

# L.A. Curtails Demolitions, Offers Plan to Save Housing

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Six months after a public outcry over the city-ordered destruction of about 200 dilapidated homes, the controversial demolitions have been heavily curtailed by Mayor Tom Bradley and the city is promoting renovation loans and launching a \$2-million home buyer plan to save such housing.

Under the revamped policy, Deputy Mayor Ed Avila said Thursday, the city since January has demolished about a dozen badly deteriorated houses, while roughly 20 homes have been torn down by their owners under city orders.

That is a dramatic drop from the 135 homes destroyed in mostly low-income neighborhoods by this time last year under two programs: Operation Knockdown, a program intended to rid neighborhoods of "crack" dens that spring up in empty houses, and a companion effort aimed at removing unsightly "nuisance" homes.

The Times reported last January that Operation Knockdown, despite its original intent, had destroyed neglected homes that were not known crack dens, and that homeless squatters were turned onto the streets by the city in some of the demolition cases.

Moreover, some demolished homes were repairable, making Los Angeles one of the few metropolitan areas in the country that was destroying usable dwellings amid a severe housing shortage.

Michael Bodaken, housing coordinator for Bradley, said of the city's new policy: "It's going to be difficult to save all the homes because not every owner is going to cooperate, but you really have to try."

The new policies were recommended by the mayor's Save Our Housing Task Force after being proposed by City Councilman Zev Yaroslavsky and South-Central Community Development, a consortium of non-profit groups dedicated to rebuilding the neighborhoods of South-Central Los Angeles.

Under the policies, most of which already have been implemented, the city is:

- Setting aside \$2 million from the Community Redevelopment Agency to be used by nonprofit neighborhood groups that will buy homes from negligent owners, renovate them and sell them to low-income families. Three nonprofit groups—two in South-Central and one in East Los Angel-

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