

## Motion re CF 21-0350 (oppose use of beaches and parks for homeless shelters)

In reference to Council File 21-0350, Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC) strongly opposes the use of our beaches, parks and any open space dedicated for public recreational use in the City and/or County of Los Angeles, as well as facilities attendant to such spaces, to shelter or house homeless individuals (*i.e.*, for “tiny homes” or “safe camping”), as proposed in the motion by Councilmember Bonin (Motion), including without limitation at the following locations specified in the Motion:

- the County-owned parking lot at Will Rogers State Beach, 17000-CA 1 in Pacific Palisades;
- the County-owned parking lot #3 at Dockweiler Beach, 11999 Vista del Mar in Playa del Rey;
- any portion of Westchester Park and/or Mar Vista Park, unless otherwise approved by clear public consensus.

The Pacific Palisades community has overwhelmingly expressed the opinion that our beaches and parks are a public trust that must be protected and preserved and that the uses proposed in the Motion would violate that trust. The Los Angeles City Council should reject these proposed uses for many compelling reasons, including without limitation the following:

### 1. Coastal Act/Public Access:

- a) Will Rogers State Beach and Dockweiler State Beach are important **California public resources** that are protected by the California Coastal Act (Public Resources Code § 30000, *et seq.*). Thousands of people, including families and children from *throughout the region*, regularly visit these beaches and use the adjacent parking lots (operated by LA County Beaches & Harbors) in order to access the beach. The use of these beach parking lots as proposed in the Motion will require the permission of the Coastal Commission as well as County Beaches & Harbors.
- b) PRC §§ 30210 and 30211 provide for **maximum public access** to the coast; consistent with this mandate, the Coastal Commission has a record of requiring and protecting parking that is adjacent to beaches. Our beaches and adjacent parking lots are crowded to capacity during weekends and on hot days, in particular since pandemic restrictions have been lifted; access to the beach would therefore be severely restricted should portions of these lots be removed from use for public parking. Given these conditions, it is likely that the Coastal Commission will not permit the use of the parking lots for the proposed purposes.
- c) The County relies on **revenues from beach parking fees** in order to maintain the parking lots as well as life guard facilities and overall beach maintenance. Revenues would be reduced substantially should the parking lots be used instead to shelter the homeless, resulting in reduced capacity to maintain the beach and existing facilities and even potential closure of beaches to the public.

### 2. Homeless Safety/Accessibility:

- a) Homeless individuals require **access to transit to fulfill basic needs** (groceries, medical appointments, mental health or addiction treatments and the like). Will Rogers State Beach in

particular is isolated, is not within easy walking distance of grocery stores or other amenities, and is **without access to transit options**.

- b) Depending on the location of the proposed sites within the Will Rogers State Beach parking lot, there is a real risk of homeless persons **dangerously jaywalking across 6 lanes of traffic on PCH** in order to access either the Von's store (on the far north of the parking lot) or the liquor store (on the south end). Individuals jaywalking across PCH in the Pacific Palisades area have been killed in the past, including as recently as February 2021.
- c) **Sanitary facilities** at Will Rogers State Beach are virtually non-existent. There is no assurance that basic cleanliness/hygiene needs will be met with proper facilities that will actually be maintained on a regular basis. Constituents rightly express concerns about resulting conditions and impacts on beachgoers and the environment as well as the homeless.

### 3). Beachgoer/Park Users and Resident Safety

- a) The single greatest concern for Palisades constituents is the **risk of fires** from homeless activities. We are all aware of public reports of scores of encampment fires in recent months, leading in some cases to major fires at neighboring buildings. Pacific Palisades has experienced substantial wildfires in our bluffs, canyon and mountain areas. Homeless activities have been the cause of several serious brush fires. We believe that sanctioning camping on the beaches will only lead to more homeless people moving to our nearby brush & canyon areas with the attendant risk of fires. **Putting residents at risk of these extremely hazardous conditions is completely unacceptable.**
- b) As noted above, families and children from throughout the region visit our public beaches; our parks are also primarily used by community members, families and children. During the summer, many children are enrolled in summer camps in parks and on our beaches. Our constituents have expressed deep concern over **safety and adverse impacts on children**, given our experience with mentally ill and addicted homeless individuals who often act erratically and/or in a threatening or even obscene manner.
- c) Constituents' fears are exacerbated by recent **homicides** involving homeless individuals in Brentwood (where a homeless person was killed after being run over by a car in a homeless encampment) and in Beverly Grove (where a resident was reportedly stabbed to death in his own yard by a homeless person).
- d) Constituents are also well aware of the unacceptable encampment conditions in **Venice beach**, in **Brentwood** and in **Echo Park**, which they understandably do not want repeated in our beach or park areas. In fact, the Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness (PPTFH) – an effective community volunteer organization – was formed several years ago to address the problem of tent encampments then mushrooming in our beach areas. We do not want to see the good **work of PPTFH** – and the community's generosity in funding that work with donations – undermined with the return of encampments (albeit officially-sanctioned) on or near our beaches.

### 4). Lack of Support/Enforcement

- a) Currently, Pacific Palisades is assigned two LAPD officers who work as our “**beach detail**” in addressing issues with the homeless who currently occupy our beach and bluff areas. We are extremely grateful for their dedicated service which has protected us time and again from fires and other criminal activities.
- b) Unfortunately, with the major cuts in police funding we have not received any assurances that our beach detail – who are already overwhelmed with their duties -- will be retained in the future.
- c) We can reasonably expect, given our experience, that resources necessary for **enforcement will be insufficient** should encampments be placed in our beach parking lots.
- d) We do not trust that necessary **mental health, medical, and addiction services** will actually be provided or available to homeless individuals encamped on Will Rogers State Beach.
- e) We also do not trust that “**temporary**” will actually mean temporary. In our experience, when facilities are proposed and installed as “temporary,” they remain in place for years and the nomenclature is meaningless.

**5. No Emergency:**

- a) There is **no immediate emergency** that might otherwise justify the use of protected public spaces such as our beaches and parks for this purpose.
- b) Our constituents have noted that there are many **other properties more suitable** for housing the homeless, such as empty warehouses, large lots adjacent to shopping centers or in industrial areas that are not near residences and would not adversely impact the public.

We further urge the Mayor of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles City Council to initiate immediate measures to facilitate **full transparency and accountability** to the public with regard to the City’s provision of housing, services and care to the homeless, including without limitation 1) a report on all activities undertaken and funds allocated by the City for the care and housing of homeless individuals in the last five years, with sufficient opportunity for public review and comment; 2) a study and report on best practices utilized by other jurisdictions nationwide for the care and housing of homeless individuals, with sufficient opportunity for public review and comment; and 3) implementation of all such successful best practices in the City of Los Angeles, as approved by clear public consensus, without further delay.

PPCC takes no position on other proposed uses and locations specific in the Motion, except that we note that a full review by the Coastal Commission and compliance with the Coastal Act is required for all proposed uses located within the Coastal Zone.

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Unanimous approval by informal straw poll taken of PPCC Board 4/8/21

Formal PPCC Board vote expected to be taken 4/22/21

*If the Motion in CF 21-0350 is set for hearing prior to the time that a formal PPCC Board vote can be taken, the Executive Committee may submit PPCC’s position as set forth above to relevant authorities (Bylaws Art.V.3(B)).*