

PUBLIC SAFETY

MOTION

According to the Los Angeles Times, California has experienced six of the biggest wildfires in recent history just within the past few weeks. The Bobcat Fire has burned over 30,000 acres of the Angeles National Forest and the El Dorado Fire is also still going strong, having burned over 14,500 acres so far. Together they have poured a thick layer of smoke over the Southland, poisoning the air and making the sun only appear as a bright orange circle through the haze. The unhealthy air, combined with the COVID-19 pandemic and excessive heat, has made it critical to temporarily stay inside and avoid strenuous activity.

As public health and elected officials make the call for everyone to remain inside, there appears to be no consistent plan or protocols to help unhoused residents and other vulnerable Angelenos stay safe and away from the toxic air. When temperatures become too extreme, 'cooling centers' are opened but a similar protocol does not exist for when air quality is as dangerous. Even with 'cooling centers,' there are not enough and often they are too far away from where the need is to be fully useful. For example, on September 6th, when temperatures surged in Woodland Hills to 121 degrees, there was only one city 'cooling center' open in the West Valley and that had enough space for only ten people. It was miles away from where most CD3 encampments are located, leaving the 600 homeless people in the district to suffer in the extreme elements with no relief. In addition, tens of thousands of housed residents of all ages and health histories who don't have, or can't afford, consistent air conditioning or air filtrations systems need relief.

The sad reality is that, with the increasing consequences of climate change, this will not be the last time the city is faced with multiple natural emergencies dramatically impacting the public's health. A plan is desperately needed to not only include air quality to the list of reasons to open community spaces, but also to increase the number of spaces that are open around the City. A handful of facilities throughout the City is simply not enough.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council instruct the Emergency Management Department, in consultation with the Department of Recreation and Parks and the General Services Department, to prepare a plan and protocols to open certain City facilities during times of dangerous air quality that includes staffing, facility and outreach needs.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council instruct the Emergency Management Department and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, in consultation with the Department of Recreation and Parks, General Services Department, to prepare a report with recommendations on what additional city-owned sites could be open during emergencies that would better serve the unhoused population and if hours can be expanded, as well as explore private partnerships to further address this issue.

PRESENTED BY:

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SECONDED BY: _____
MONICA RODRIGUEZ (verbal)
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