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CALIFORNIA

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ARLETA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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ARLETA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Community Impact Statement

November 19, 2019

RE: Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) 41.18; Council File: 19-0602-S1

To the City of Los Angeles and stakeholders:

The Arleta Neighborhood Council supports amendments to LAMC 41.18 with the aim to protect the public from unfettered human encampments on our sidewalks, and in close proximity to sensitive areas, whereupon such unchecked behavior contributes towards an unsafe environment for: the general public, children on their way to school, the elderly, and citizens with disabilities who make use of sidewalks.

1. Background:

- a) Public Safety has been compromised within proximity to, and in, sensitive areas such as schools, day care centers, flood control channels, and parks.
- b) Hypodermic needles, bodily human waste, proliferation of garbage, alcohol containers, propane tank explosions, drug paraphernalia, other illicit activities, and further environmental degradation on our sidewalks, parks, flood control channels, in proximity to public facilities, businesses, and near/adjacent to permanent residences pose serious health hazards to the general public.
- c) Thefts from vehicles and residences have increased in Arleta as homeless and drug addicts roam throughout our neighborhoods while working people are away from their homes and/or business properties throughout the day and night. Residences and businesses adjacent to alleyways are particularly vulnerable as suspicious individuals are consuming drugs at any given time, participating in indecent behavior, or may be planning to attack residents/merchants/employees the moment a garage door opens or rear gate opens as they go on about their business.
- d) A Hepatitis A outbreak was declared in Los Angeles County back in September 2017 and Los Angeles County Public Health Department issued information regarding the highly contagious virus.¹ In an unfortunate turn of events 15 die in a hepatitis outbreak in the City of San Diego and as a result sanitary

¹ <https://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-ln-hepatitis-la-20170919-story.html>
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/hepa/index.htm>

street washing had to take place in affected sidewalks there.² Moreover, City of Los Angeles workers have also been exposed to trash and bodily fluids outside City Hall East and have become ill additionally.³

- e) Typhus outbreaks and poor hygiene, along with overcrowding, are intertwined in evidence that sidewalks were not intended for living spaces.⁴

2. Findings:

- a) Sunday, September 22, 2019, a brush fire broke out near Interstate freeway 210 at Wheatland Avenue in the vicinity of Lake View Terrace. A homeless encampment was there.⁵
- b) Tuesday, July 30, 2019, a brush fire burns through homeless encampments in the Sepulveda Basin. Several propane tanks exploded there as well and more than 140 tons of trash was collected afterwards. In the cleanup aftermath a crystal meth addict admitted that she will return to the area and will likely decline offers to enter a rehabilitation program given her schizophrenia and previous assaults on institutional personnel.⁶
- c) There are multiple examples below of filthy and deplorable conditions in Arleta (and in surrounding communities) that are disregarded even when they are taking place at or in proximity to sensitive areas. Existing state legislation prevents counties and/or municipalities from exercising exerted guardianship over individuals with mental illnesses/drug addictions and thus continues to allow afflicted individuals the liberty to reject assistance even if it is for their own well-being.
- d) It is critical to acknowledge that other US cities have given free bus vouchers (or airfare vouchers) to their native homeless—to leave the host city—in what has been referred to as a homeless relocation program without safety nets. According to a story in The Guardian newspaper, in 2013 the Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital in Las Vegas, Nevada, was alleged to have discharged 1,500 patients with bus vouchers out of the city.⁷ New York City's Department of Homeless Services has spent \$89 million dollars of City taxpayers' money since August 2017 to export 5,074 homeless families—12,482 individuals—to places as close as Newark, [New Jersey] and as far as the South Pacific," or 32 states and Puerto Rico.⁸ Receiving cities are unaware that homeless people are being sent from elsewhere.

3. Conclusions:

- a) Our streets and neighborhoods have become both mental patient intake environments and *non*-rehabilitation centers without walls or services. It is unfair for Arleta residents, homeowners, business

² <https://www.latimes.com/94646376-132.html>

³ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-08-15/city-workers-trash-bodily-fluids-los-angeles-civic-center>

⁴ <https://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-ln-typhus-outbreak-20181011-story.html>

⁵ <https://www.dailynews.com/2019/09/22/firefighters-quickly-douse-brush-fire-near-large-homeless-encampment/>

⁶ <https://losangeles.cbslocal.com/video/4135356-it-was-pandemonium-homeless-encampments-burned-in-brush-fire-in-sepulveda-basin/> <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Homeless-Encampment-Los-Angeles-Sepulveda-Basin-Brush-Fire-561130361.html>

⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2017/dec/20/bussed-out-america-moves-homeless-people-country-study>

⁸ <https://nypost.com/2019/10/26/nyc-homeless-initiative-sends-people-across-us-without-telling-receiving-cities/>

owners, and the City of Los Angeles citizenry to continue to pay taxes yet our sidewalks and streets are not only unsafe but may be hazardous to our health as well. These conditions are hyper acute in the general area east of Interstate 405 freeway and north of Oxnard Street in the East San Fernando Valley; *particularly in low-income neighborhoods*. More municipal and county resources, including 24-hour armed security and dedicated maintenance crews, around existing and proposed shelters, are mandated in conjunction with enforcement of existing laws and enactment of new laws (both State and municipal) to address these circumstances.

- b) Systematic powered water washing of all affected sidewalks by municipal urban services must take place in order to disinfect the sidewalks and kill the hazardous bacteria that the citizenry (all ages) comes in contact with via their shoes, clothing, belongings, and skin.
- c) When a homeless person *with* a mental illness/drug addiction is continuously allowed to remain living in the streets as an expression of freedom preservation, even though that same freedom could possibly lead to his/her demise, then the life of that person has been shortchanged by the very same system that seeks to preserve his/her freedom and state of existence.

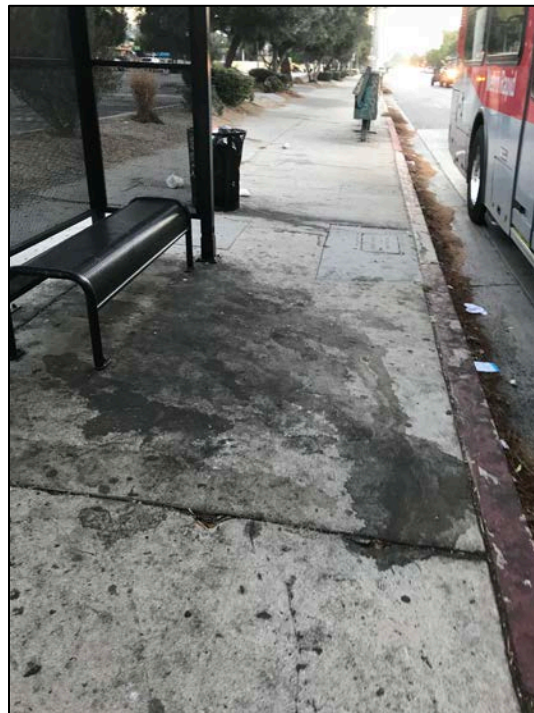


Figure 1. Multiple human urination residuals at bus shelter at 9750 Woodman Av, Arleta; Southbound Van Nuys Blvd side. September 25, 2019.



Figure 2. Trash removed from trash receptacle. 9700 block of Woodman Ave, Arleta; Southbound Van Nuys Blvd side, bus stop. September 25, 2019.



Figure 3. Hypodermic needle found in vicinity of Canterbury Avenue and Remington St in Arleta.



Figure 4. Hypodermic needle found in the vicinity of Canterbury Avenue and Pierce St in Arleta.



Figure 5. Human defecation residuals and possible extinguished fire site.
6643 Van Nuys Blvd, Van Nuys. September 25, 2019.



Figure 6. Homeless encampment (adjacent to single-family residences) along Woodman Avenue, north of Mission Hills Estates Ct, Mission Hills. September 7, 2019.



Figure 7. Homeless individual sleeping at Calvary Lutheran Church, 8800 Woodman Avenue, Arleta. While not shown in this picture a child day care center is on site.



Figure 8. Homeless encampment at Tobias Avenue Park, 9122 Tobias Avenue, Panorama City.
August 27, 2019. View from Van Nuys Blvd side.



Figure 9. Homeless encampments along route to Panorama City High School. Location at Lanark Street side
of 8100 Van Nuys Blvd, Panorama City. Sidewalk access is blocked by homeless belongings and encampments.
September 12, 2019.



Figure 10. Homeless encampment on left side of the picture by shopping cart and Van Nuys Elementary in the background beyond the stop sign shown on the right side of the photo.
Location at 14401 Victory Blvd, Van Nuys. September 25, 2019.



Figure 11. Homeless encampment belongings on same sidewalk shown in Figure 10 in the vicinity of Van Nuys Elementary. Location at 14401 Victory Blvd, Van Nuys. October 10, 2019



Figure 12. Parent and children walk by homeless individual along Victory Blvd at Sylmar Av. Location at 14412 Victory Blvd, Van Nuys. October 10, 2019



Figure 13. Homeless encampment at Brand Park, 15121 S Brand Blvd, Mission Hills.



Figure 14. Homeless drug addict behind single-family residences in alley in the 9400 block of Dorrington Avenue in Arleta.



Figure 15. Homeless encampment at church side entrance/exit at Calvary Lutheran Church, 8800 Woodman Avenue, Arleta: Montague Street side. Child day care center on site.



Figure 16. Fence has been broken-in at children's playground adjacent to alley of child day care center in Arleta. September 29, 2019.



Figure 17. Homeless encampment at El Super supermarket, route to Liggett Street Elementary and Arleta High School. Location at 9710 Woodman Avenue, on Van Nuys Blvd side. October 31, 2019.