

September 3, 2024

200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Prioritizing Mental Health Services

Honorable Mayor Karen Bass

The Neighborhood Council of Westchester / Playa is deeply concerned and saddened by the ongoing homeless crisis, recognizing that our County could, should and must serve the homeless better.

This lack of an executive response is hurting the homeless who suffer from mental illness and addiction. We are doing the homeless no favor by keeping them on the beaches and streets and we are doing them no favor by asking them if they would like help. We all know too well that when mental illness and/or drug addiction is in play, people are unable to make decisions that are in their own best interest.

The state, the Governor, and the US Supreme Court have given us tools to address the homeless crisis, both for the homeless, and for all those who are impacted by all the negative and often unlawful consequences that encampments bring to a community.

We believe several critical issues need to be addressed by our Mayor and All City Councilmembers, particularly in the following areas:

1. **Prioritize Mental Health Services:** There is an urgent need for mental hospitals that offer long-term residential care of those who suffer from chronic mental illness who are not capable of caring for themselves.
2. **Prioritize Drug Addiction Services:** The City should prioritize the provision of sober living facilities where addiction treatment can be provided, rather than focusing on harm reduction strategies such as needle distribution, which enable continued substance abuse rather than guiding individuals towards sobriety.
3. **Protect the Public Space:** It is essential to safeguard public City spaces near sensitive uses for the benefit of all residents of Los Angeles City.
4. **Urgent Action:** The City must act with the level of urgency required for the massive humanitarian crisis that is homelessness in Los Angeles City.

We therefore respectfully request the following actions:

1. Implementation of SB 43: We urge the Mayor and City Councilmembers to take immediate action to implement SB 43 and to end the delay in providing essential services to those who may not recognize their need for help.
2. Clearing of Encampments on City-Owned Property: We request that the Mayor and City Councilmembers act with the same urgency mandated by Governor Newsom in his Executive Order to clear encampments on City-owned property.

With kind regards,

Paula Gerez, President
Neighborhood Council of Westchester / Playa Del Rey

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