

Draft of proposed letter

Dear General Manager Kim and Members of the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners:

On behalf of the Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa (NCWP), I am writing to formally request immediate and sustained action to address ongoing conditions at Westchester Park that compromise public safety, sanitation, and the ability of residents—especially children, families, youth sports participants, and seniors—to use this important community asset.

Community reports and observations document persistent problems including: individuals living or sleeping in the park (including in picnic areas adjacent to the pool and ballfields and near a childcare center); vehicle dwelling in parking lots; repeated vandalism and misuse of restrooms (toilets stuffed with debris causing stoppages and plumbing damage, fixtures ripped from walls, and other unsanitary conditions); insufficient nightly clearing and locking of parking lots and gates; and limited visible security or consistent patrol presence. These conditions have continued despite some recent improvements noted after meetings with RAP staff (such as limited graffiti abatement and partial bathroom locking).

Westchester Park serves as a critical recreation resource with ballfields, a swimming pool, tennis courts, playgrounds, and other facilities used by local schools, youth sports organizations, Loyola Marymount University and Otis College students, families, and nearby residents. A large childcare center is in close proximity. Ongoing issues deter use, create safety concerns for children and athletes, generate sanitation problems, and reduce the park's value as a revenue-generating facility for the Department.

As a community, we are no longer willing to tolerate these conditions. Keeping Westchester Park clean, secure, and properly maintained is not only essential for the people who use it daily, but it also has a direct positive impact throughout our surrounding neighborhoods. A well-kept and safe park reduces the spillover of sanitation issues, property crime, and disorder into adjacent residential areas, commercial corridors, and school routes. It strengthens the overall quality of life and sense of safety for residents of Westchester, Playa del Rey, and Playa Vista.

We therefore request the following specific actions:

1. Nightly locking of bathrooms throughout the park (including those near the pool, ballfields, and recreation center) after hours to prevent overnight occupation, vandalism, and plumbing damage.
2. Nightly clearing of parking lots followed by locking of gates, consistent with park ordinances and prior commitments.
3. Increased and consistent security presence, including expanded Park Ranger patrols, coordination with LAPD Pacific Division for supplemental presence or overtime, and exploration of dedicated security measures around high-use areas such as the pool and fields.
4. Regular and responsive cleanups of trash, debris, and sanitation issues, with prioritization of areas near the childcare center, pool, picnic zones, and sports facilities.
5. Enforcement of applicable park rules, curfews, and Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 41.18 where appropriate, paired with outreach and offers of shelter or housing resources (including prioritization for Inside Safe operations where encampments persist near sensitive uses).
6. A written response and timeline outlining the Department's plan, responsible parties, and metrics for improvement, with an opportunity for NCWP and community stakeholders to provide input.

These measures are consistent with practices implemented at other City parks and facilities and with the Department's mission to provide safe, welcoming spaces. We recognize the broader challenges of homelessness and support solutions that include housing and services; however, public parks must remain usable and safe for the general public, particularly children.

NCWP stands ready to collaborate with RAP, Council District 11, LAPD, and relevant outreach teams. Please contact me at your earliest convenience to discuss next steps or to schedule a site visit.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter