



Memorandum
City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve



Councilmember
ROBERTO URANGA
Long Beach, Seventh District

R-14

Date: September 7, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilwoman Cindy Allen, Second District
Councilmember Roberto Uranga, Seventh District
Councilmember Al Austin, Eighth District
Councilwoman Suzie Price, Third District

Subject: "Kid Zones" - Safe Park Spaces

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to request the City Attorney draft an ordinance to enact "Kid Zones," defined as safe spaces for children at local parks, playgrounds, beaches and other areas intended for use by children. "Kid Zones" would prohibit adults from entering or remaining within these designated areas without the accompaniment of a child under the age of 12.

BACKGROUND:

Safe outdoor spaces are vital to the healthy development of children. They provide exercise and recreation areas, emotional and social enrichment opportunities, and promote community use of public green spaces.

In playground design, everything from the height of the structure to the type of surfacing used is based on guidelines that reflect use by toddlers and children aged 2 to 5 and/or 5 to 12 years old. Adult use of playground equipment can result in structural damage that may lead to safety hazards for the children who use it after them. Residents have also recently reported adults misusing public playground spaces by engaging in other activities that discourage proper use by children and their guardians.

Given recent upticks in vandalism/damage and resident concerns about the safety and availability of the City's playgrounds to families, it is necessary we explore measures that promote safe outdoor spaces. By establishing "Kid Zones," this recommendation ensures the City's playground equipment and play areas specifically designed for children remain safe and available spaces for use by children. These zones would be easily identifiable and enforceable with signage identifying the area. This recommendation would not apply towards other public spaces in parks, including but not limited to benches, fields, and restrooms. Cities in New York, Oregon, Colorado, Florida and California have already adopted policies for "Kid Zones" to ensure the safety of children in playgrounds.

This matter has been reviewed by Budget Manager Grace H. Yoon on August 27, 2021.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This recommendation requests the City Attorney to draft an ordinance to enact "Kid Zones," that would prohibit adults from entering or remaining in designated areas defined as safe spaces for children. Drafting the ordinance is anticipated to require a minimal level of staff hours beyond normal budgeted scope of duties and is expected to have a minimal impact on existing City Council priorities. However, there are anticipated impacts related to implementation, including things such as signage, installation, enforcement, prosecution, etc. Staff will provide a report back on these fiscal and staffing impacts for City Council consideration before approval of the ordinance.