

Communication from Public

Name: Kate Blackman

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Council File No: 21-0063

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Councilmembers, We understand that a motion is before the Los Angeles City Council to request that the Department of Recreation and Parks review every park parcel deed to determine if any of these sites could be used to support the homelessness crisis. We want to bring to your attention that, the parkland within our community known as Crestwood Hills Park is not suitable for alternative housing. Crestwood Hills is a hillside community located within the highest level of fire zones. Our community bore the brunt of the Getty Fire with nearly a dozen homes burned to the ground and many more significantly damaged. If a fire were to start in the park grounds—due to, for example, misuse of a camping stove like that which started the Skirball Fire—it would devastate our community. Crestwood Hills Park is located in the valley of the canyon that lies at the very center of our neighborhood of 330 homes. A fire would spread up hill quickly allowing flames to access the main arteries of our neighborhood as well as connecting canyons like Mandeville within minutes. During the Getty Fire, hundreds of firefighters experienced the volatility of this location as they worked for nearly a week to extinguish the flames and hot spots. Battalion Chief Mark Curry described those flames as some of the most dramatic and aggressive he had witnessed in his career. We had the luxury of almost an hour to evacuate the night of the Getty Fire because the fire first spread through unoccupied acreage. We fear a fire igniting within our park areas would not provide the same good fortune—giving us little or no time to evacuate our community safely. In addition, the Crestwood Hills Park shares space with the Crestwood Hills Cooperative Preschool, which is located next door and has served our community since 1953. The Preschool rents the Park's recreation center Monday-Friday hosting classes for more than 100 children and their families. This school provides an essential lifeline to members of our community during this pandemic. For these reasons, we respectfully request that the City Council look for alternative means to support the unhoused members of LA County. Sincerely, Kate Blackman President, Crestwood Hills Association