



Neighborhood Council of Westchester Playa

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July 5, 2022

Sylvia Patsaouras, President
Lynn Alvarez, Vice President
Nicole Chase, Commissioner
Tafarai Bayne, Commissioner
Joseph Halper, Commissioner

Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks Department
Office of Board of Commissioners

RAP.COMMISSIONERS@LACITY.ORG

RE: Item No.: 22-188 Westchester Recreation Center – Safe Parking LA Program at
Westchester Swimming Pool Lot

Honorable RAP Commissioners:

The Neighborhood Council of Westchester / Playa (NCWP) strongly opposes the granting of a permit for Safe Parking in Westchester Park. Our constituents stand in opposition as well. We have received hundreds of letters from our constituents opposing Safe Parking in Westchester Park, and we receive complaints from constituents about the Safe Parking program nearly every day. We ask that you deny the permit request for the following reasons:

The Chief Administrative Officer, in his report of August 10, 2021, determined Westchester Park is not feasible for Safe Parking because it is used by thousands of people. Westchester Park is the only park in Westchester, which has over 40,000 residents. The park also serves many people from Inglewood and other inland communities, who use and enjoy all park facilities and recreation programs. Westchester Park is one of equity and inclusion. The City of Los Angeles is “park poor”, meaning there is a shortage of park space.

The Safe Parking program near the recreation pool and ballfields uses 25 of the 50 parking spaces in that lot. Yet the fenced in Safe Parking area is nearly empty many nights, and has at most 10 cars using the fenced in lot. Vehicle dwellers who do not want to follow the rules of Safe Parking program live in their vehicles outside the fenced Safe Parking area in the same parking lot. Between Safe Parking (25 spaces) and vehicle dwellers in that lot (8 spaces), there are only about 17 parking spaces available for pool users. Later this summer, the ballfields will be open as well, and there will be a critical need for parking spaces in the park.

Just in the last two weeks, a homeless man went on to the tennis courts in the park saying the 12-year-old girls who were taking lessons on the court wanted to have sex with him. The next day, he jumped a fence onto another court where young girls were taking lessons, and talked about having sex. A homeless woman grabbed a clipboard of an elderly woman at the courts and yelled and screamed at her. Over the past couple years, there have been hundreds of incidents of homeless people indecently exposing themselves to children, harassing and attacking children in the restrooms, following children, using IV drugs in public, and more.

The safety of children and seniors is of utmost concern to the NCWP and to our community. We believe that having homeless interventions in our public park is inconsistent with public safety and poses a risk to park users. Westchester Park is the only park in the City with a Safe Parking program.

The NCWP does not oppose Safe Parking programs in general. However, we strongly oppose the use of any parking lot in Westchester Park for a Safe Parking program because it uses precious parking spaces, and it attracts homeless people who live in the park full time.

LAX will have 50 spaces of Safe Parking beginning this summer, approximately two miles from Westchester Park. The eight or so vehicle dwellers who use the Safe Parking at the park may park at LAX Safe Parking instead. We respectfully ask that you deny the permit request for Safe Parking. We ask this as compassionate elected stakeholders for the whole community and authorize the President to take the appropriate action to promote this position.

Thank you in advance,

DocuSigned by:
Paula Gerez
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Paula Gerez, President, Neighborhood Council of Westchester / Playa

CC:
Councilmember Mike Bonin