief of Police. Chief Bratton's goals include the reduction of Part 1 crimes such as robberies, burglaries and Grand Theft Auto. He also will focus on "quality of life" issues like gang activity and graffiti. He is also a firm believer in a strong community / police partnership. Everyone should take an active part in helping to reduce the incidence and fear of crime in their neighborhood. Consider starting or joining a Neighborhood Watch or participate in the Northeast Volunteer Surveillance Team. Information on both of these programs can be obtained by contacting the Community Relations office at Northeast station, (213) 485-2548.

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By working together as a team we can accomplish many things. Several examples can be seen in the area just south of the Franklin Hills community along Sunset Boulevard.

We saw the closure of the Sunset Pacific Hotel and the sealing of the pedestrian stairways on Myra Avenue earlier this year. More recently, there are improvements taking place at the Tangs Donut shopping mall. Criminal activity plagued each location and extended into the Franklin Hills area. Recent crime statistics show a significant decrease in violent crime and an improvement in "quality of life." Participation by area residents, members of Neighborhood Watches, business owners, and community organizations like FHRA came together and helped make these changes possible. Each of you has my sincere thanks and praise for the important roles that you played. A special thanks to the many officers that worked so hard, the numerous city entities that were involved and especially Councilmen LaBonge and Garcetti for their support.

In closing, I wish you all a happy and safe holiday season and look forward to future successes by working together. Oh, and don't forget to check out the Los Angeles Police Department's official website at WWW.LAPDONLINE.Org.

Sincerely,

Senior Lead Officer Al Polehonki
Northeast Division, LAPD

A Meeting Report For the Record

By Bruce Carroll



It's been a record year for the FHRA. With a 15% increase in membership we easily broke last year's record of 347

and are now hitting 400. But we also broke new ground in other areas. Our internet website: www.FranklinHills.org got off to a great start featuring results from our poll on Hollywood Secession. The website had more than 2000 hits in days surrounding the crucial decision on whether to include parts of Franklin Hills in the proposed new city.

This year's annual meeting was held June 12th at ABC-TV Center Studios. The meeting also boasted record attendance, with more than 160 turning out to hear and question featured speaker City Councilman Tom LaBonge. He stressed the importance

of keeping the city together through promoting more resident input and improving services.

FHRA members voting by mail and at the meeting added three new faces to the FHRA Board of Directors. The names that go with those faces are Mary Frances Smith-Reynolds who has revitalized the area's Neighborhood Watch program, Eric Frase who's led the way in our uphill fight against graffiti and David Campbell, a retired college professor and

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A YEAR TO CHEER

by Bruce Carroll

*It's that time of year. let's rate '02.
Have the 12 months past been good to you?*

*For affairs impacting us Franklinites,
See below. FHRA's highlights.*

*Drug dealing denizens of the "Bates" motel.
Finally got the boot, and the crime rate fell*

*When a smelly auto shop asked to expand.
We showed the zoning board
the shop shud be banned.*

*Though taggers sprayed lots of "IFT,"
Volunteers erased most their graffiti.*

*Our membership numbers hit record height.
Ditto for e-mail, and our new website*

*Neighborhood Watches were re-energized...
Now crooks must be wary of many more eyes.*

*We battled secession, united we stood.
Against those who'd split us in-to Hollywood.*

*Another year of more good than ills.
More ups than downs for the Franklin Hills.*

*We hope your '02 was trouble free...
And the World will get better as we head to '03*

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Median Update

Shirley Mims

The flat area of the median looks a lot better since the FHRA board acted on a suggestion by board member, Norm Harriton, to cover the area with decorative wood chips. To prevent the hoards of weeds from sprouting every month, Norm first laid down and secured a felt weed barrier. While some weeds still grow, there are not nearly as many as there were before.

Mark Bruna, Franklin Hills neighbor and median volunteer, now has his own tree trimming business and continues to trim the palm trees on the median. We are thankful to him for his volunteer service to the community.

Please join me in welcoming our neighbor Terri White-Abudu who has kindly agreed to take over the organization of the median volunteers. I have enjoyed working with many of you on the median but my schedule has taken a permanent turn towards college studies and I am no longer able to handle it. Since Terri has kids at both Marhsall and King she wants to organize periodic clean up days with both the schools and our neighbors. She and her kids will be making "Stop" and "Slow Down" signs that will help slow speeding traffic when there are volunteers working on the median. Look for future announcements from Terri for the next Median Day.

OCTOBER 28 C-PAB MEETING

Upcoming Events announced: The Semi-annual Basic Car meetings, now called "District Meetings" will be held in December. Meeting for A71 (Franklin Hills) will be on Dec. 10, 2002 at the Hillhurst Community Center, (in the CalFed bldg.)

Northeast Toy Drive is scheduled for early December. Donations of unwrapped toys are gladly accepted; children attending must live in Northeast.

The Senior Lead Officers will now work in a new unit consisting of 8 SLOs, 5 Police Officers II, 1 officer III which will be designated as a problem solving footbeat. This unit will focus on community identified problems relating to crime, fear, and quality of life. Each SLO is asked to identify at least 5 problems within their area. The footbeat unit will also provide support as a chase team for the Volunteer Surveillance Team which focuses on recurring problems (such as graffiti.)

Issues discussed with the Neighborhood Prosecutor and the Captain: Tang's Doughnuts will be placing Security guards as well as painting the center; and will not be open in the evening.

Semi's parking under the overpass on Delay Dr. working with CalTrans and CHP to solve.

If you have an issue for C-PAB to discuss, call or e-mail it to: Carol Skinner, 323-662-1775; carolcantata@yahoo.com

Concerns for the Senior Lead: leave a message on Officer Polehonki's phone ((213) 509-2964)

Round Two Against Hyperion Auto Repair Shops

By Bruce Carroll

The FHRA's fight against polluting auto body shops scored more points last summer. The Central Area Planning Commission upheld the a zoning administrator's decision to just say "No" to requests for zoning variances for the auto shops at the corner of Hyperion and DeLongpre.

While Commission President, Beverly Ziegler, initially complimented property owner Gary Rogers on the appearance of his property, Commission VP Mary Lou Dudas disagreed and showed strong support for area residents suggesting that, since "clearly the applicant has not been a good neighbor, like a slumlord he should be forced to spend time" on the property. They both eventually voted to deny the variance based on the facts that some of the business' buildings were illegal and zoning changes made some uses inappropriate.

Rene Weitzer, Councilman Tom LaBonge's planning deputy, was of enormous help during the hearing frequently strongly addressing the panel about neighborhood concerns after the commission muzzled Franklin Hills representatives with a 2 minute gag rule that was not applied to other participants.

At one point FHRA member Michael Miller, who has long experience as a city attorney, objected to the fact that that he and FHRA past president Ricardo Gomez, who both had detailed information about the issue, were denied equal time with the property owners to explain our case. A commission staff member even threatened to have Miller ejected from the hearing. During Miller's brief testimony he asked the dozen Franklin Hills residents who attended the hearing to raise their hands to show the community's support.

Others raised their hands and voices to give the panel as sense of the community's mood. Hyperion resident Lisa Henschel observed that the property would "have to be upgraded to be an eyesore." King Middle School activist Mary Rodriguez pleaded with the commission to curb the pollution from the many Hyperion body shops that foul the air at the school. And DeLongpre resident Garbiel Bristol testified a shop employee told him, "I'm not here to make the neighborhood happy."

The neighborhood can be a little happier after the ruling, but the fight is not over. Many of the shops' activities can continue, so there is far more work to be done and battles to be fought along Hyperion before we can all breathe easier.



Even when it is not open the shop at Hyperion and DeLongpre offers up visual pollution. At least 15 vehicles were packed onto the property...not counting the one on the sign.
Photo by Bruce Carroll



Has your nest egg grown lately?

If you're like most homeowners, your home is your largest nest egg. The reason is simple: over time, real estate in our neighborhood has proved to be the safest store of wealth. No other investment even comes close—especially lately.

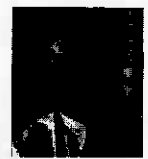
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NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH UPDATE

By Mary Frances Smith-Reynolds and Mary Rodriguez



There is very good news to report in the area of community policing. For starters, our new LAPD leader, Chief William J. Bratton, has publicly stated his support for community policing. These are welcome words for Senior Lead Officers, Neighborhood Watch groups and others who are working to prevent crime and improve safety through this law enforcement-community partnership. There are many folks in our area who support this collaboration, as demonstrated at the August 6 National Night Out Community Walk. This evening stroll through the Los Feliz business district drew some 175 participants, a few of whom were then motivated to start new Neighborhood Watch groups.

In fact, around ten Neighborhood Watch groups have started, or have been revived in the past six months in the Franklin Hills, Los Feliz, Silver Lake and East Hollywood areas. If you have considered starting one on your block, and want materials or information, contact the LAPD Northeast Division Community Relations Office at 213/485-2548, or Mary Frances Smith-Reynolds, FHRA Neighborhood Watch Committee Chair, at 323/668-9069.



Recently, our Senior Lead Officers (SLOs) in the Northeast Division were re-assigned fulltime to their positions, complete with their own office. This is a step in the right direction, allowing the SLOs to concentrate on their specific geographic areas. Their jobs include tackling recurring crimes by getting to the roots of the problems; problem-solving and strategizing to prevent certain crimes from occurring or getting worse; and supporting Neighborhood Watch groups and other community activists in their quest to improve neighborhoods.

In addition, the Neighborhood Prosecutor program, sponsored by the City

Attorney's Office and started this year, is alive and well in our area. This program was designed to work hand-in-hand with the SLOs of every police division. In July, Jeanne Kim of the City Attorney's Office, was assigned to the Northeast Division, replacing Peter Shutan. Her office is located right across the hall from the Senior Lead Officers' new office, which allows them to be in constant communication.

When a criminal problem begins to infiltrate a neighborhood and a concerned citizen contacts the LAPD, their call is usually directed to the Senior Lead Officer for their area. In our community, SLO Al Polehonki covers Franklin Hills, Silver Lake, and the south end of Los Feliz; SLO Sam Salazar covers the Franklin Hills area around Thomas Starr King Middle School and East Hollywood; and SLO Stacy Miyamura covers Los Feliz and Griffith Park. These officers work as a team. They are experienced and have patrolled our neighborhoods for many years. They are still the ones to contact when a citizen suspects a crime or quality of life problem in their neighborhood. Now the SLOs can enlist the help of the Neighborhood Prosecutor for additional assistance. Jeanne Kim believes that the new Neighborhood Prosecutor pilot program, which began in March, has been very successful. She feels the community appreciates the fact that she can "fill the gaps" with the SLOs. She says she does not advise the SLOs, but tries to find alternative ways to problem solve, other than taking all matters into the courtroom.

Currently, Ms. Kim is working on prostitution problems in the Normandie Avenue area, which is the majority of her work. Other issues, such as drug abuse and drug houses throughout the Northeast Division, run a close second. Her area covers four City Council districts: Council Districts 4 (Tom LaBonge); 13 (Eric Garcetti); 14 (Nick Pacheco); and 1 (Ed Reyes).

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