

Your Community Impact Statement has been successfully submitted to City Council and Committees.

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at NCsupport@lacity.org.

This is an automated response, please do not reply to this email.

Contact Information

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(10) Nay(0) Abstain(1) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 11/10/2020

Type of NC Board Action: Against unless Amended

Impact Information

Date: 11/13/2020

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 20-1376

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: The North Westwood Neighborhood Council urges you to oppose the passage of Council file: 20-1376. However, the Neighborhood Council supports the substitute motion drafted by Councilmember Bonin and Ryu on October 28, 2020 (this amendment considers the importance of ensuring individuals are thoughtfully placed into housing and that greater efforts are made to find housing that meets the welfare needs of unhoused constituents). The North Westwood Neighborhood Council further requests that CARE sweeps of homelessness encampments are restructured to allow communities to clean their own areas given resources provided from the City (an October 14, 2020 amendment to Council File 20-0147 suggests that CARE sweeps should resume throughout the City).

November 2020
CIS Opposing Council File 20-1376

Letter taken from [Services Not Sweeps coalition](#):

Dear Los Angeles City Councilmembers Martinez, Blumenfield, Bonin, Buscaino, Cedillo, De Leon, Harris-Dawson, Koretz, Krekorian, Lee, O'Farrell, Price, Rodriguez, Ryu, and Wesson,

We, the North Westwood Neighborhood Council, are requesting that you oppose any legislation that allows the city to ban sitting, sleeping, and lying: within 500 feet of freeways, ramps, and tunnels; within 500 feet of any facility opened after January 2018 that provides housing, shelter, services, safe parking, or storage to unhoused people; or that criminalizes storage of property in the areas listed above. We also request that you oppose legislation criminalizing the refusal of offers of shelter by city employees.

The proposed changes would make it illegal to be unhoused in a significant portion of Los Angeles City, as demonstrated by [this interactive map of comprehensive enforcement restrictions](#). According to Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) data, this could impact thousands of unsheltered individuals living in Los Angeles. It would also make it illegal to refuse an offer of shelter by the city in public spaces citywide. Under these rules, homeless people can be sentenced to six months in prison for simply having property in public spaces.

Public officials have stated over and over again that there are not enough available beds to support Los Angeles' unhoused populations. LAHSA's most recent [Housing Inventory Count](#) estimated that there were 15,000 shelter or bridge beds available across the Continuum of Care. Even if all of these beds were open, they would only provide space for a fraction of the people living unsheltered in the city. Further, even if there were sufficient beds, public officials, most notably LAHSA, consistently state [that inflow into homelessness is far greater and faster than what our homelessness service system can support](#). Proposals like these promote the myth that people are homeless by choice, not the result of a failure to expand the city's homeless housing stock (both shelters and permanent). Given this scarcity, prioritizing enforcement will do little more than move people from place to place, disrupting their lives along the way.

The focus of this legislation is to criminalize homelessness, a strategy that [wastes millions of city dollars while accomplishing very little](#). Legal scholars have argued that these ordinances constitute [cruel and unusual punishment](#) and [violate basic human rights](#). *Jones v. City of Los Angeles* ruled that enforcing the bans on sitting and sleeping in public violate the Eighth Amendment's cruel and unusual punishment clause. Despite these rulings, Los Angeles has continued to lead with criminalization in its response to the homelessness crisis. This is actively counterproductive toward reducing homelessness.

- Citations, arrests, and fees are impediments to obtaining employment, housing, and other needed resources.
- Displacing people can disrupt relationships with homeless outreach and caseworkers, who are necessary to enter into stable housing and services.
- Encampment sweeps by police and sanitation workers result in the loss of important possessions: documents, items of personal value, even medication.
- When documents are confiscated, people applying for housing and other services are set back—ID cards and certain forms are often needed to obtain assistance.
- When medications are confiscated or thrown out by police, the consequences can be fatal.

As of September 21, coroner data shows that [964 unhoused Angelenos have died this year](#).

- Unhoused deaths represent 11% of all deaths in LA, despite representing 1% of the overall population.
- Unhoused deaths were almost twice as likely to be male and 1.6 times more likely to be black.
- Unhoused people were over two times more likely to have died from accidental and preventable causes compared to housed populations.

The Centers for Disease Control states “clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. This increases the potential for infectious disease spread.” Increased enforcement creates another threat to unhoused Angelenos at a time when the city is already expected to surpass the number of [unhoused deaths of the previous year](#) and set a record for the **City with the highest homeless mortality rate.**

City Council is approaching enforcement with urgency, even as housing projects face [delays](#) and [higher-than-expected costs](#). We cannot prioritize building systems to force people into shelter when there is nowhere for them to go.

For the above reasons, the North Westwood Neighborhood Council urges you to oppose the passage of [Council file: 20-1376](#). However, the Neighborhood Council supports the substitute motion drafted by Councilmember Bonin and Ryu on October 28, 2020 (this amendment considers the importance of ensuring individuals are thoughtfully placed into housing and that greater efforts are made to find housing that meets the welfare needs of unhoused constituents).

The North Westwood Neighborhood Council further requests that CARE+ sweeps of homelessness encampments are restructured to allow communities to clean their own areas given resources provided from the City (an October 14, 2020 amendment to Council File 20-0147 suggests that CARE+ sweeps should resume throughout the City).

