

Council Member Mike Bonin

The Westchester community has a decades-long tradition of celebrating the Fourth of July by holding a parade on that day. Hundreds of people of all ages march in the parade. In addition, thousands of people from our community and other communities show up to enjoy the parade.

The parade participants gather and organize at Westchester Park, and march from there up Loyola Avenue to Loyola Marymount University. Over 7,000 people gather the entire length of Loyola Avenue to watch the parade. Bleachers are set up along Loyola Avenue to accommodate all the parade goers. The parade is a four- or five-hour affair and is the annual highlight for our community.

Westchester and Playa Del Rey are happy to have a large population of seniors who participate in this annual event. Many have done so for decades. We want to ensure all feel welcome and safe, whether they are participating in the parade or observing the parade.

As you may be aware, the parking lot outside the senior center, which also serves the library, Council Member Bonin's office, and the rest of the park, has at least 10 vehicle dwellers. Trash surrounds several of these vehicles. Several of the handicapped parking spots are not usable because of trash that has accumulated around a vehicle dweller's van directly in front of the senior center. The parking lot reeks of urine, it is not maintained, and weeds are growing up through the asphalt. The landscaping in the center median of the parking lot consists of dying weeds. At least two people sleep on bedrolls next to a van. Homeless people camp directly adjacent to the senior center, and directly next to Council Member Bonin's office.

Last week, the Westside Current did a news piece on the fear seniors experienced when going to the senior center to vote on Election Day. In general, seniors are afraid to use the senior center because of the homeless encampments in the parking lot:

https://www.westsidecurrent.com/news/outcry-at-westchester-senior-center-seniors-do-not-feel-safe-to-vote/article_242222ae-e600-11ec-9c83-937bc7dd151e.html

We cannot expect our senior parade participants to park across Lincoln Avenue, which is a six-lane state highway. We cannot expect the participants to park across Manchester either.

We respectfully request that you to direct Recreation and Parks to close this parking lot for a deep cleaning and power washing, weed removal, and landscaping prior to the parade.

Thank you so very much for your consideration.

Paula Gerez, President, NCWP

Honorable RAP President and Commissioners

Mr. Tony Royster, General Manager, General Services Division, tony.royster@lacity.org

Ms. Barbara Romero, Director, Department of Sanitation

Brian Hale, Chief of Parking Enforcement, Department of Transportation

Richard Tefank, Executive Director, Police Commission