

Beverly Hills North Homeowners Association

P.O. Box 1984 Beverly Hills, California 90213

March 26, 2014

SAVE AND PRESERVE BEVERLY GARDENS PARK

Introduction

The purpose of this letter is to inform that City Hall is considering widening Santa Monica Boulevard (“SMBld”) by encroaching into and thereby diminishing Beverly Gardens Park. The inducing cause for this park intrusion is to provide bike lanes on both the north and south sides of SMBld.

While we support the re-paving and upgrading of SMBld, we oppose the misguided, unnecessary and cost excessive widening proposal. Accordingly, we urge the City Council to reject the proposed widening of SMBld into the park and offer the following reasons:

1. Parkland is precious, in short supply and must be preserved;
2. Bike lanes on heavily traffic-impacted streets create dangerous conditions; and
3. Cost Excessive – the initial estimate to complete the proposed widening project was 15 million dollars. Shortly thereafter, City Hall increased the estimate to somewhere between 30-35 million dollars.

Analysis

1. Our City has a deficit of greenspace. Public parkland must be preserved for the benefit of our community. To enhance the beneficial use of parks and increase parkland inventory, our City Council has crafted Joint Power Agreements over the years with the school district to lease the districts greenspace and athletic facilities for our residents when not interfering with any school activity. Seems self-evident that our existing parkland should be regarded as inviolate.

2. Bike lanes on heavily impacted boulevards create dangerous conditions. Of course, there are so-called “White Paper” analyses that argue just the opposite in theory. But would it offend your common sense to suggest that a bike lane on the north side of SMBld would create an un-safe condition when motorists make right hand turns across the bike lane to proceed in a northern direction while travelling in the west bound lane? Also, our common experience informs that we have a “blind spot” while driving that occurs in the rear right side which would necessarily endanger both the driver and the un-seen cyclist while making that right turn heading northbound.

New York City had in excess of four thousand bike related accidents/deaths last year. When these tragic and dangerous events occur on impacted streets, the City also incurs substantial additional liability. Common sense and common experience suggest that bike lanes are not appropriate for SMBld.

Proponents nevertheless argue that these SMBld bike lanes are necessary to promote and further a “green agenda.” Again, would it offend common sense to suggest that SMBld bike lanes would have a “de minimis,” if any, impact on traffic congestion, and/or pollution?

We suggest that our City Council probe alternative suitable routes for cyclists on less heavily trafficked streets to ensure the safety of all users.

Beverly Hills North Homeowners Association Board of Directors: *President* - Robert Tanenbaum; *Vice Presidents* - Victor Bardack and Lou Lipofsky; *Secretary/Treasurer* - Donna Schifrin; *Members* - Barry Brucker, Kathy Javors, Thomas Javors, Myra Lurie, Simi Neman, Isaac Neman and Patti Tanenbaum

3. Unfortunately, our City Council engaged consultants to advise with respect to the proposed "widening" of SMBlvd. That contract provides for the consultants to receive 1.9 million dollars. They have already received as of the last City Council meeting on March 4, 2014 \$193,000.

In our judgment, this entire matter should be spear-headed by our Public Works staff. They have demonstrated over the years to be expert and technically skilled in working through to completion in excellent fashion the entire SMBlvd upgrading and re-surfacing project.

From them, we would expect to receive for public analysis and discussion the following:

1. An inventory of all the pot-holes, cracked sidewalks, broken pipes and related issues;
2. A time-line indicating the duration of the remedial construction period; and
3. Construction costs.

The extra excessive expense for consultants, seems to us, to be unnecessary and wasteful. We have a superb staff quite capable to do the job.

Finally, we hold firm to the view, that a bike lane on SMBlvd that encroaches into Beverly Gardens Park, that is projected to be utilized by 70%-80% non-residents, that creates a dangerous condition for all operators and that is "cost excessive" is "NOT" in the best interests of our City. We must shepherd our resources. We have an obligation to enhance and preserve our parkland, for purposes both aesthetic and useful. To do otherwise would negatively impact our quality of life which we are committed to enhancing and enriching.

Publius
3/19/14

ON CIVILITY

Civility is important. It certainly would contribute to making our world, our environment, a kinder gentler and more agreeable place to be in.

Civility is about more than just politeness, although politeness is a necessary first step. It is about disagreeing without disrespect, seeking common ground as a starting point for dialogue about differences, listening past one's preconceptions, and teaching others to do the same. Civility is the hard work of staying present even with those with whom we have deep-rooted and fierce disagreements. It is political in the sense that it is a necessary prerequisite for civic action. But it is political, too, in the sense that it is about negotiation interpersonal power such that everyone's voice is heard, and nobody's is ignored.

Too often intelligent discourse by well-meaning citizens degrades to shouting and name calling. Sadly we have seen this in our City Hall and Council Chambers and in public meetings. People have differing views on important issues, they should be allowed to present them without ridicule and derogatory commentary. Our Council persons, who give of their personal time and abilities should not be the target of personal verbal assaults.

Freedom of speech entails people to speak their minds. Despite what various people might say, nothing excuses today's outbursts of incredibly ill-mannered speech and behavior.

The Beverly Hills North Homeowners Association has unanimously adopted a policy of Civility in its conducting of business and discourse. The members of our organization will be respectful of different opinions and points of view. Our attitudes will be an essential part in our discussions with Council members and the City officials.

Let better manners and more meaningful dialogue begin with all of us!

Respectfully submitted,
Victor Bardack and Louis Lipofsky
Vice Presidents
Beverly Hills North Homeowners Association