



October 31, 2016

Hon. Herb Wesson
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: TIME SENSITIVE - Opposition to BID in Venice / Public Hearing

Dear President Wesson:

The community-labor-clergy Fix LA Coalition is writing to express our opposition to the establishment of a proposed Venice Beach Business Improvement District (BID). Moreover, we believe that the public is entitled to a reasonably scheduled hearing on the matter – *not* on Election Day, Nov. 8!

The Venice Beach BID puts the needs of corporations before community and diverts public funding away from City services. It strips decision-making power about high-impact projects away from the people who will be affected and puts it in the hands of a small group of wealthy business owners. The BID process is essentially undemocratic, giving only commercial property owners a voice in a process whose outcome will impact everyone.

Moreover, City services should be performed only by City workers – not outsourced or privatized.

Also of concern is the fact that the only scheduled hearing on the BID falls on Election Day. We ask that you use the power of your office to change the hearing date to allow for public participation.

Our opposition to the BID stems from the following:

- The Venice Beach BID is economically unjust. The proposed BID in Venice Beach is unique among BIDs for the large percentage of City-owned land contained in the district. If the BID is implemented, the City will be forced to pay over \$450,000 per year from the general fund for the assessment fee.
- The underlying premise for the BID is erroneously that the City cannot provide the vital services needed for businesses to thrive. Meanwhile, some of the world's wealthiest

corporations, such as Google and Snapchat, have enjoyed an 80% tax break from the City. Instead of replacing City services with a BID and paying general fund money into a private entity working to benefit these corporations, the City should make "Silicon Beach" pay its fair share.

- The Venice Beach BID is anti-democratic: The process for establishing the BID has not been open or transparent; it has disenfranchised residents who do not own property and decreased democratic control over public resources. Giving away over \$450,000 of public money to a corporate-controlled entity is not the precedent we want to establish for meeting LA's needs for public services.
- The Venice Beach BID will have additional hidden costs: Business Improvement Districts in the City of Los Angeles, and particularly their private security forces, have a history of hostility toward homeless and low-income residents. Several BID-related lawsuits since their inception in the late 1990s have led to rulings against the City because of the unconstitutional practices of private BID security forces.

For all these reasons, we ask that the hearing date be rescheduled to allow public input and we urge you to oppose the Venice BID.

Thank you,

*Cheryl Parisi, Executive Dir.
AFSCME District Council 36*

*Ana García, Policy Coordinator
CARECEN*

*Beverly Roberts,
Board Member, ACCE*

Rev. William Smart, Jr.

Jerilyn Stapleton, President California NOW

*Jaime Zeledón,
Board President, POWER*

Cc: Mayor Eric Garcetti
Los Angeles City Council
Venice Community Housing Corporation
The Los Angeles Times
The Argonaut