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Living in LA, I've lived in many a neighborhood in which police helicopters circle all day and they don't do anything except be loud an annoying.

You know what improved the morale and safety of my neighborhood in less than two weeks?

A new taco stand. I'm 1000% serious.

In general Street food vendors on a block means more pedestrian foot traffic round the clock, if they're open late, that's more eyes in a neighborhood. Additionally in an area with many dark empty storefronts, literally adds light and vitality to the area.

More of the neighborhood is meeting each other waiting in line for nearby tacos. I met people three houses down I didn't know. It feels like we're all only now getting to know each other, over a torta and some soda.

City planners had left the area in disrepair. The vendors literally CLEANED THE BLOCK. THEY PICKED UP TRASH THE CITY NEGLECTS.

I'm serious when I say in the area they posted up, it's markedly cleaner. This is not the work of the local waste removal services. This is taqueros.

They also posted up at a bus stop and out open until 2am. Meaning people waiting for a bud stop are not longer waiting alone in the dark. There's a noticable air of camaraderie, safety and enthusiasm.

Street vendors did more for our neighborhood than the city ever did.

So the next time you see the elote guy, thank him for his service. He's doin' a whole lot more than selling corn.