

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 04/20/2021 09:30 AM

Council File No: 21-0350

Comments for Public Posting: It would be a real travesty for local beachgoers to be inundated with homeless housing units each weekend. It would be an even larger catastrophe for the amount of tourism that LA city public beaches bring to the city. These items, in addition to housing homeless at the beach where it is cold, unsheltered, windy, and unsafe being next to one of the largest highways in the state, strike me as obvious and substantial reasons as to why this is not a feasible and realistic strategy despite the good intentions. The city is not committing largely enough to this effort. This is an ill thought-out band-aid over the homelessness issue which has grown immensely due to Covid. In 2019 there were about 60,000 on the streets of LA. Now there are more than 70,000+. That is more than half the entire homeless population for the entire country. We could fill Dodger Stadium every single night with the amount of homeless individuals that call LA their home. Let's make it a equitable home for those individuals. We need public and private support of scale to make any dent in this problem. Not individual closets in the parking lots at the most beautiful and historic beaches in all of California.

Communication from Public

Name: Sara W.
Date Submitted: 04/20/2021 01:27 PM
Council File No: 21-0350
Comments for Public Posting: I oppose Mr. Bonin's motion for the reasons stated in the attached document.

Name: Sara W.
Date Submitted: 04/20/2021
Council File No: 21-0350

Dear Councilmembers:

As a resident of Mar Vista, I urge you to reject Mr. Bonin's ill-conceived and unsustainable proposal to install official encampments at Mar Vista Park and other neighborhood parks and public beaches. The proposal doesn't solve the City's complex homelessness situation because it does not provide housing for unsheltered individuals. On the other hand, it would create new public safety, health and sanitation, and environmental issues for Mar Vista and the other affected communities. The proposal would also diminish the quality of life for the many Angelenos who rely on public parks and beaches for recreational and other services.

Mar Vista Park is not an appropriate location in which to create a large encampment. The park is a bustling gem that provides recreation and an assortment of services to the community and residents from other LA neighborhoods. It hosts youth sports leagues, youth camps and after-care programs, a preschool program, and adult classes and activities. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the park has become an even more popular refuge, including for the multitude of neighbors and families who live in nearby apartments and lack their own private outdoor spaces. It simply does not make sense, and is bad public policy, to take away scarce public resources like this heavily-used park to build a large encampment. While it's reasonable for CD11 to share in the responsibility of housing individuals experiencing homelessness, less-frequented sites and under-utilized or vacant properties should be identified instead.

Installing a large homeless encampment at Mar Vista Park would also create public safety, health and sanitation, and environmental problems at the park and in the adjacent neighborhoods. For reference, Mar Vista Park is located directly behind people's homes. It is across the street from a middle school (which has used the park for athletics), and two blocks away from an elementary school. There is already a mid-sized, informal encampment in the northeast corner of the park, which is filled with trash, debris, and bulky items. We regularly see residents of the encampment using personal grills and cooking with open flames (instead of the City-designated grills at the south side of the park), which is a fire danger both to the people living in the encampment and to those who reside in the houses immediately adjacent. Neighbors have also reported finding needles, condoms, and human waste in the park. Installing an even bigger encampment here would only exacerbate these issues – and would threaten to bring incidents of violence, as has happened at and near other large encampments in Venice, Brentwood, and Echo Park. This would be unsustainable, even in the short term.

Importantly, the goal of any initiative to alleviate homelessness should be to provide unhoused individuals with housing and support services. Such initiatives require a lot of thought and planning, as well as staffing and resources. Councilmember Rodriguez's recent Paxton-Bradley Pilot Project is a great example of a successful public-private initiative that compassionately and respectfully helped unsheltered individuals move from encampments into housing units.

Councilmember De Leon's 25K by 2025 proposal, which aims to create housing options on a large scale within four years, is also promising. Notably, Ms. Rodriguez's and Mr. De Leon's initiatives aim to move people out of encampments, and into housing. Mr. Bonin's proposal does not do that. It would keep people unsheltered, simply re-shuffling them from one encampment to another. And it is not accompanied by a plan to help move people into housing. The proposal is therefore not a viable solution to the City's homelessness issues.

Finally, to go forward with Mr. Bonin's proposal would be undemocratic, because it is overwhelmingly opposed by his constituents. The proposal disregards input from neighborhood councils, individual residents, and other neighborhood-based groups. Indeed, nearly 1,100 pages of written public comments have been submitted to date in response to this motion, almost all of which strongly oppose this unsustainable proposal. I hope that this Committee will consider and listen to the strong and plentiful opposition from Mr. Bonin's constituents.

I respectfully urge the Committee to remove Mar Vista Park and other parks and beaches from the list of sites for Mr. Bonin's proposal, and to find more sustainable alternatives to the homelessness situation that would not have such adverse impacts on local communities and members of the public. Please do not support this ill-advised and unfeasible motion.