



May 25, 2022

Councilmember Joe Buscaino

VIA EMAIL

[councilmember.buscaino@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.buscaino@lacity.org)

RE: Council File Nos. 22-0496, VTT-82288; ENV-2018-6667-SE; CPC-2018-7344-GPAJ-VZCJ-HD-SP-SPP-CDP-MEL-SPR-PHP; Related Council File Nos. 21-0829 and 21-0829-S1

Dear Councilman Buscaino,

I am writing regarding the above-referenced Council Files, which relate to the development formerly known as the Reese Davidson Project, now called the "Venice Median" or "Venice Dell" Project (after the living family members of Arthur Reese and Gregory Hines have demanded their family names be removed from it). This project is scheduled to come before you in the Homelessness & Poverty Committee **tomorrow** (Agenda Item #2).

Councilmember Bonin is asking you to prematurely authorize the Housing Department General Manager to sign the City into an irrevocable Disposition and Development Agreement (DDA) with the private real estate developers to turn control of about 40 taxpayer-owned lots/parcels at Venice Beach, with an estimated fair market value of \$60 million, so they can evict four low-income families and start demolition of the public parking lot to make this project a fait accompli before the entitlements even have been obtained.

Including the fair market value of the City's land, cost of LADOT parking garage (\$25 million), and cost of west parking garage (\$3 million), the total price tag per door comes in at a whopping \$1.24M per 460 square foot unit). This is an egregious waste of taxpayer dollars, and overall, the proposed mixed-use development does little or nothing to address either the homelessness or affordability crisis in our City or the Westside of LA.

Further, this project is opposed by the vast majority of Venice residents, and has repeatedly been voted down by the Venice Land Use and Planning Committee and the Venice Neighborhood Council. Due to repeated procedural flaws, it has now made its way back and forth between PLUM and the City Council. This project will forever change the character of the historic Venice Canal community. Six of the eight candidates running for the CD-11 seat openly oppose this project, which is also the subject of an ongoing lawsuit alleging serious legal and environmental issues. I am thus writing to ask that you please defer any further action on this project until after our new Councilmember takes office in January 2023 and all outstanding community concerns have been addressed.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink that reads "Traci Park". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Traci" and last name "Park" clearly distinguishable.

Committee to elect Traci Park for City Council 2022

2554 Lincoln Blvd. #158, Venice, CA 90291 email: [info@tracipark.com](mailto:info@tracipark.com)

Additional Information is available at [ethics.lacity.org](http://ethics.lacity.org)



P.O. Box 1185  
Venice, CA 90294  
SafeCoastalDevelopment@gmail.com

May 24, 2022

**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Hon. Nury Martinez, President  
Los Angeles City Council  
c/o City Clerk  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
([holly.wolcott@lacity.org](mailto:holly.wolcott@lacity.org))

Hon. Kevin de Leon, Chair  
Homelessness & Poverty Comm.  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
([luigi.verano@lacity.org](mailto:luigi.verano@lacity.org))

(Clerk.HomelessnessandPovertyCommittee@lacity.org)

**Re: Councilmember Mike Bonin's Effort To Lock This City Council Into An Irrevocable Commitment to Reese Davidson Project at Homelessness and Poverty Committee Meeting on May 26, 2022, Item No. 2, Council File No. 22-0496, VTT-82288; ENV-2018-6667-SE; CPC-2018-7344-GPAJ-VZCJ-HD-SP-SPP-CDP-MEL-SPR-PHP; Related Council File Nos. 21-0829 and 21-0829-S1.**

Dear President Martinez, Chair de Leon and City Clerk:

This letter is a **BRIEF AND URGENT ALERT** to members of the City Council that Councilmember Mike Bonin is asking his colleagues to prematurely and inadvisably authorize the Housing Department General Manager to sign the City into an irrevocable Disposition and Development Agreement (DDA) with the private real estate developers of the ill-conceived Reese Davidson (Pacific Dell or Venice Median) Project in Venice. This will turn control of about 40 taxpayer-owned lots/parcels at Venice Beach, with an estimated fair market value of \$60 million, over to the developers so they can evict 4 low-income families and start demolition of the public parking lot to make this project a *fait accompli* before the Project entitlements have been obtained. **City Council must reject this scheme.**

Mr. Bonin asks his City Council colleagues to join this DDA approval even though he has failed to complete the land use entitlement process before the City Council. (See Housing Staff Report for CF 22-0496 at page 3 where City staff admit the process is

not done.) Additionally, the entitlement process before the California Coastal Commission, or before federal/state agencies is not complete. Id. The Housing Staff report contains misleading and unrealistic timetables for the review, possible modification, and conditional approval of the Project related to the California Coastal Commission. Additionally, the Housing Staff report fails to disclose to this Council and the public that Army Corp of Engineers/Coast Guard has review and approve the Project – and no application appears to be on file with the Corps based upon my client’s recent inquiries.

Is this City Council ready to put the cart before the horse as Mr. Bonin asks?


Six out of eight candidates seeking to replace Mr. Bonin on this legislative body and some candidates for Mayor have gone on record declaring this Project is a waste of taxpayer monies and ill-advised City policy. **Most of the candidates for both Mayor and CD 11 have declared they would halt this ever-spiraling costly Project** and pursue reasonable alternatives to house homeless individuals. Taxpayers and voters in approving Measure HHH in no way contemplated spending more than \$620,497 up to \$1.24 million per unit to remove each homeless individual from our streets. **The humanitarian crisis of homelessness does not justify the City Council following Mr. Bonin’s lead to throw out all prudent procedures and processes that protect taxpayer funds from needless waste by signing a binding DDA at this time.**

Given Mr. Bonin’s lame duck status on this City Council, red alarm bells ought to be ringing in the ears of every Councilmember. The City Clerk referred to the Homelessness and Poverty Committee last week a proposed motion to **authorize the General Manager of the Housing Department to sign and enter the City into a Disposition and Development Agreement with the real estate developers.** This is a raw power move by Mr. Bonin to prevent current candidates from replacing his flawed policy vision with a more reasonable one.

Unlike many smaller and more sensitively placed affordable housing projects that other Council members have supported in their own districts, the Reese Davidson Project, by its own pro forma in Council File No. 22-0496 now stands with an estimated cost per unit of \$620,497. **But this is not the actual cost to taxpayers and this City.** In addition to the nearly \$100 million development cost is the value of taxpayer-owned land Mr. Bonin asks this City Council to this week dedicate for the next 99 years to this Project and the taxpayer costs of the replacement parking garage on the east side of Grand Canal and the residential/commercial parking garage on the west side of Grand Canal:

<b>Reese Davidson/Venice Median Affordable Housing Project Current Cost Estimates Per Unit</b>	
Per the developer's pro forma in Council File No. 22-0496	\$620,497 per unit
Including FMV of City Land (\$60 million), undisclosed cost of LADOT parking garage (\$25 million), and cost of west parking garage (\$3 million)	\$1.24 million per unit

Based upon true market value of lot sales nearby, the actual value of the land Mr. Bonin asks this Council to immediately sign away is conservatively \$60 million. This \$60 million estimate is based upon recent sales of lots nearby for much more. For instance, in December 2021, a lot on Linnie Canal nearby sold for \$1,750,000 which pencils out to about \$70 million. (40 lots X \$1,750,000 = \$70 million.) Even more recently, three lots sold for \$6.4 million for an average lot cost of \$2.13 million. That would yield an approximate fair market value of the 40 Project lots of \$85.2 million. Thus, our \$60 million assumption is very conservative.



**\$1,750,000**  
Sold Price

0 Beds      0 Baths      0 Sq. Ft.

0 Linnie Canal  
Los Angeles, CA 90291

**Recently Sold**  
This home last sold for \$1,750,000 on December 20, 2021.

When that market value land cost of \$60 million, the municipally budgeted cost of the LADOT replacement parking garage disclosed in the staff report (\$25 million), and the cost of the west residential/commercial parking garage (\$3 million) is factored into the Project pro forma, the total cost of public contributions to build these particular units rises to \$1.24 million per 460 square foot unit. Mr. Bonin will not be around to try to justify such an outrageous unit cost, **but members of this Council will be when they face re-election.**

**The Homelessness and Poverty Committee, and indeed, all City Councilmembers must ask questions and take public testimony to understand the concerns about this Project.** A recent conversation between a community resident in Venice and a Councilmember revealed he was unaware of basic aspects of this Project and its costs – and when he became aware, he had important questions about this taxpayer expenditure. That concern ought to be shared by all City Council members as Mr. Bonin seeks to impose on this City Council a boondoggle and land grab that they will need to explain to taxpayers and implement in his absence.

We object to the Project. Moreover, we hereby adopt all project objections, comments, and all evidence/studies submitted in support of project objections, and specifically requests that the City print out or attach to the Council file every hyperlinked document cited in all comment letters in the administrative record for this Project. Additionally, please confirm that the City Clerk has placed an accurate and complete copy of all of our correspondence, including this letter, in each of the following City Council Files: Council File Nos. 22-0496, 21-0829, and 21-0829-S1. We request an email confirmation that the City Clerk has placed our correspondence into these City Council files.

Sincerely,

Coalition for Safe Coastal Development