OPEN LETTER TO MAR VISTA STAKEHOLDERS

Councilman Mike Bonin proposes a feasibility study of a safe camping site in Mar Vista Park. The community does not endorse a safe camping site in our only park; therefore, it is a waste of time and money to perform a feasibility study. We do not support a safe camping site in Mar Vista Park for multiple reasons.

There is no guarantee that a safe camping site will make any difference. Most likely, we will sacrifice a portion of the park and still have tents on the streets all over Mar Vista. Bonin has never said that he will not allow sleeping on the street outside of safe camping areas. In fact, his rhetoric speaks to just the opposite. He supports voluntary behavior and enforcement of encampments and people sleeping on the streets.

Bonin says that no one forces a homeowner to clean inside their home; therefore, we cannot tell a homeless person to clean an encampment area. He does not acknowledge the concept of private versus public property. He does not acknowledge the value and necessity of people who work, pay taxes, invest in houses and apartments, contribute to society, and keep everything functioning. He prioritizes the desires of the unhoused over the housed. At the very least, they should be equal. The same rules and regulations that we vote on, pay for, are expected to follow, and are punished if we don't, should apply to everyone. That is equality.

Bonin wrote a motion that cleaning of public property should only be voluntarily done by people in an encampment if they choose to. Therefore, they have the right to desecrate an area of public use and the City (and other members society) have no right to clean it up. His motion protects the rights of drug-addicted and mentally ill people to destroy our common areas and takes away the rights of other people to clean and protect them. We are not allowed to trash public property and no one else should either. Cleaning of public property should be done for the safety and health of everyone. Bonin's idea that some people can voluntarily choose to not comply is unequal treatment and a threat to the safety of the community.

Similarly, Bonin refuses to acknowledge the drug use, drug dealing, prostitution, stealing, crime, and illegal activity in the encampments. He says that just like people indoors can commit crimes inside, people in encampments commit the same crimes, it just happens to be outside. Once again, he sees no distinction between public and private property. Worse, instead of proposing a strategy to enforce laws and protect the housed and unhoused, he has gone in the opposite direction, he refuses to acknowledge any crime and lacks any plan to enforce any laws on anyone. Those of us living in his district suffer the consequences. Speak to anyone who lives near an encampment, they live with the reality that Bonin refuses to acknowledge. Crime is rampant in the encampments and Bonin has done nothing about it.

There is no reason to believe that if we sacrifice part of our only park that anything will change in Mar Vista. Bonin's rhetoric speaks to voluntary compliance with our rules that maintain social order. There is no reason to believe that people will not be allowed to voluntarily commit crimes, desecrate public space, and sleep anywhere they choose, even if safe camping sites are built.

Bonin says that every neighborhood has to do "their share". Mar Vista and Venice have done more than their share. Bonin's voluntary policies and lack of any accountability has caused Mar Vista and Venice to be overrun with tents. Bonin does not believe in holding unhoused people accountable, he endorses voluntary compliance with laws, drug use, and cleaning of public space. The neighborhood has become a disaster, now he holds the housed people accountable to fix it. We're supposed to sacrifice our only park and safe place for children to play outside; otherwise he's going to accuse us of being "NIMBY".

Bonin is thinking about the problem backwards. The solution is not every small neighborhood being responsible for providing comprehensive shelter and services within their neighborhood, especially when there is limited space. The global solution that is cost-effective and less detrimental to the children, families, and responsible people who support and hold these neighborhoods together, is to build large facilities and designated areas of safe camping and parking, outside of dense family neighborhoods. It is not cost effective to build

a safe camping site with the necessary services for 10-20 people. These sites need to be in larger spaces such as: government property, the VA, LAX, and industrial areas around the LA river. Instead of burdening small neighborhoods of hardworking families by sacrificing their only outdoor park with an unrealistic and financially unaffordable plan, the city needs a global plan that is cost-effective and humane for the housed and unhoused.

For example, last year the Mar Vista Community Council (MVCC) passed a compassionate and cost-realistic solution to the homeless crisis:

1. Massive emergency temporary shelters need to be built in an area with affordable land, away from residential neighborhoods to provide medical care, mental health, drug treatment, safety, hygiene, and services to re-introduce people back into society (e.g., job training, relocation, family reunification). Anyone sleeping on the streets must be required to go to the shelter which should eventually be converted into a permanent structure to provide all services.

2. Subsidized affordable housing, with services on-site, needs to be built in residential neighborhoods to re-integrate people into society. People eligible for this option must have a prior connection to the neighborhood defined as living as a member of the community for the past three years; living, working, or attending school in the neighborhood (for example, people who meet the prior criteria and who have become disabled, elderly, mentally ill, or drug-addicted).

3. "Low-Barrier" Shelters do not belong in residential neighborhoods. Shelters that allow drug use and are open throughout the night are detrimental to the children and working members of the community. What's more, services that allow people to remain on the street will enable homelessness and encourage more to migrate to desirable areas.

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