

🔨 build your own! 🔨

# DIY Platform-on-Wheels



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Will Sens



# Who We Are



**hello!** We are the **DIY Urbanism Collective**, a group of unhoused community members and UCLA urban planning students committed to resisting the criminalization and displacement of the unhoused.



← This is our advisor! **Elvis Summers** is founder of the Tiny House Project. He builds temporary homes for people transitioning to permanent housing.

You can learn more about Elvis at  
[www.thetinyhouse.org](http://www.thetinyhouse.org).

Unhoused communities innovate creative DIY solutions to the challenges of living outside, subverting the ways that the City polices houselessness. **By building such a DIY urbanist intervention together**, we seek to build solidarity between housed and unhoused neighbors.

# the platform-on-wheels

This zine will show you how to build a platform-on-wheels.

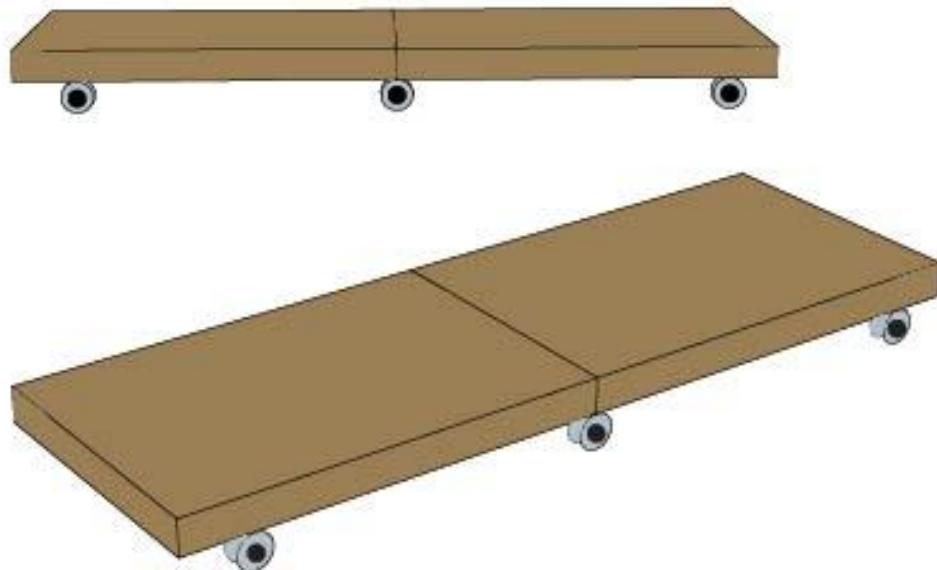
We recommend collaborating with friends to build several at once.  
Building will take several hours – make a party out of it!

★ No construction experience is necessary, though having someone who has and knows how to handle tools is very helpful.

*The platform-on-wheels is a DIY urbanist intervention.*

You can use it to:

- **lift your tent up** from cold concrete and the critters,
- **enhance mobility**, and
- **subvert 41.18 sweeps**.



**Exercise your right. You have the *right* to personal property.**

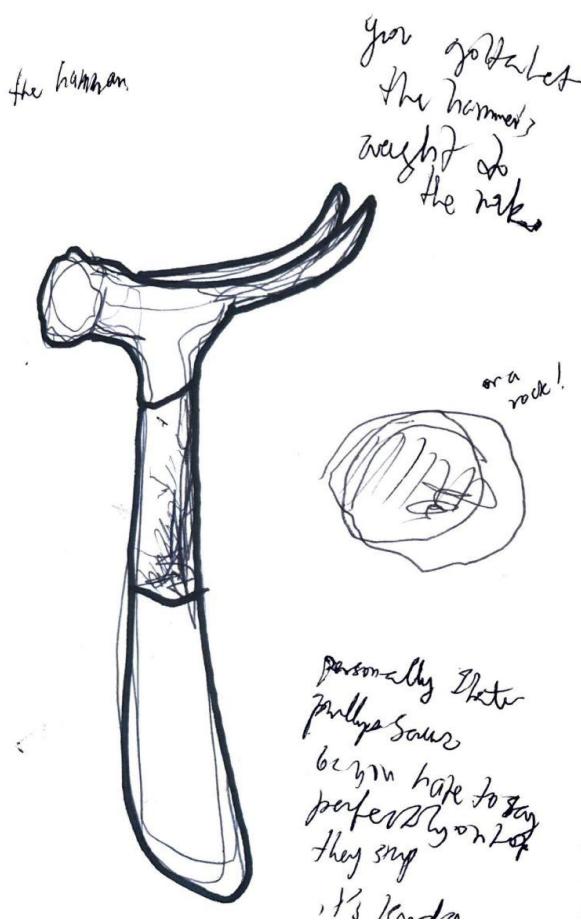
In *Garcia v. City of LA*, six unhoused plaintiffs successfully sued the city for seizing and destroying their belongings during sweeps. The City cannot legally confiscate your bulky items. Don't let them.

*Learn more at [bit.ly/garcia\\_LA](http://bit.ly/garcia_LA).*

# materials & tools

## *what you need:*

- ~ 5 wooden pallets
- 4" swiveling casters
- nails
- screws
- (optional) rope and metal screw-eye



- ★ You can easily find these wooden pallets for free as many businesses just throw them away. Ask your local auto shop, Target, chain grocery store!
- ★ Brand-new wheels can be \$\$. Consider reusing wheels from abandoned shopping carts.
- ★ Could climbing gyms donate worn rope?
- ★ Could you borrow or barter for tools? Friends? Bike co-ops? Trade schools? Woodshops? Habitat for Humanity?
- ★ Get creative! Consider donation drives, dumpster diving, Facebook Buy Nothing Groups.

## *useful tools:*

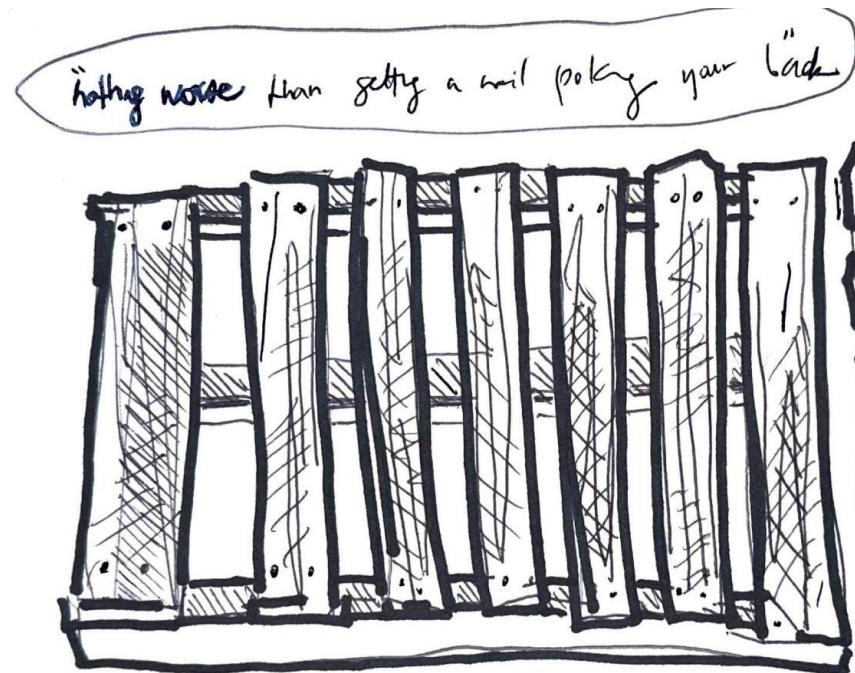
- work gloves
- hammers
  - \*a good rock would help too
- crowbars
- drill
- sliding saw (optional)
- broom

*...and get some friends to help you!*

# before you begin...

**Take stock of your supplies! Examine your pallets.**

- Which planks look rotten? Which look good?
- Which pallet has the most solid frame?
- Where are the nails? Are they rusty?



“Nothing worse than getting a nail poking your back” – Elvis Summers



**SAFETY FIRST**

**Keep your work area organized!**

Designate specific areas for your tools and loose nails.

★ Pro tip: use wood scraps for bonfires!

# roadmap

We will remove the planks on the pallets and then re-attach them so that there are no gaps.

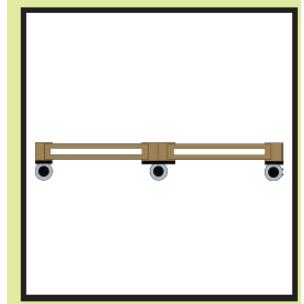
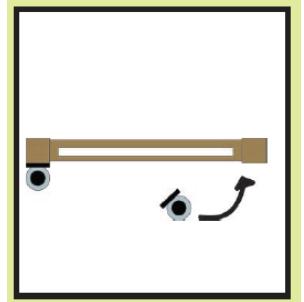
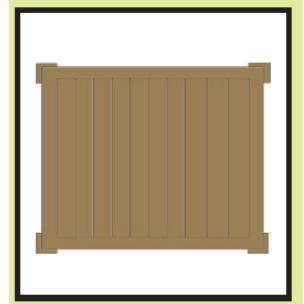
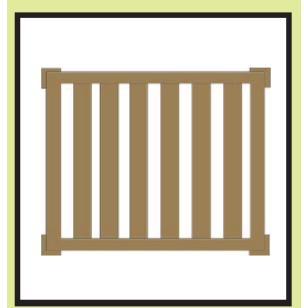
Here are all the steps:

**Step 1. Remove the planks.**

**Step 2. Align and reattach the planks.**

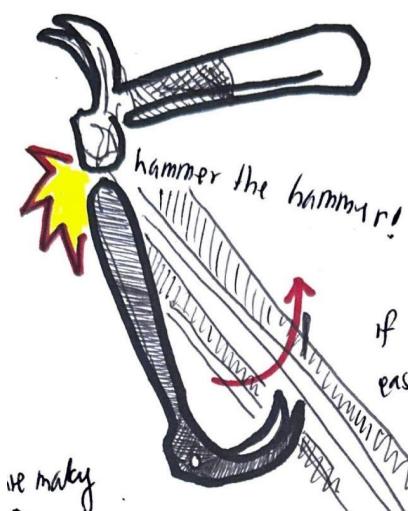
**Step 3. Attach wheels.**

**Step 4. (Optional) Attach 2 platforms.**



# how-to

## Step 1. Use *leverage* to remove the planks.



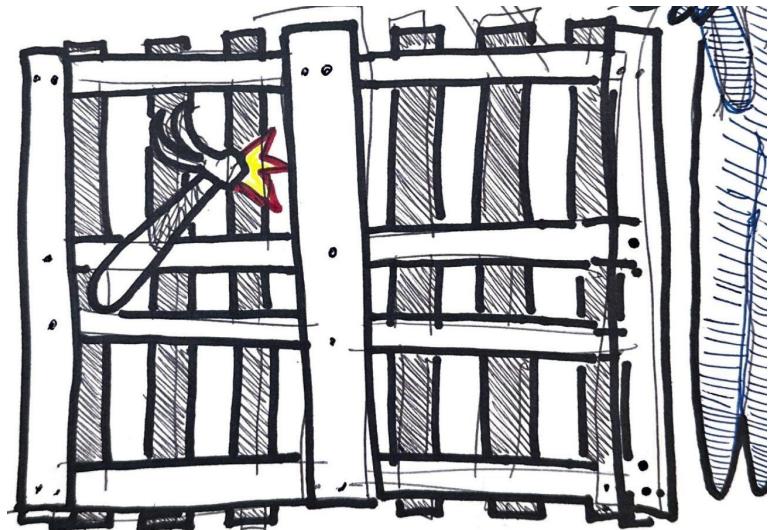
- ★ Pry the crowbar (or the pointy part of the hammer) under the plank, around the nail.
- ★ Pound the end of a crowbar or hammer with another hammer.
- ★ Tuck a piece of wood under the crowbar to increase leverage!

Once the nails are nice and loose, stand the pallet up vertically.

***Hammer from the other side.***



★ Tip: If the nails are curved, it could be easier to saw through the nail.

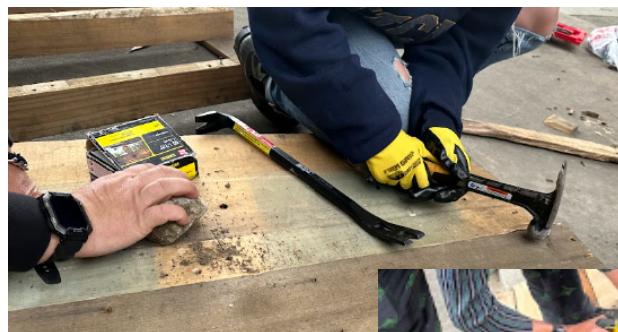
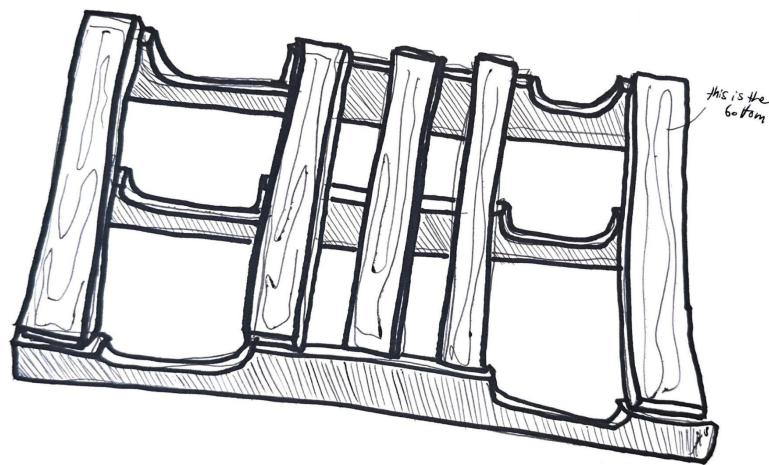
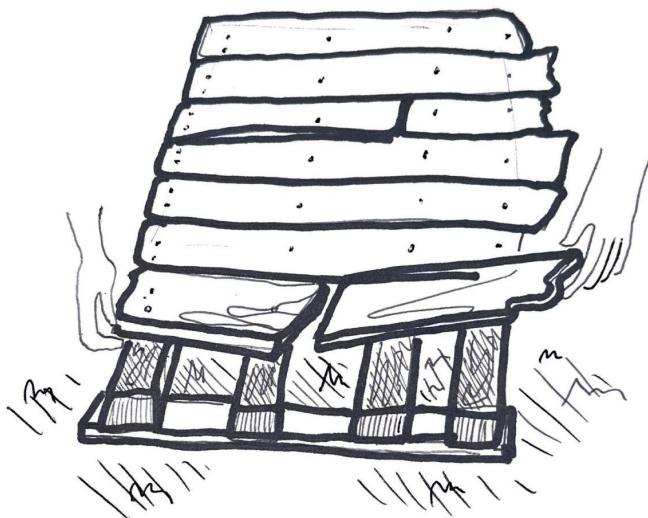


***Work smarter, not harder!***

## **Step 2. Re-attach the planks with no gaps.**

Now you have your frame:

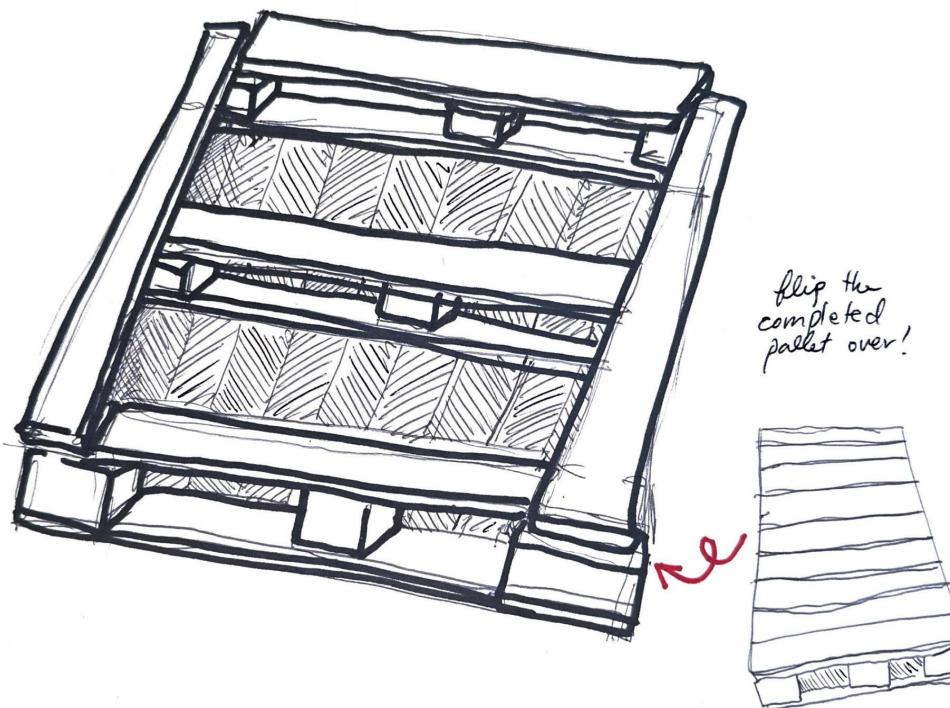
Lay the good planks on the frame. Nail them on.



Saw off the extra ends:

★ Tip: Use 2 good halves together!

Flip the finished platform bottoms-up for the next step.

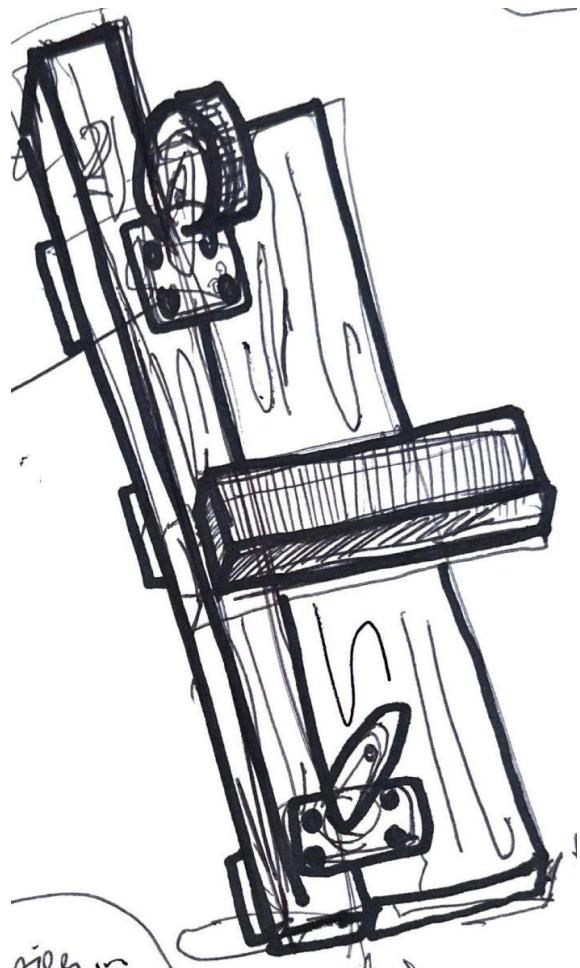


## Step 3. Attach wheels.

★ **Note:** If you want a double platform-on-wheels, **read Step 4 first!**

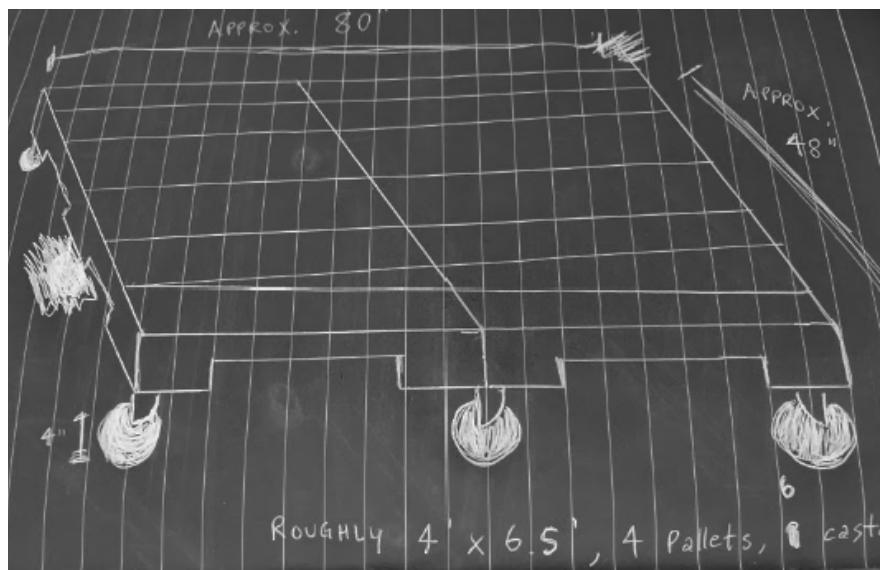
Center the wheel between two planks.

The planks should be level.



Use a drill to screw on the wheels!

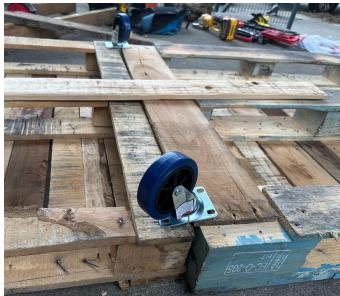
★ Pre-drill holes so that the screws won't strip or split the wood.



## **Step 4. (optional) Attach 2 platforms together.**

Repeat Steps 1 & 2 to make two platforms.

Line up the two platforms, and center a castor across the edges:



## **Modify our blueprint to fit your needs!**

★ You can make a much easier version of the platform-on-wheels by **gluing styrofoam** on a pallet – skipping the labor of removing & reattaching planks.



★ You can **add “walls”** to keep your stuff contained:



★ If you want to get fancy, you could **attach hinges** so the platforms fold on top of each other.

★ A simpler idea is to **attach hooks and rope**. This will make it easier to move your stuff.

*Could you tie several platforms-on-wheels to block a sweep?*

# Learning from the process...

The DIY Urbanism Collective hosted a demo build of these platforms-on-wheels for the unhoused community on Aetna.

Folks would stop by and spontaneously join our work party. We built with people with decades of construction knowledge, making new friends throughout the day.

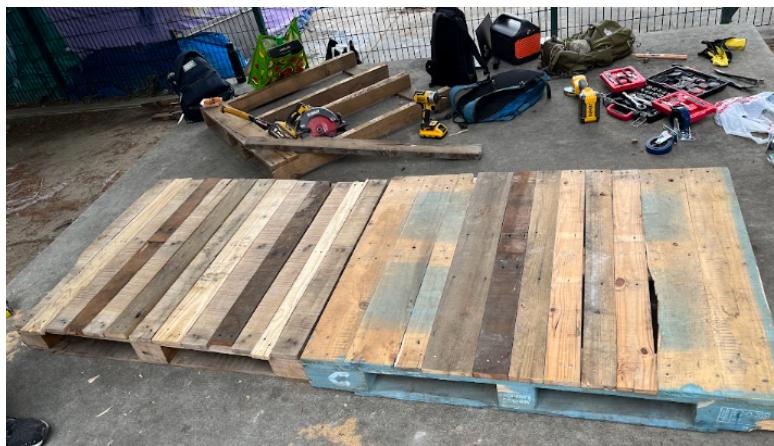


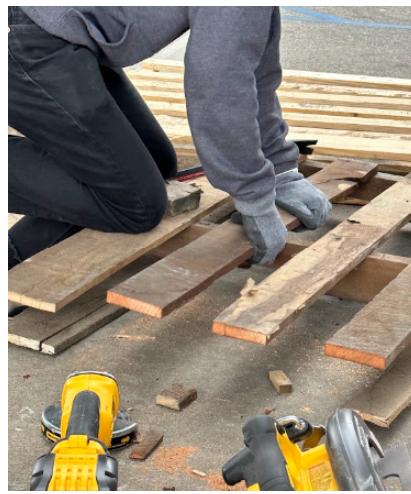
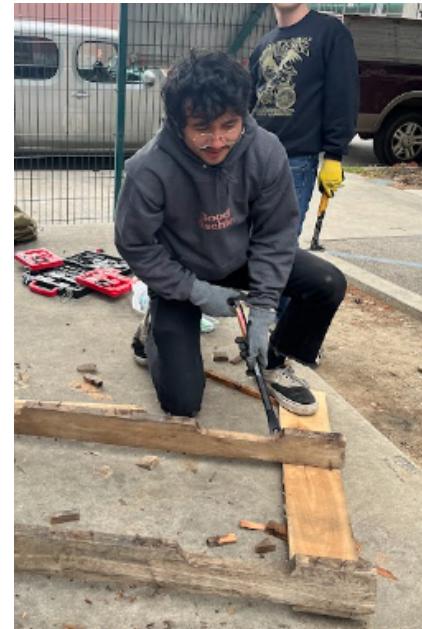
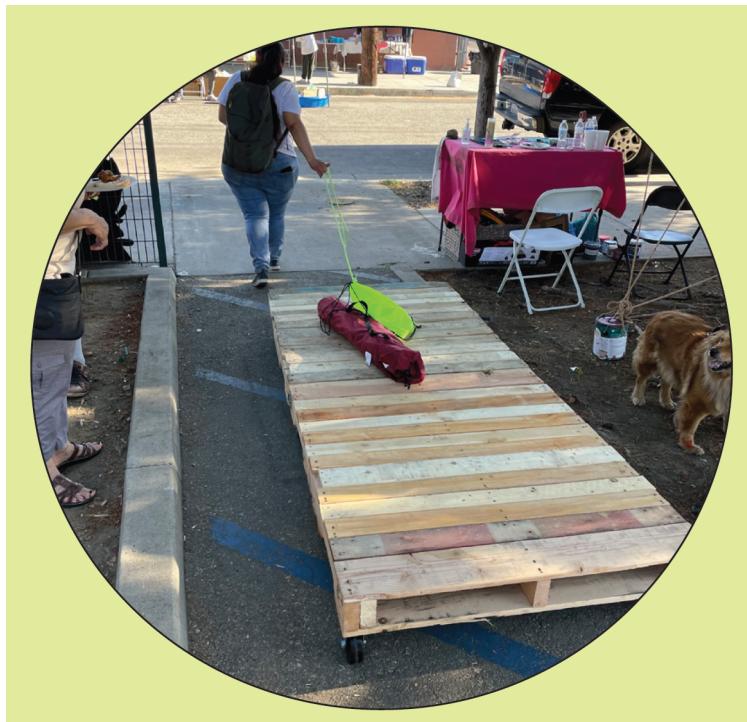
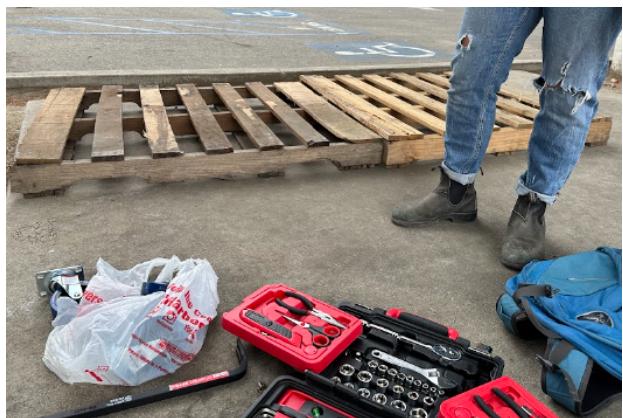
We made four platforms-on-wheels.  
**All were immediately claimed by friends who needed them.**



## **Testimonials:**

*Gelly and Patrick say their platforms-on-wheels are working out great!*





# *DIY urbanism is a form of* **RESISTANCE.**



Our unhoused friends invent creative solutions to the challenges of living outside.

**But when the state co-opts their ideas without their input, the solutions become carceral.**

– For e.g., see tiny homes ([bit.ly/bad\\_tinyhomes](https://bit.ly/bad_tinyhomes)) and Project Roomkey ([bit.ly/project\\_nokey](https://bit.ly/project_nokey)).

## We are in solidarity with other DIY urbanist interventions that save lives.

We spoke to the **Crosswalk Collective**, a volunteer group that paints crosswalks at dangerous intersections.

After a community member died on Aetna at an unmarked intersection, the Crosswalk Collective came to paint a fresh, up-to-code crosswalk to alert vehicles.

**Yet the very next day, LADOT erased the DIY crosswalk.**

Crosswalk Collective reports that 30-40% of their DIY crosswalks are painted over by the city.



**Why?** It's such a simple concept, for people who need something – a crosswalk, a platform-on-wheels, a home – to build it themselves. The city should be *glad* that we are using our private funds to do their job for them.

We don't know why the city always gets in the way. But as long as our friends are dying on these streets, we cannot help but do something about it ourselves.

We can do it better. Hosting a work party to build platforms-on-wheels – or any other DIY urbanism intervention – can be a great way to build community solidarity between housed and unhoused neighbors.

***We hope this zine will be of use to you!***

# *Acknowledgments*

- ❖ Many thanks to the 2023 UCLA Spatial Justice Community Collaborative, for bringing together folks who were never meant to be in the same room.
  - Learn about our sister projects at [www.Beyond4118.com](http://www.Beyond4118.com).
- ❖ To Professor Ananya Roy, Carla, and Rasheed, thank you for teaching us how to plan in community and solidarity.
- ❖ Thank you to our advisor Elvis Summers, for teaching us how to build, and for inspiring us by example.

## *And some further food for thought...*

These are the theories and texts that have inspired us.

### DIY Urbanism

Urban interventions by regular people in absence of state action or approval

### Auto-construction

Process of designing/building to meet one's needs (again in the absence of state action or approval)

### Art of Krzysztof Wodiczko

"an emergency tool for people who have no options, and an intellectual tool, as it articulates the complex situation of the homeless."

### Jugaad urbanism

Concept from the Global South, translated to "make-do, workaround, hack, temporary solution" enacted by the urban poor

-  *Continuum of Carcerality: How Liberal Urbanism Governs Homelessness*
-  *Methodologies for Housing Justice Resource Guide*
-  *Emergency Urbanism*

