

March 2, 2021

Councilman Mike Bonin  
200 N. Spring Street #475  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Honorable Councilman:

The Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa (NCWP) respectfully requests the City, Dept. of Rec and Parks and County investigate the feasibility of creating a specific and defined area within Westchester Park for our unsheltered neighbors to reside in (a Safe Camping Zone), with centralized services to include suspending the enforcement of LAMC 63.44, while all other areas of the park would be subject to enforcement of LAMC 63.44.

During the pandemic, NCWP has repeatedly and increasingly heard concerns from our stakeholders regarding the condition of Westchester Park. At the same time, we duly recognize and empathize with the plight of our unsheltered neighbors residing in the park.

The Westchester Recreation Center and trailers were utilized to offer safe shelter during COVID-19 to the unhoused. The program began and ended, without clear and transparent communication to the community, increasing frustration.

While the golf course has since reopened for recreational use, the park remains unavailable to residents to use safely and enjoy to the extent possible while following COVID protocols. Our youth have suffered during Safer at Home, isolating and learning remotely, impacting them academically, developmentally, and psycho-socially.

Our unsheltered neighbors do not have adequate access to bathrooms, showers, or to charging stations for phones and devices. Some have lost access to their social security money. Particularly during the pandemic, it's an arduous process for outreach workers to help reconnect them to their money. No one should have to live this way. We need better conditions for everyone.

Thanks to your commitment and passion, Safe Parking LA now operates an expanded program with services in Westchester Park. What better location to build upon as a designated area with centralized services (Safe Camping Zone) for our unsheltered neighbors? We request the proposal be evaluated with hopes that it'd lead to better park conditions for everyone.

We also request that the Westchester Park Task Force and Rec and Parks weigh in regarding the feasibility of such a designated area (Safe Camping Zone), since the Task force works directly with our unsheltered neighbors and Rec and Parks has jurisdiction of the park. Again, the intent is to better serve our neighbors, both sheltered and unsheltered, while providing access to the park that is safe and equitable for all.

Thank you for your consideration; we look forward hearing from you regarding this request.

Respectfully,

Paula Gerez  
President, NCWP