

Re: Request for Consideration of Increasing Park Ranger Presence at City Parks

Dear Mayor Garcia and City Council Members,

It is with hope and desire for increased public safety at our city parks that that we submit this letter to you for consideration of reinstating a Citywide Park Ranger Program to the 2015 budget.

There are more than 100 parks in Long Beach and many of those parks are in desperate need of public safety.

If it is not possible to create a budget that allows for one or two additional full time park rangers, then the Neighborhood Associations would like to request that the city provide public safety support utilizing one of the three park rangers that are presently budgeted at El Dorado, to patrol the city parks that are struggling with public drug use and drug dealing "Hot Spots" and address these issues.

Public drug use and drug dealing has increased at our public parks over the past three years, since the Park Ranger program was cancelled.

Burglary, robbery, grand theft and petty crimes remain a problem in our neighborhoods. Add to these concerns frequent incidents of public drug use and drug dealing at our neighborhood parks. Residents and homeowners of Long Beach would like to see our city's police officers' time spent enforcing the law in our neighborhoods and business districts. There have been several occasions when residents and park visitors complain that they called 911, as we have been advised to do, and LBPD do not respond immediately (sometimes not at all) to calls pertaining to public drug use or suspicion of criminal activity.

The Neighborhood Associations of Long Beach would like to see a park ranger presence that is hyper-focused on parks that have public safety issues.

The LBPD does not itemize arrests for drug dealing and public drug use in its crime statistics, but it can confirm that the number of arrests at city public parks for intent to sell drugs is high. There are no volunteer positions or Rec Center staff programs that can resolve the criminal acts taking place at our public parks. East Division Commander William LeBaron once said that the problem of drug dealing at Bixby Park cannot be resolved by someone other than a trained professional officer. "These are some hardcore thugs," he said.

One example of this epidemic is last summer five drug dealers were arrested at Bixby Park within a four-week period. This summer four drug dealers were arrested in a two-week period. Most drug-related arrests take place across the street from- or in close proximity to the children's playground.

At Bixby Park, it is not out of the ordinary to see teens and adults exhale "plumes" of pot smoke in public within feet of the playground area. There have been two separate incidents of a child picking up a hypodermic needle in the playground sandbox. On an ongoing basis, Friends of Bixby Park volunteers discard glass pipes, hypodermic needles, dime bags and burnt aluminum foil at its monthly park clean ups.

After a series of complaints by residents and park users, the city provided park rangers at Bixby Park for a short period. On the first day that the park rangers were on duty at Bixby Park they arrested a woman who had been selling crystal meth in a suitcase in the same spot near the rec center building for two years.

Several neighborhood associations in the city have a tale to tell about lack of public safety at their local parks, and how they are concerned about the impact it will have on youth in our communities. Incidents of public drug use, drug dealing and other illegal activities make residents and families feel uncomfortable and unsafe. Many parks have lost countless park users as a result of these activities, despite neighborhood groups' efforts to revitalize their parks.

Without park ranger presence, illegal activities will continue to rise and have consequences on our community, including exposing young children and teens to drug use and drug dealing.

One of the greatest benefits a city can provide its community is safe and drug-free parks. Please don't ask your community to accept public drug use and illegal activities at our parks.

By increasing Park Ranger presence the city will be providing a safe environment for families and lower the incidents of children and teens being exposed to drug activities at our parks.

Less drugs in our parks equals less drugs on our streets and more safety in our neighborhoods. A Park Ranger Program will provide the kind of public safety that will have a lasting effect on our community now and in the future.

Your neighborhood associations,

Willmore City Heritage Association, 1<sup>st</sup> District  
Washington Neighborhood Association, 1<sup>st</sup> District  
Friends of Bixby Park, 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
Craftsman Village Neighborhood Association, 1<sup>st</sup> District and 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
AOC7, 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
Rose Park, 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
North Alamitos Beach, 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
East 7<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor, 2<sup>nd</sup> St.  
Harvest Farmer's Market, 2<sup>nd</sup> District and 3<sup>rd</sup> District ~~and 2<sup>nd</sup>~~  
On Broadway Business Association 2<sup>nd</sup> District and 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
Bluff Park, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
Belmont Heights Neighborhood Association, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
Bluff Heights Neighborhood Association, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
West East Side Community Association, 4<sup>th</sup> District  
California Heights Neighborhood Association, 7<sup>th</sup> District  
Wrigley Association, 6<sup>th</sup> District and 7<sup>th</sup> District  
Wrigley Historic District, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> District  
Country Club Manor Association, Bixby Knolls, 8<sup>th</sup> District  
Jane Adams Neighborhood Association, 8<sup>th</sup> District  
Houghton Park Neighborhood Association, 9<sup>th</sup> District  
Starr King Neighborhood Association, 9<sup>th</sup> District

Without public safety officer presence, illegal activities will continue to rise and have consequences on our community, including exposing young children and teens to drug use and drug dealing.

One of the greatest benefits a city can provide its community is safe and drug-free parks.

By reinstating the Park Ranger Program, you will be providing a safe environment for families and lower the incidents of children and teens being exposed to drug activities at our parks.

Less drugs in our parks equals less drugs on our streets and more safety in our neighborhoods. A Park Ranger Program will provide the kind of public safety that will have a lasting effect on our community now and in the future.

Best regards,

Friends of Bixby Park

Sidney T. Cramer On Broadway Buss. Ass.  
Claudia Schon, Friends of Bixby Park

Michelle E. Arend-Schroff  
Co-Chair, Craftsman Village Historic District

J.R. Clout  
NABA President

John Thomas Bluff Mts. Neighborhood Assoc.

Wita Sandoz, Pres. Long Beach Arts  
Contract instructor, Bixby

Barbara Sinclair, Wrigley Historic District  
President

J.B. , PRESIDENT, ROSE PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOC.

Absentee Permission: Lee Ostendorf, Local Harvest Farmers Market  
Hugh Little, President, California Heights NA In 2nd + 3rd Dist.  
Kathleen Irvine, President Willmore City Heritage Association

Jean Ward, President, West East Side Community Association  
David Clement, President, North Alamitos Beach  
Dianne Sundstrom, Belmont Heights Community Association President  
Gloria Bradley, Country Club Manor Association  
Sasha Witte, Bluff Park Neighborhood Association  
Jimmy Murray, Starr Kings Neighborhood Association  
Linda Palacro, Washington Neighborhood Association

**From:** [Ralph Brooks](#)

**Sent:** Monday, August 11, 2014 8:21 PM

**To:** [Claudia schou](#)

**Cc:** [bannrism@yahoo.com](mailto:bannrism@yahoo.com), [mannywlkr@hotmail.com](mailto:mannywlkr@hotmail.com), [mroh51@verizon.net](mailto:mroh51@verizon.net),  
[brooksr@verizon.net](mailto:brooksr@verizon.net)

Claudia,

Houghton Park Neighborhood Association (HPNA) supports reinstating and expanding use of a Citywide Park Ranger Program in the 2015 budget for city parks.

HPNA

**From:** Stephen Sandoval

**Sent:** Friday, August 8, 2014 3:18 PM

**To:** Claudia schou

Hello Council-member Al Austin ,

I am writing to add the support of the JANEa in re-instating the Park Ranger Program. I spoke with Claudia Schou from Friends of Bixby Park this morning; we have added our signature to the letter she is presenting to City Council.

We feel the Ranger program would add a significant level of public safety to our parks and, in doing so, make the park experience more pleasurable for residents of Long Beach.

Please call me if you have any questions or if I can provide more information in support of this at the Council meeting.

Regards,  
Stephen Sandpval, President, JANEa  
562-704-2653

Stephen Sandoval, CPhT

**From:** [Linda Palacios](#)

**Sent:** Thursday, August 7, 2014 4:42 PM

**To:** [Claudia schou](#)

Hello Claudia I approve the letter and give you my signature approval by email.  
I thought you needed the communities help. If you still will need signatures let me know.

Linda

**From:** [dianne.sundstrom@verizon.net](mailto:dianne.sundstrom@verizon.net)

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 6, 2014 11:05 AM

**To:** [suzie@suzieaprice.com](mailto:suzie@suzieaprice.com), [suzie.price@longbeach.gov](mailto:suzie.price@longbeach.gov)

**Cc:** [Julie Maleki](mailto:Julie.Maleki), [kristina.duggan@longbeach.gov](mailto:kristina.duggan@longbeach.gov), [gordana.kajer@verizon.net](mailto:gordana.kajer@verizon.net), [HouStories](mailto:HouStories), [Maureen Neeley](mailto:Maureen.Neeley), [pembertonlindaj@gmail.com](mailto:pembertonlindaj@gmail.com), [jshisko@yahoo.com](mailto:jshisko@yahoo.com), [SYDEY1@aol.com](mailto:SYDEY1@aol.com), [wmnealvincent@yahoo.com](mailto:wmnealvincent@yahoo.com), [Claudia schou](mailto:Claudia.schou)

Hello Councilwoman Price,

I am writing to add the support of the BHCA in re-instating the Park Ranger Program. I spoke with Claudia Schou from Friends of Bixby Park this morning; we have added our signature to the letter she is presenting to City Council next Tuesday.

We feel the Ranger program would add a significant level of public safety to our parks and, in doing so, make the park experience more pleasurable for residents of Long Beach.

Please call me if you have any questions or if I can provide more information in support of this at the Council meeting.

Regards,  
Dianne Sundstrom, President, BHCA  
562-221-5518