

TENT CITY

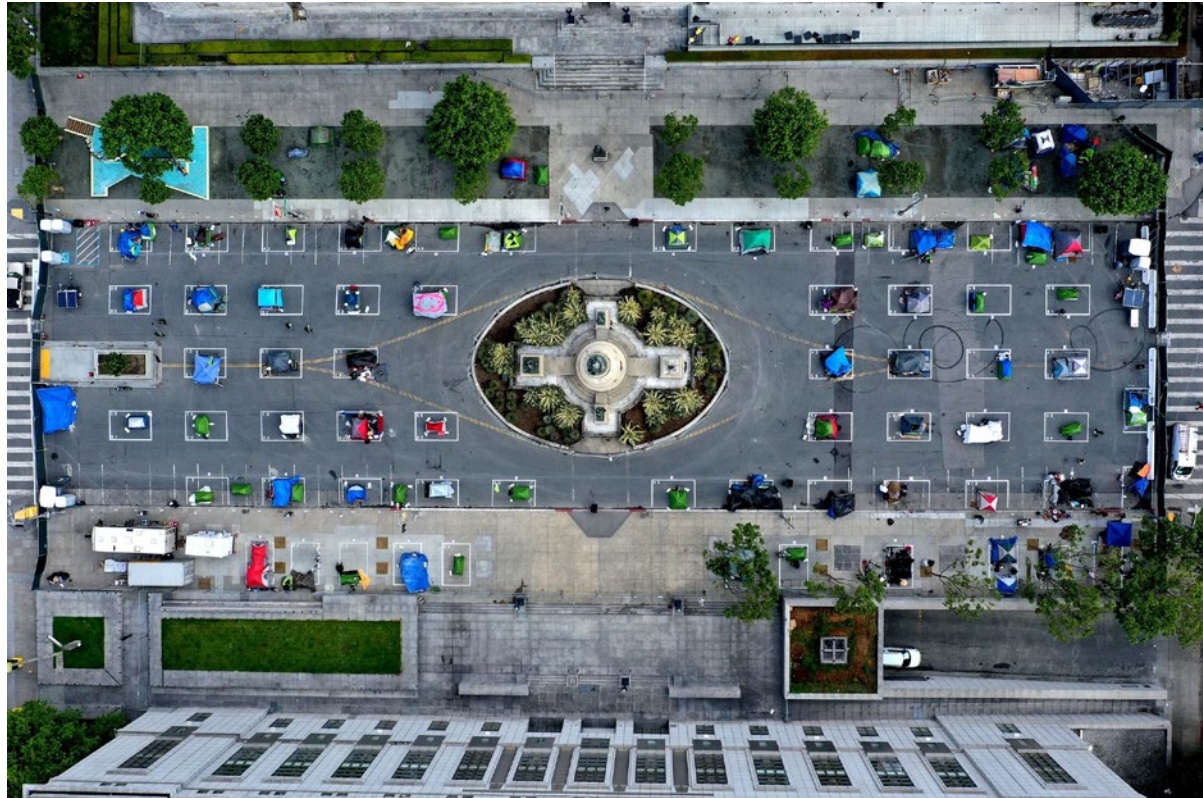
ARCH 698A DESIGN RESEARCH: SPATIAL POLITICS

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'Safe Sleeping Village' 80 tents are neatly spaced out the area between the city's central library and its Asian Art Museum - San Francisco
<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2020/05/22/reopenings-san-francisco-opens-unique-civic-center-covid-19-pandemic-safe-sleeping-village/>

Total Unsheltered Population by Supervisorial District

SD1 - 11,359

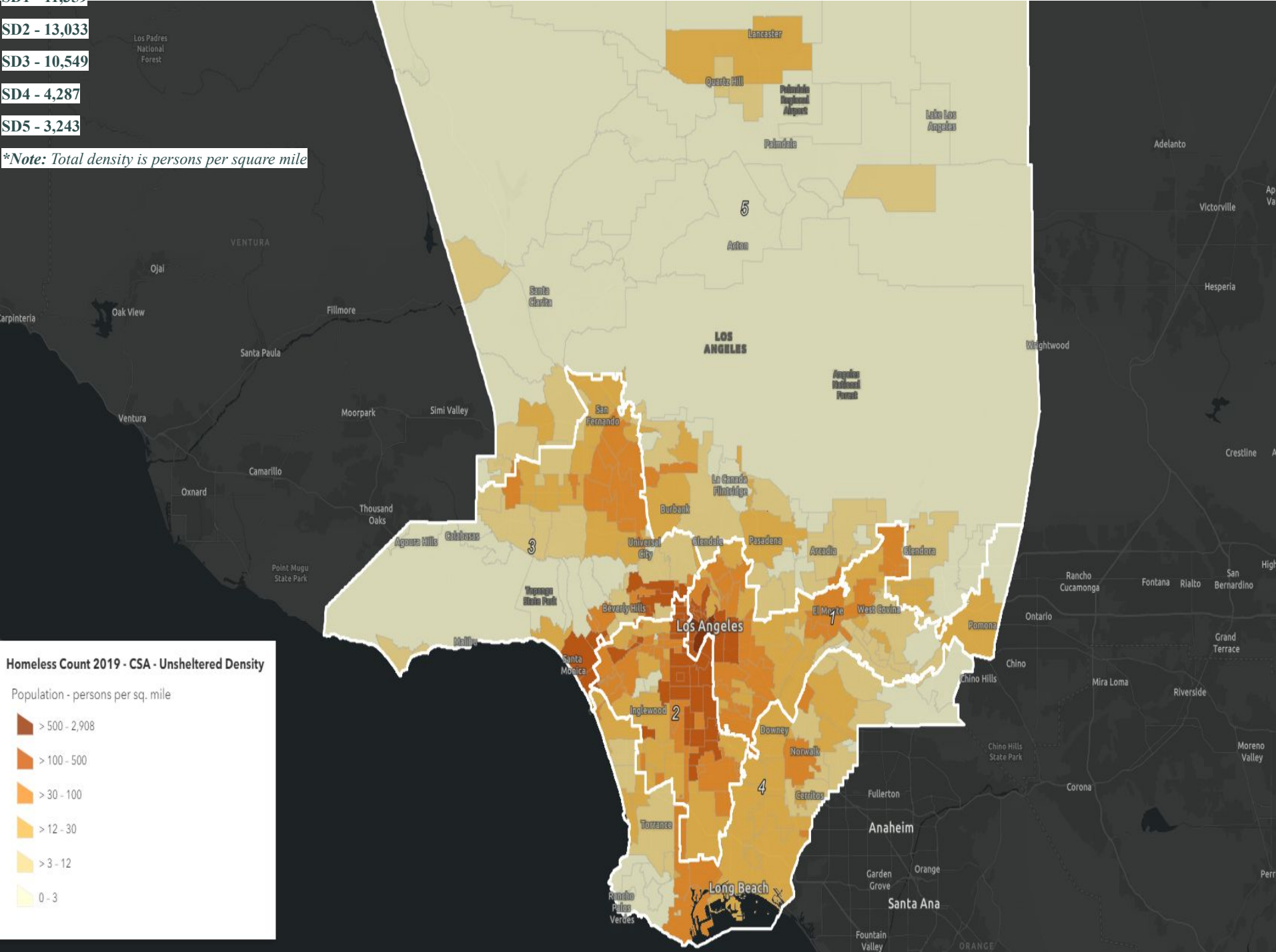
SD2 - 13,033

SD3 - 10,549

SD4 - 4,287

SD5 - 3,243

**Note: Total density is persons per square mile*



1

What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in tent cities compared to living alone on the streets, in shelters, in indoor housing?

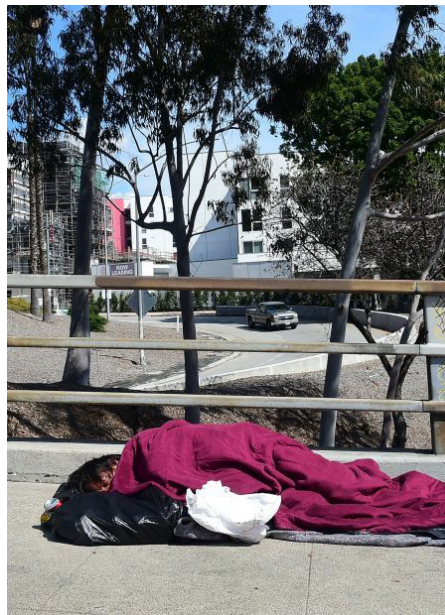
- + What is “Tent city”?
- + Defining “Tent City” - informal and formal strategies
- + Explanations for the Increase of Tent City
- + Advantage (of Living in Tent Cities) for Homeless
- + Disadvantage (of Living in Tent Cities)

What is “Tent City”?

Tent city has connotations of both impermanence and continuity. It is a temporary housing facility made using tent or other temporary structures. Inhabitants may be a core group of people who are known to one another and who move together to different locations when necessary, or they may be a changing group of people who cycle in and out of a single location. Tent cities set up by homeless people may be similar to shanty town, which are informal settlements in which the buildings are made from scrap building materials.



Tent city



Living alone on the street



Shelters



Indoor housing

Defining “Tent City”



Informal

not sanctioned/ unauthorized
encampment in public space

Some communities send police to quickly clear (“sweep”) encampments, with no attempt to provide services or referrals to help people at the encampment find another place to stay.



Formal

city permitted

At the other end of the spectrum, some communities permit (“sanction”) encampments formally. Local government or community organizations provide running water and places to prepare food and dispose of waste, as well as healthcare and other services.

Explanations for the Increase of Tent City

Shortcomings in the shelter system

Shortcomings in the shelter system are consistently identified as a **primary factor** that “pushes” people congregate in encampments.

- Literal shortages
- Regulations

Population of homeless (2020) 66,436;
 Only **27%** is sheltered;

The disadvantage of living in shelters

- Restrictions in shelters - separation from partner, family member, or pets
- Inconvenient entry/exist time and location with people’s daily route
- Concern the security of personal belongings - restrictions on the ability to store belongings and difficulty to moving
- Personal safty and exposure to germs
- Virus disease in shelters
- Specific barriers to entry - sobriety requirment and entry fee

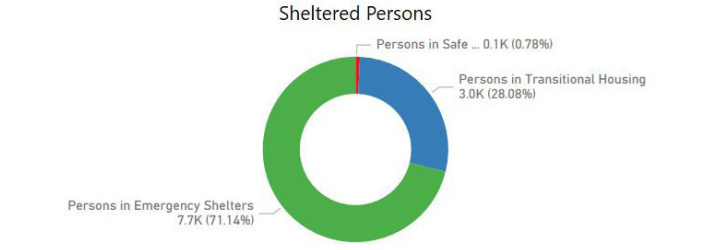
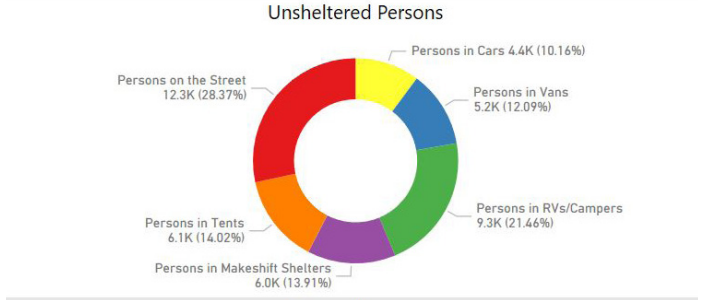
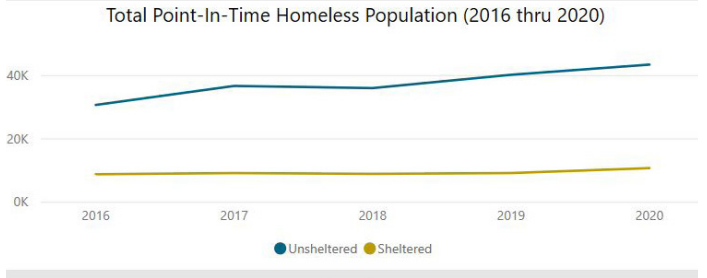
General perceptions of shelters as “inhospitable,” “alienating,” “demeaning,” and offering little or no support or case management to find permanent housing.

Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count

2020 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count - Data Summary
 Total Point-In-Time Homeless Population by Geographic Areas

Geographic Area	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total	Total Percent Change 2019-2020
Los Angeles County	18,395	48,041	66,436	13%
City of Los Angeles	12,438	28,852	41,290	16%

<https://www.lahsa.org/data?id=45-2020-homeless-count-by-community-city>



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Advantage (of Living in Tent Cities) for Homeless

- + Safety/Visibility - especially during pandemic (feel safe and relax)
- + Stability compared to living in street
- + Sense of the community
- + Sharing Resources (Organized tent city) -
 - Clean Up Crews
 - 24 Hr. Security
 - Public entertainment facilities
- + Food donation
- + Mental health support
- + No restrictions for family members and pets
- + Cheaper to fund encampments



<https://www.princegeorgematters.com/highlights/vancouver-downtown-eastside-sees-fifth-shooting-in-six-weeks-1773913>

Advantage (of Living in Tent Cities) for Homeless

All the reference here is come from the interviews of homeless in Tent city 3 in Seattle.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2016/02/americas-tent-cities-for-the-homeless/462450/>

Keep in mind how to provide the same services in public parks?

We got people working graveyard shifts, we got kids here, we got families and our pets. People go to work not having to carry their stuff on their backs like they do in the indoor shelter system.

I can enjoy football game in our communal television area.



I just returned from a 12-hour working day to SHARE/WHEEL Tent City 3 to give the birthday card to my daughter!



Living in encampment is like an adventure! Meeting new people and seeing new things. I've always been really grateful that there is some place where you can come and go as you choose and there is safety in numbers.

It's like a big family and we look out for each other!



The concept of tent city means community, safety, and a place to be where nobody is going to harass or hurt you in the middle of the night!

We people as homeless have lives, just like you all have lives. We don't want to be out on the street but we don't have an alternative.

Disadvantage (of Living in Tent Cities)

For Homeless

Compared to living in transitional housing

- + Not all encampment is organized, resources and facilities still not available in some area.
- + Limited health support in some area
- + Relatively instable compared to housing
- + Location



Tent city
<https://www.earthsafe.com/critical-thinking/create-blog-post>



"Sleep pod" Housing in Portland
<https://www.pdxmonthly.com/news-and-city-life/2019/08/these-tiny-home-inspired-sleeping-pods-provide-shelter-for-portland-s-homeless-women>

For Communities

Compared to living in transitional housing

- + Negative public perception
- + Make the surrounding area dirty and messy
- + Bring the properties nearby value down
- + Security



Tent city
<https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/articles/2020-03-19/coronavirus-could-crush-the-poor-and-homeless-advocates-warn>

2

Where have Tent Cities been formalized and recognized by city officials? Why did these officials recognize these encampments; how were they able to do so politically?

- + Tent Cities Project Examples
- + Informal + Formal Encampments (Temporary + Transitional Housing)

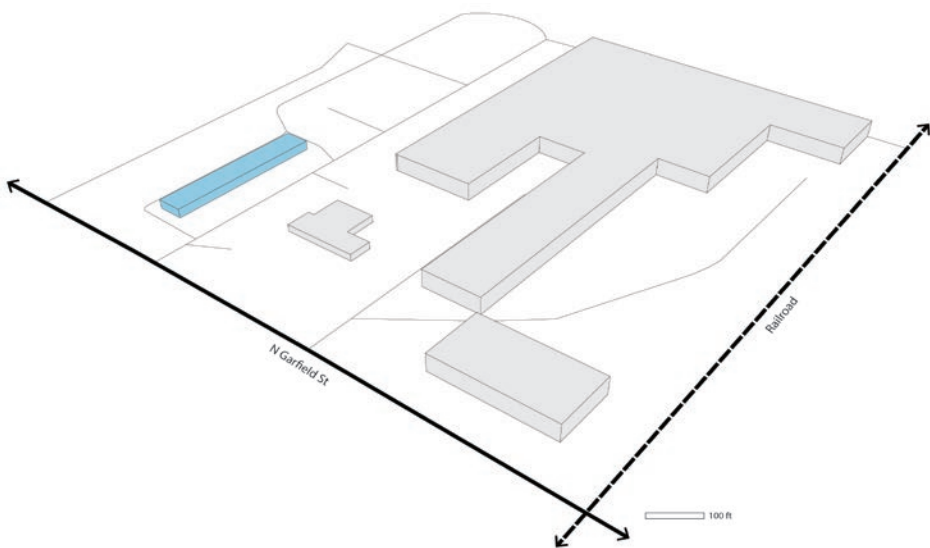
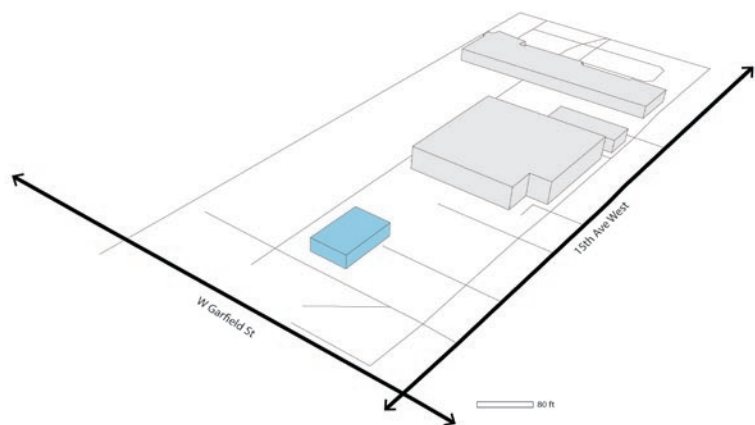


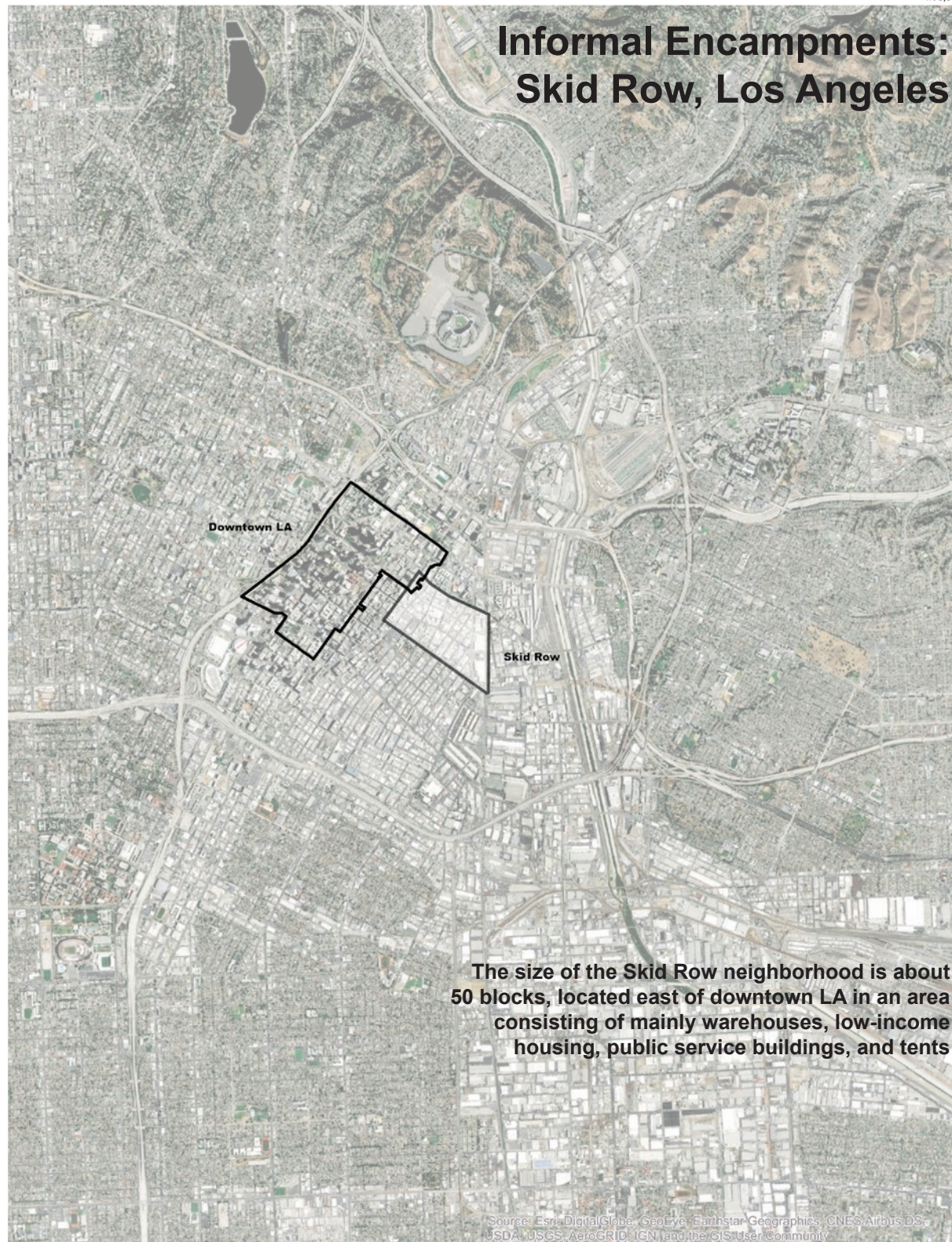
Case Studies of informal and formal encampments at different scales

Informal Encampments:
Skid Row, Los Angeles

Formal Encampments:
Tent City 5, Seattle

Formal Encampments:
Opportunity Village, Eugene





Informal Encampments: Skid Row, Los Angeles

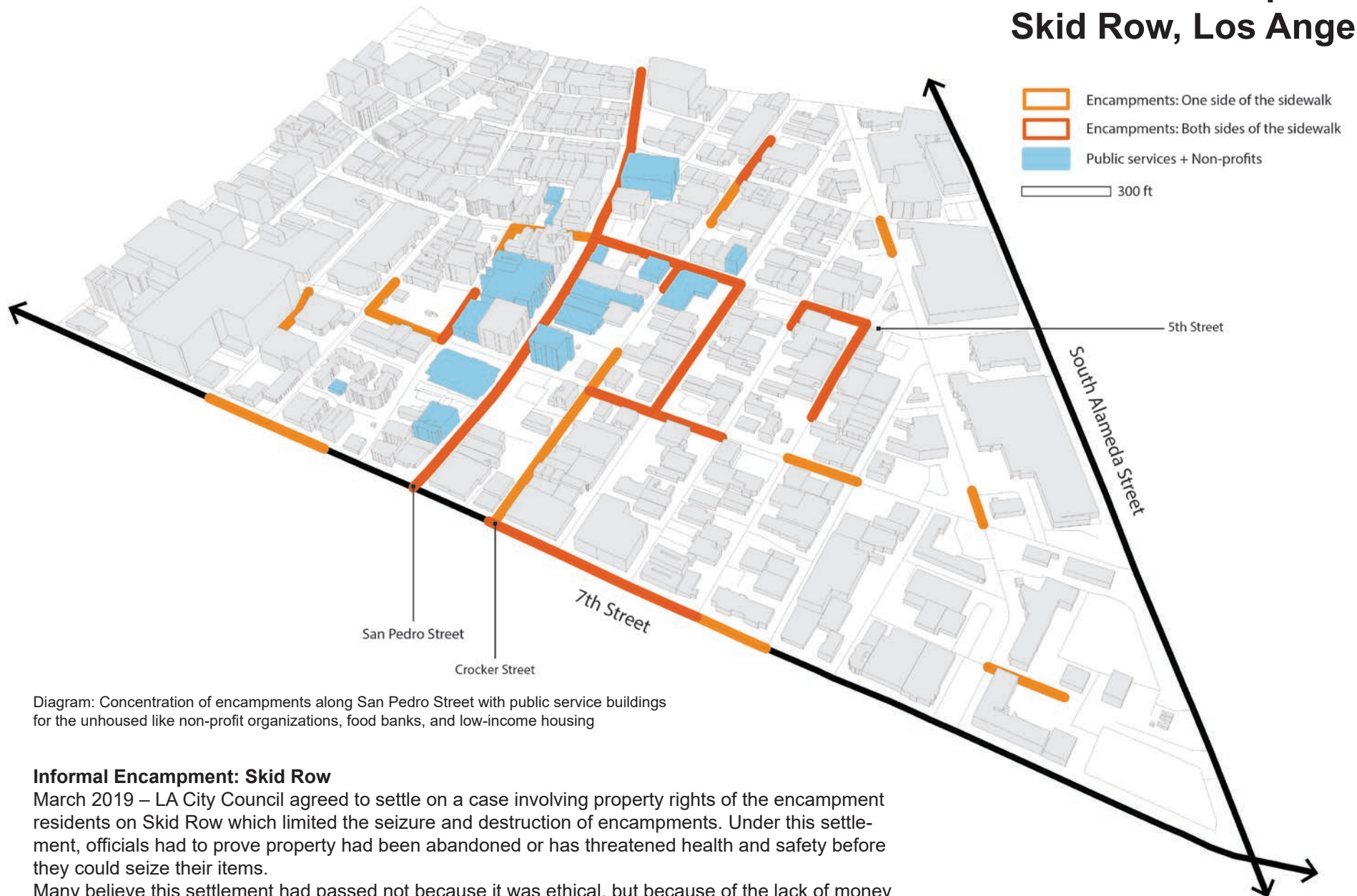


Diagram: Concentration of encampments along San Pedro Street with public service buildings for the unhoused like non-profit organizations, food banks, and low-income housing

Informal Encampment: Skid Row

March 2019 – LA City Council agreed to settle on a case involving property rights of the encampment residents on Skid Row which limited the seizure and destruction of encampments. Under this settlement, officials had to prove property had been abandoned or has threatened health and safety before they could seize their items.

Many believe this settlement had passed not because it was ethical, but because of the lack of money in cleaning up Skid Row where the city's annual cleanup costs soared to \$31 million last year which has affected enforcement tactics.

The tent cities in Skid Row are still considered informal due to unclear settlement laws but there are regulations in place, specifically in this area, to protect encampment residents' properties.

Informal Encampments: Skid Row, Los Angeles

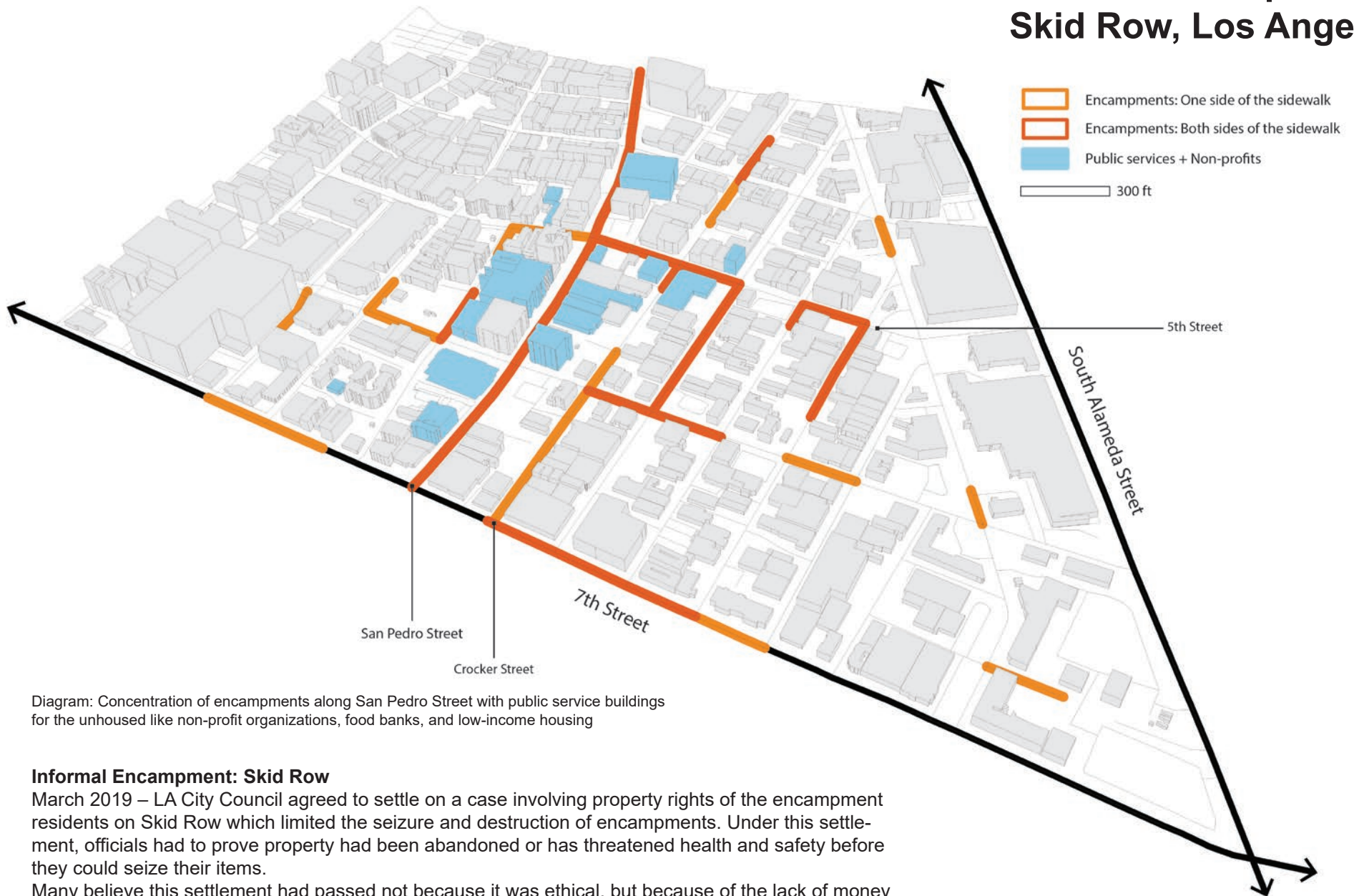


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Informal Encampments: Skid Row, Los Angeles



“In its nearly 20-year history, the homeless encampment known as Tent City 3 has moved more than 90 times. Usually, it has been hosted, with a permit, by a church or university but this weekend it moved, guerilla-style, next to I-5 on city land in the Ravenna neighborhood...Tent City 3 was Seattle’s first, and perhaps most famous, tent camp allowed by the city.”

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/seattles-most-famous-legal-tent-camp-moves-to-an-illegal-spot-for-the-first-time-in-years/>

“Since the late 1990s several American cities have witnessed the re-emergence of large scale homeless encampments for the first time since the Great Depression...Large-scale encampments are not homologous spaces spurred by the recession, but responses to new punitive policies and paradoxically...”

[Herring, C. \(2014\). *The New Logics of Homeless Seclusion: Homeless Encampments in America’s West Coast Cities*. *City & Community*, 13\(4\), 285–309.](https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12086)
<https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12086>

This section aimed to explore the movements of the Tent City 3 in Seattle and its’ encampments arrangement, special relationship with the surroundings and the life within the tent camp through mapping, academic paper reading, online sources examination and interviews which conducted by newspapers and journalists.



[Tent City 3 has relocated to a spot along I-5 near Ravenna. \(Ken Lambert / The Seattle Times\)](#)



Tent City to Tiny Cabins

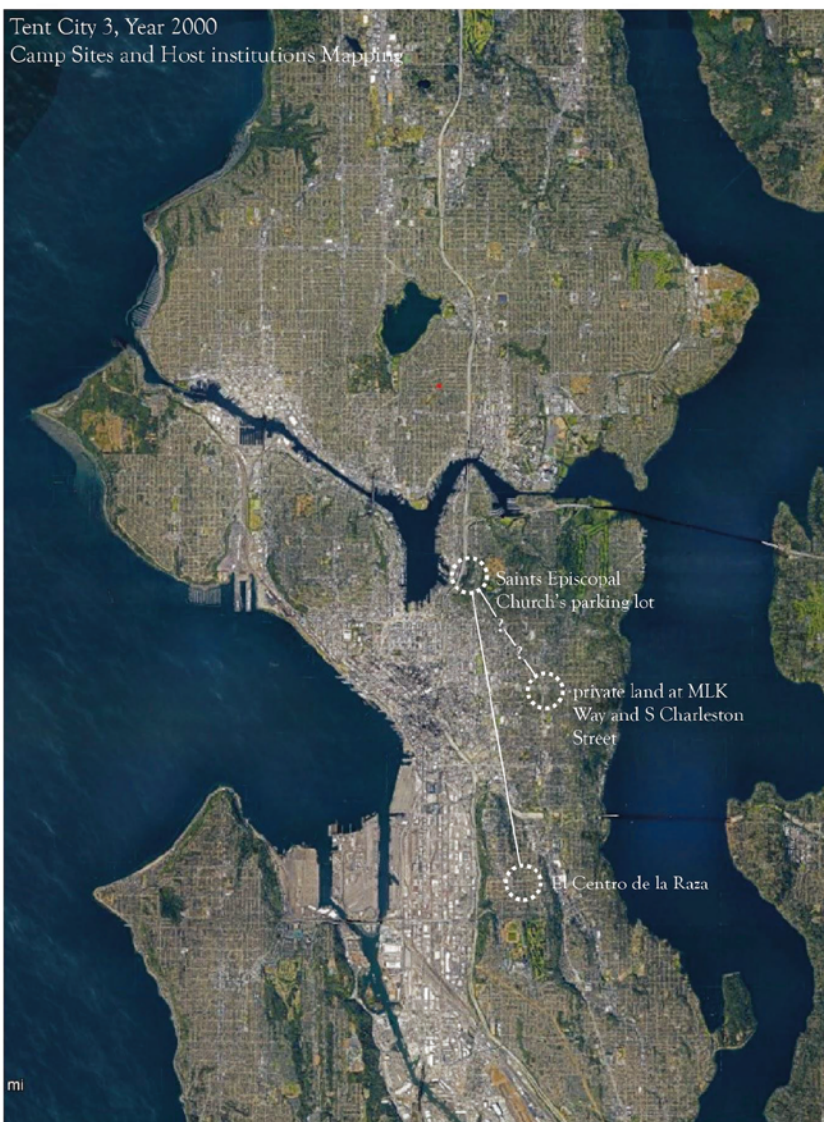


3

What should we consider when designing the tent city? Are there any spatial strategies in Tent Cities that promote better health or improve quality of life among residents?

+ The study of Tent City 3 (Seattle)

Tent City 3, Year 2000
Camp Sites and Host institutions Mapping



1990

SHARE began with the Goodwill Gathering in 1990 helping displaced homeless people stay together and safe. SHARE established the first Tent City the day before Thanksgiving on November 24th, 1990.

The November establishment of Tent City1 on mudflats south of the Kingdome. Within days, the camp grew to 166 members. After negotiations with the City, on December 10th, 99 SHARE members moved into the abandoned METRO Bus Barn near Seattle Center, and SHARE's first self-managed overflow shelter started at Immaculate Conception Church.

1990

The Bus Barn Shelter was scheduled to close at the end of March. SHARE held a rally at the Bus Barn and continued negotiations with the City. The Bus Barn remained open until the Aloha Inn was born—a self-managed transitional program on Aurora Avenue.

1993

WHEEL, the Women's Housing, Equality and Enhancement League, SHARE's women-only partner organization, was born in January, campaigned for increased hours at day centers and shelters, and (with SHARE) opened the first women-only self-managed shelter, at Lakeview Free Methodist Church.

1994

SHARE opened a free, self-managed Storage Locker facility in the Glen Hotel.

1998

Newly-elected Mayor Schell sponsored a Housing Summit at Seattle Center in March; SHARE and WHEEL asked for and received permission to do a Shelter Summit, in tents, on Seattle Center grounds. In June, SHARE/WHEEL set up Tent City2 on Beacon Hill near Jefferson Park. The City opened the Municipal Building lobby shelter, but the SHARE/WHEEL group, arguing for a public-land encampment, moved the camp to the Jungle greenbelt near Jose Rizal Park. The City bulldozed the camp and arrested 18 people; charges were later dropped.

2000

At the end of winter, on April 1st, SHARE/WHEEL's Tent City3 began, on private land at MLK Way and S Charleston Street. The City threatened property owners with fines: Tent City3 began an exodus and made two moves before finding sanctuary at Saints Episcopal Church's parking lot. Later that spring St Mark's Episcopal Cathedral hosted Tent City3, and in July, El Centro de la Raza agreed to host the camp for six months and apply together with SHARE/WHEEL for a permit. El Centro accrued \$17,000 in fines during the permit processing period, and the permit application was denied.

2001

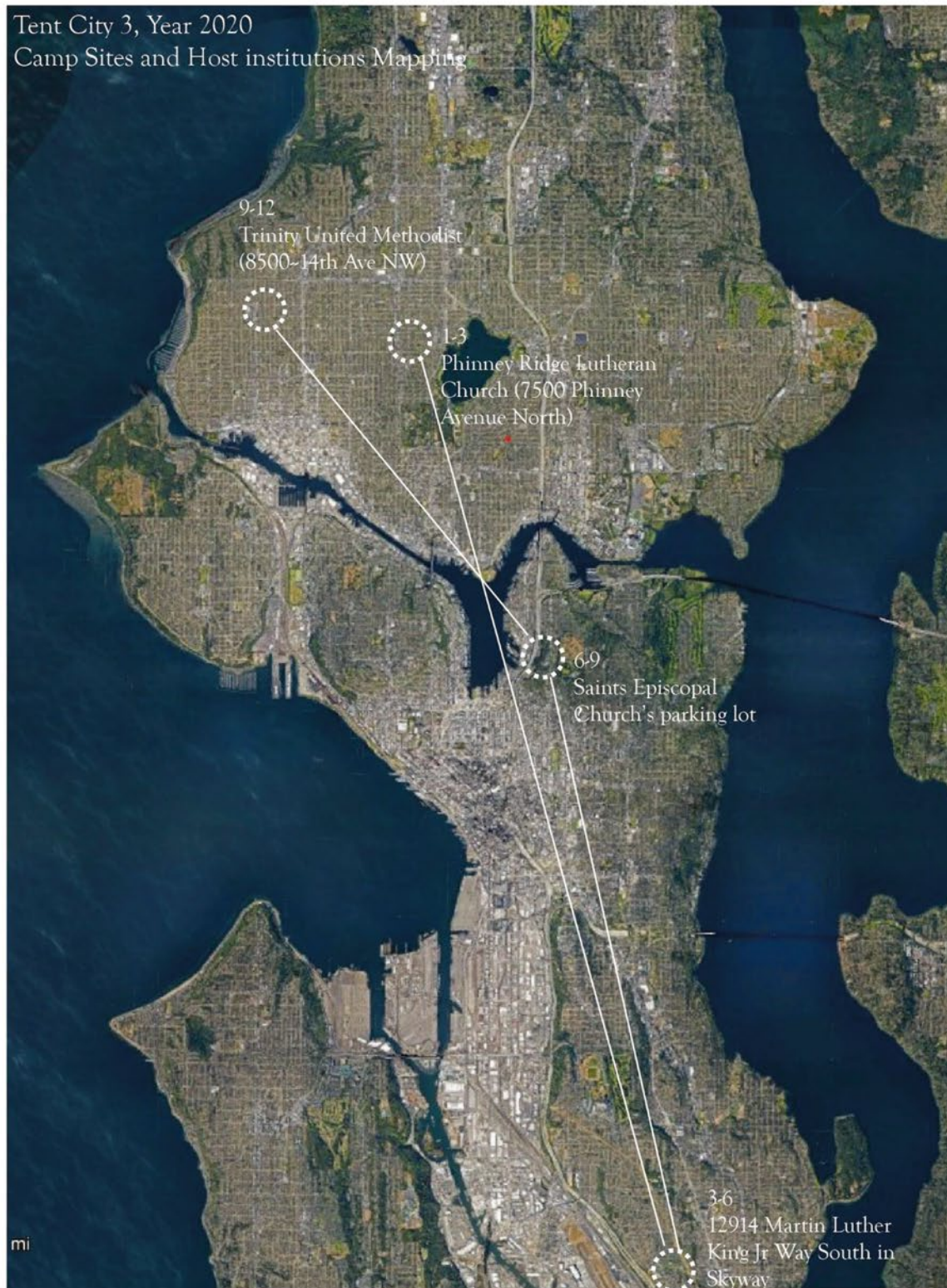
The City Hearing Examiner upheld the Tent City3 permit denial. Late in the year, King County Superior Court Judge Mahan overturned the permit denial.

2004-2010

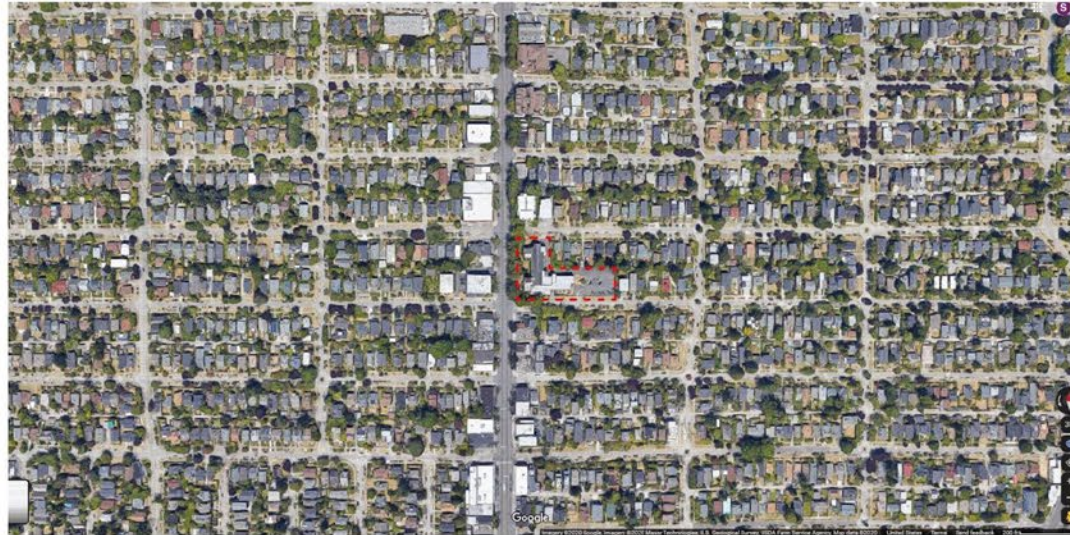
SHARE/WHEEL's Tent City4 began on the Eastside. A year-long campaign and the prospect of the complete closure of SHARE's indoor shelter network and establishment of Tent Cities 5, 6 and 7 resulted in mediation, and eventually a settlement with the City to allow SHARE to do voluntary monthly surveys of shelter participants. SHARE/WHEEL now self-manages 15 indoor shelters, three SHARE2 Housing-for Work locations, two Tent Cities, and a Storage Locker program.

**Citizens without property: Informality and political agency in a Seattle, Washington homeless encampment*
[/http://iwalk.blogspot.com/2015/08/a-living-magazine-day-70-visit-to-tent.html](http://iwalk.blogspot.com/2015/08/a-living-magazine-day-70-visit-to-tent.html)

Tent City 3, Year 2020
Camp Sites and Host institutions Mapping



January to June, 2020
Moving date: March 6th, 2020



SHARE/WHEEL's Tent City3 is moving TOMORROW (Saturday, March 7th) from Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church (7500 Phinney Avenue North)



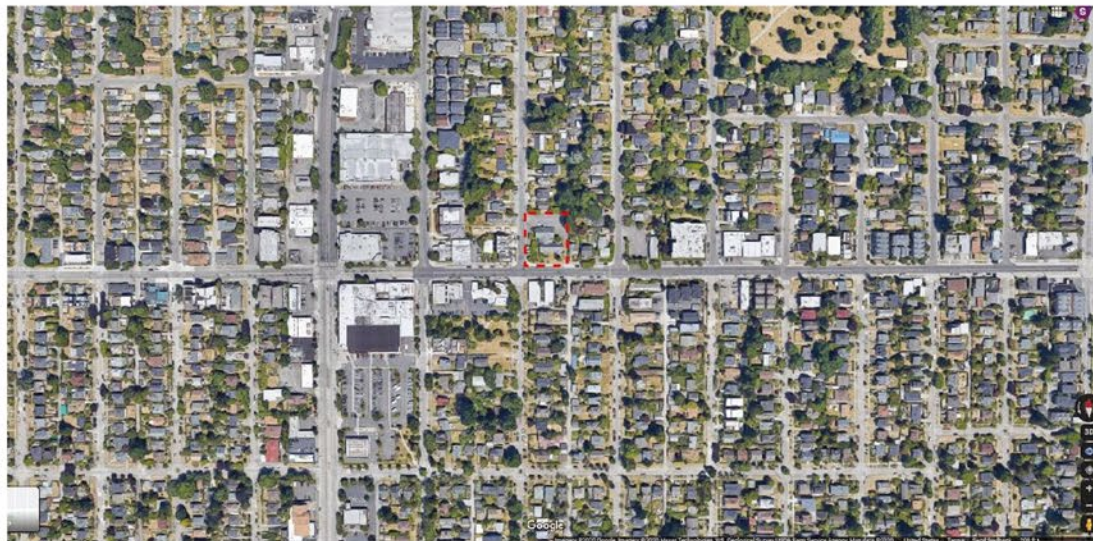
SHARE/WHEEL's Tent City3 is moving TOMORROW (Saturday, March 7th) from Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church (7500 Phinney Avenue North) to 12914 Martin Luther King Jr Way South in Skyway

June to November, 2020

Moving date: September 15th, 2020

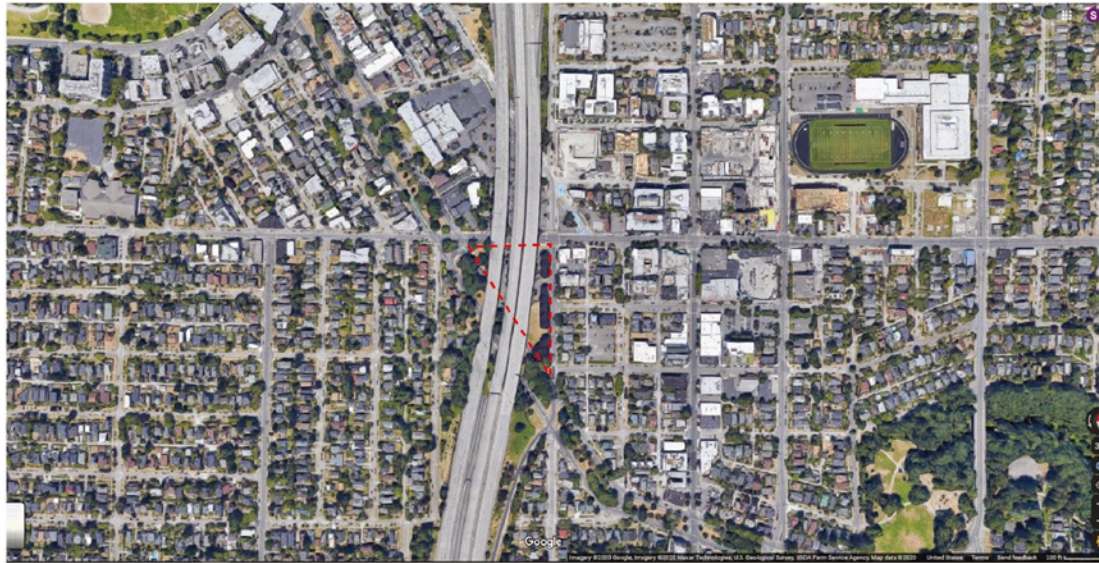


Parking lot of St. Mark's Cathedral at 10th Ave E and E Galer St. Because the camp is set up behind a hill in the parking lot, they are not visible from 10th Ave E. However, the camp has quite a view across Lake Union. "It's a million dollar view," said a Tent City resident who gave me a tour of their new digs. During a 2009 stay at St. Mark's, a photographer went onto the roof of the cathedral and took a photo of the camp that made it into Time Magazine's Year in Pictures.



Trinity United Methodist (8500~14th Ave NW)

Other Camp Site



A line of storage tents set up on the east side of the Tent City 3 encampment in Ravenna. The camp moved to the chunk of public land after leaving their previous church host without an alternative location. They will now move to a church site in Tukwila. Photo by Ashley Archibald

Seattle's oldest self-managed tent encampment will move to a church in Tukwila on Sept. 7 after a brief stint on public property in the Ravenna neighborhood. Tent City 3, which currently houses approximately 50 people, moves every three months to a new site, but negotiations with a church property fell through over an insurance issue, said Michelle Atwood, spokesperson for the camp. The confusion left the campers with no legal place to go for the first time in nearly five years. (August 28th, 2019)

<https://www.realchangenews.org/2019/08/28/after-controversial-move-tent-city-3-pulls-stakes-and-heads-tukwila#:~:text=Seattle's%20oldest%20self%2Dmanaged%20tent,property%20in%20the%20Ravenna%20neighborhood.>

Moving

Traditionally, the tent city -- which is self-managed -- **moves to a new host site every 90 days**. These sites are often property of faith-based communities, like churches. The quarterly moves ensures the tent city doesn't become too much of a burden on any one community, Atwood said. It also allows the encampment to pick up people in different areas and try to help those in need.

Picking up and moving so quickly after its previous move, though, is tiresome.

Moving day begins at **5:30 a.m.** Coffee is ready -- one cup per person -- and then residents attend an emergency camp meeting at 5:45 a.m. to go over final instructions for the move. By **6 a.m.**, people are getting to work.

"You load the trucks and you don't stop till it's done," Atwood said. "However long that takes."

On the day of the move, the camp has people specifically in charge of coordinating everything.

"We have move masters. On that day, they're the bosses of the camp," said Michelle Nobles, who stays at the tent city and has been involved with the organization for a number of years.

Things are moved down to the new site in rented trucks. Everyone is required to help. "If you don't help with the move, you don't move," Atwood said.

By 8 a.m. on move day, people are expected to have turned in their personal items and have their personal tents down.

The first things transported and set up are the common areas, such as the kitchen area and flooring pieces. Then, residents start moving personal belongings. This doesn't include blankets, which the tent city provides. Atwood said because of the constant moves, you learn how to get comfortable and be a minimalist. She said she has just a single sandwich bag of her kid's baby pictures and a FedEx envelope of important documents.

There are sometimes volunteers who come to help out during a move, Atwood said, calling it a "logistical monster." "But the bulk of the work is done by people who sleep here," she said.

The goal: to leave the site better than when they found it.

In most of the places the camp has stayed, the community surrounding it has been helpful and supportive. But residents of the encampment know how important it is to leave the site in good condition, Atwood said.

"I would say 95% of the neighbors in any given neighborhood that we go to are amazing, absolutely beautiful people," she said, adding that when the tent city first moved to Ravenna, people were asking what they needed and handing food over the fence within hours.

Q: How long does a typical Tent City camp stay at one location?

A: A Tent City camp usually stays at one location for about 90 days. A few additional days may be needed as the camp prepares to move to its next location.

Q: How many residents may reside at Tent City?

A: A Tent City camp typically does not serve more than 100 residents.

Q: Are there background checks on Tent City residents?

A: The Tent City application states that Tent City residents are required to have valid picture identification with all prospective residents checked for warrants and sex offender status by the King County Sheriff's Department. Tent City states that people with active warrants are not allowed to stay at Tent City. Tent City also reports that Police will be notified immediately of anyone rejected due to warrant status or that has registered sex offender status.

Q: What happens if an individual is rejected or required to leave Tent City because they have violated the Code of Conduct? For code of conduct click here (link to code of conduct)

A: If a resident is required to leave the camp, the person is given a bus pass and escorted to bus transportation. If bus transportation is not readily available, Tent Cities will arrange for alternative transportation such as a private vehicle or taxi service. If, in the opinion of Tent City, any rejected/ejected individual poses a potential threat to the community, the police are contacted immediately.

<http://www.sharewheel.org/tent-city-f-a-q-s>

TENT CITY | BETWEEN FORMAL AND INFORMAL



IANFCDOTAI

- +Community Protected
- +Sweeps Occur Under the "Care Act"
- +Sanctioned Area

+ECHO PARK RISE UP: Built Showers/Pay People \$10/hr To Pick Up Trash

+ "The Future Is Where The Unhoused and the Housed Cohabitate".

+ 70,000 Unhoused In LA and Growing

+ "Teaching Empathy Is The Most Important Thing For Tolerance"



Thank You