

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: Park Rangers are not glorified park docents, which is how many people view them. The Park Rangers receive the same law enforcement training and firearms training as LAPD. Plus, they often have additional training in areas like fire and rescue, search and rescue, wildland firefighting, and specialized expertise in the extensive trails and terrain of city parks. They are law enforcement officers, just like LAPD, with the same authority and they face all the same risks as LAPD. However, despite this training and their authorized status as law enforcement, they are prohibited from carrying firearms to protect themselves. This puts them in much more danger, leading many to leave the Park Rangers for other branches of law enforcement where they are allowed to protect themselves. Some of our parks have very dangerous people living in hazardous encampments. Oftentimes, Park Rangers are the first responders in areas of our parks that LAPD or LAFD cannot easily reach. But then they are forced to call LAPD for backup and wait for them to handle escalating situations instead of immediately dealing with the threat themselves. This endangers them and the public which is unreasonable, illogical and should not be the case. The Park Rangers are a small and truly dedicated force who should not be treated like mall cops by our City Council. One of our most dangerous parks is the Sepulveda Basin which is in CD4 and CD6, and it is unacceptable that the councilmember for CD4 voted against this. Thank you to Imelda Padilla from CD6 for supporting our Park Rangers and recognizing the vital role they play in keeping our parks and communities safe. I urge the City Council to immediately revisit this and authorize Park Rangers to carry firearms.