



PACIFIC PALISADES COMMUNITY COUNCIL

May 11, 2021

Hon. Eric Garcetti, Mayor, City of Los Angeles
Hon. Nury Martinez, President, Los Angeles City Council
Hon. Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chair, City Council Homelessness & Poverty Committee (HPC)
Hon. Kevin de León, Hon. Joe Buscaino, Hon. Monica Rodriguez & Hon. Nithya Raman, Members, HPC
Hon. Mike Bonin, Councilmember, CD 11

Via email to each addressee and submission to the Council File public comment portal

Re: CF 21-0350 – OPPOSE use of public state beaches, beach parking lots and parks for homeless housing

Dear Mayor Garcetti, Council President Martinez, HPC Chair Ridley-Thomas, HPC Members de León, Buscaino, Rodriguez and Raman, and Councilmember Bonin:

Citizens of Los Angeles, from Pacific Palisades and beyond, have expressed strong opposition to the use of public state beaches, beach parking lots and parks for homeless housing. This letter will supplement the Position Statement of Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC), submitted in the above-referenced Council File on April 23, 2021,¹ with additional compelling information and support for our position.

1. Pacific Palisades Is Overwhelmingly Opposed.

Respected Palisades organizations, entities and individuals strongly oppose the use of public beaches, beach parking lots and parks for homeless housing. *The level of community opposition is unprecedented in our experience.*

- Representatives of all nine **PPCC member organizations** unanimously voted to adopt the PPCC Position Statement, opposing the use of public state beaches, beach parking lots and parks, including the Will Rogers State Beach (WRSB) and Dockweiler Beach (Dockweiler) parking lots, for homeless housing:²

Corpus Christi School
Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce*
Pacific Palisades Civic League*
Pacific Palisades Historical Society
Pacific Palisades Residents Association*
Pacific Palisades Rotary Club*
Palisades Beautiful*
Palisades-Malibu YMCA
Temescal Canyon Association*

- All four **PPCC officers** (the undersigned) and all nine elected **PPCC Area & At-large Representatives**, representing *thousands of Palisades residents*, voted unanimously to adopt the PPCC Position Statement:

Joanna Spak, Area 1 (Castellammare, Paseo Miramar)
Steve Cron, Area 2 (Palisades Highlands)
Haldis Toppel, Area 3 (Marquez Knolls & lower Marquez)

¹ PPCC Position Statement: <http://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Letter-re-CF-21-0350-beach-parks-homeless-housing.pdf>.

² * Indicates that in addition to its PPCC representative's vote, the organization independently opposes using public state beaches, beach parking lots and parks for homeless housing.

Karen Ridgley, Area 4 (El Medio, above & below Sunset)
Sue Kohl, Area 5 (Alphabet Streets)
Karyn Weber, Area 6 (Alternate; Via Mesa/Bluffs & Huntington)
Jenny Li, Area 7 (Santa Monica & Rustic Canyons, Will Rogers State Park)
Reza Akef, Area 8 (Riviera & Polo Fields)
Alan Goldsmith, At-large (all Palisades residents, property owners & business operators)

- Additional **prominent Palisades organizations and entities** oppose the use of public state beaches, beach parking lots and parks for homeless housing, or do not support the motion in CF 21-0350:

Caruso/Palisades Village
Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness
Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association

2. **The Sites Are Not Options, According to Supervisor Hahn.**

County Supervisor **Janice Hahn** has stated that the sites proposed in the motion in CF 21-0350 are **not options at this time**: <http://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Message-to-Sup.-Hahn-5-7-21.pdf>.

3. **Other Neighborhood & Community Councils and Thousands of Other Citizens Are Opposed.**

NC Westchester-Playa and Mar Vista CC each oppose the motion in CF 21-0350 and specifically oppose the sites proposed for their respective areas: Westchester Park, Dockweiler and Mar Vista Park.

At this writing, two additional non-coastal Westside councils oppose the use of public beaches, beach parking lots and parks for homeless housing: **Bel Air-Beverly Crest NC** and **Brentwood CC**. Other non-coastal Westside councils will also consider motions to oppose this use in the coming days (Westwood NC: 5/12/21; West LA-Sawtelle NC: 5/12/21; Westside NC: 5/13/21; Westwood CC: 5/18/21).

Over **1,000 pages of public comments** have been submitted in CF 21-0530 by individuals and entities who have overwhelmingly expressed opposition to the use of public beaches and parks for homeless housing.

Over **18,500 individuals have signed an online petition** opposing the use of public beaches and parks for homeless housing.

4. **Additional Compelling Reasons for Opposition:**

- **County Code** expressly **prohibits habitation/dwelling** on beaches and in beach parking lots: *LACC Sec. 17.12.232 and Sec. 17.12.620*.
- **All County Supervisors** have stressed the importance of preserving and enhancing our public recreational spaces as a matter of equity, health and well-being for all citizens.
- **Judge Carter** has expressed, in his ruling on the preliminary injunction in the federal *Alliance* lawsuit, that public spaces such as beaches, parks and libraries should be reserved for public use and enjoyment, not for homeless housing.
- A core mandate of the **California Coastal Act** is protection and preservation of **public access to California's beaches**. The Coastal Commission has historically disapproved of measures to impede access by reducing public beach parking; there is no reason for the Commission to deviate from this mandate now.
- It would be **unprecedented** to allow the state beach parking lots to be used for homeless housing. To our knowledge, homeless housing is not sanctioned on beaches or beach parking lots anywhere in California.
- The homeless crisis has existed in Los Angeles for more than a decade. Councilmember Bonin has insisted at PPCC meetings over the course of five years that Los Angeles is experiencing a homeless "crisis" or an

“emergency.” The homeless count has been rising steadily year after year, yet never once, until now, has he or any other public official suggested that any part of the public state beaches should be used to address the emergency.³ There is clearly **no “immediate emergency”** to justify impeding public access to treasured state beaches by replacing state beach parking lots with homeless housing.

- The state beach parking lots are **not owned or operated by the City** and as such, should never have been included in a “Sheltering Plan” submitted by the City in the federal *Alliance* lawsuit.

For all of these reasons:

PPCC calls on **Councilmember Bonin** to amend his motion and remove the state-owned/county operated WRSB and Dockweiler parking lots, as well as Westchester Park and Mar Vista Park (*opposed by the respective councils in those areas*), from the proposed sites in his motion in CF 21-0350.

Alternatively, PPCC urges the **Council Homelessness & Poverty Committee** to amend the motion to remove these sites and/or decline to recommend the state-owned/county operated WRSB and Dockweiler parking lots, as well as Westchester Park and Mar Vista Park, from the proposed sites in the motion in CF 21-0350.

PPCC further calls on **Mayor Garcetti** to express strong opposition to the use of public beaches, beach parking lots and public parks for homeless housing, and to direct the **City Attorney** to remove the WRSB and Dockweiler parking lots – sites that are neither owned nor operated by the City -- from the Sheltering Plan in the *Alliance* lawsuit.

Sincerely,

David Card, Chair David Kaplan, Vice-Chair
Richard G. Cohen, Treasurer Christina Spitz, Secretary
Pacific Palisades Community Council

cc (*via email*):

Hon. Ben Allen, State Senator, SD 26
Hon. Richard Bloom, State Assemblymember, AD 50
Hon. Sheila Kuehl, County Supervisor, CSD 3
Hon. Janice Hahn, County Supervisor, CSD 4
Hon. Mike Feuer, Los Angeles City Attorney
Jack Ainsworth, Executive Director, California Coastal Commission
Steve Hudson, District Director, California Coastal Commission
Jerry West, Superintendent, Angeles District, State Dept. of Parks & Recreation
Gary Jones, Director, County Dept. of Beaches & Harbors
Kerry Silverstrom, Chief Deputy Director, County Dept. of Beaches & Harbors
Cris Liban, Chair, County Beach Commission
Tony Tavares, Caltrans District 7 Director

³ PPCC and the Pacific Palisades community have for years recognized and responded to the urgent need for solutions. As Councilmember Bonin knows, the Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness is a model of responsible and successful volunteer action to address the crisis. Moreover, PPCC’s Chairs and officers have searched in good faith but have been unable to find any suitable government-owned sites for homeless housing in Pacific Palisades. Information about the location of government property is available to Councilmember Bonin. The lack of suitable sites for homeless housing is not a matter within the control of his constituents, nor are we required to find alternate sites when none exist. We are concerned that this sudden new proposal involving a clearly unsuitable site, WRSB, is being raised now solely for political expediency and in response to Judge Carter’s orders in the *Alliance* lawsuit. If that is the case, the proposal – which is *contrary to the Judge’s express goals* -- should be rejected out of hand.