



WESTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
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October 12, 2025

Via Email to:

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Dear All Addressees:

On Thursday, October 9, the Board of the Westside Neighborhood Council (WNC) voted to endorse and communicate the concerns expressed in this letter, as requested by a constituent to be our comments on the Parks Needs Assessment report (PNA) as it pertains to key assets – or lack thereof within WNC boundaries.

While we believe maintenance attention should be given to the Palms Park, needless neglect is rapidly diminishing the capital life cycle of key amenities at the Cheviot Hills Recreation Center. Yet, the draft of the city's ongoing PNA report assigns a stunningly low priority to the Cheviot complex, ranking it 417 of 512 city deserving of upgrades and improvement. Therefore, the Westside Neighborhood Council (WNC) respectfully requests that the city place a considerably higher priority on addressing conditions there.

At stake are the needs not just of residents within WNC district but many surrounding communities. Indeed, the 183-acre facility plays an important regional role due to its considerable size and breadth of offerings, which would be impossible to recreate in today's market conditions.

The most egregious example of neglect is Cheviot's public swimming pool

and adjoining restrooms. As recently as 2019, the city documented the need for \$20 million in renovations to those amenities. Yet, they remain untouched and, as even the PNA recognizes, in the worst possible condition, which discourages adult users. Further, the pool's outmoded condition limits operations to the summer months, denying potential users up to nine months of access.

The pool complex isn't the only wasted resource at Cheviot. Of the park's five baseball fields, four are ranked in the worst possible condition and the fifth is in the second worst condition. Notably absent from the PNA is any mention of the condition of the clubhouse for the adjoining Rancho Park Golf Course, which was gutted prior to the pandemic for a renovation effort that has been stalled ever since.

That facility long served not just the golf course but the wider community, and, if renovated, could serve as hub for a wide range of activities for golfers and non-golfers alike, much like the recently renovated clubhouse at Penmar Golf Course. Yet, despite this obvious deficiency, the PNA website rates the Rancho Park Golf Course as in the best possible condition. Troublingly, the PDF of the report doesn't even mention the golf course.

The mismatch between dismal conditions of park amenities and Cheviot's low priority for improvement appears to stem from ill-considered scores on at least two scales. Cheviot's low score on PNA's "social equity" scale appears to stem from a lack of appreciation of the many communities that the park now serves and could better serve if it were in better shape.

While the park's eastern edge borders the high-resourced, low-density neighborhood of Cheviot Hills, it actually serves a large range of neighborhoods that are dramatically denser and far less resourced. Chief among those neighborhoods is historically dense Palms, which lies immediately to the south and is rapidly increasing in density as one-story commercial properties are being replaced by six-story-plus multifamily developments. As the report from the Palms Neighborhood Council indicates, the area is extremely park-poor and unable to acquire land to meet the escalating needs of the moderate- to low-income neighborhood due to market conditions. In better condition, Cheviot could meet more of Palms' needs, especially as relates to pool access.

To utilize a year-round pool with conditions acceptable for adult lap swimming, Palms residents now need to leave the city and go to Culver City, which struggles to accommodate extremely high park pressure at its single public pool (The Plunge). Yet, the Cheviot pool could accommodate many more Palms swimmers if improved and renovated to operate year-round.

Palms is just one community served by the park. The modest, immediately adjacent neighborhood of Rancho Park, isn't even named in the report as a service area, which it most certainly is. Cheviot also serves the modest neighborhood of Westside Village. Other dense, moderate- to low-

resourced neighborhoods that rely on the park include Pico-Robertson, Castle Heights and other neighborhoods within the South Robertson Neighborhood Council. By the PNA's own count, the Westside has fewer than half as many parks as the city's three other regions, making Cheviot's condition vital to the entire region.

Also questionable is Cheviot's low "park pressure" score in the PNA report. While the park's pool, restrooms and baseball fields may be perceived as underutilized right now, that is largely due to the abject state of these facilities. If the pool were renovated to be able to operate year-round -- as is a regional standard -- and to a condition acceptable for adult users -- it likely would be as busy as Culver City's Plunge. Clearly, the need exists. The PNA shows the Westside as the city's region with the fewest public pools and splash pads with only nine such facilities as compared to the East/Central's 12, South's 19 and Valley's 24. The condition of Cheviot's baseball fields is nearly as vital to the region. The PNA shows that the Westside nearly ties with the East/Central region in terms of the lowest number of sports fields city-wide. By comparison, the less dense Valley boasts nearly twice as many.

Whatever its origins, the low priority assigned to Cheviot Hills Recreation Center puts it at an unjustified disadvantage for much needed maintenance and improvements. Please take these issues into consideration when making necessary corrections to the document's draft, so that the park can assume its rightful role as a workhorse for the region and city.

For these reasons, the WNC hopes the ranking/status of our local parks is revised to reflect their role within the region. Thank you very much for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Terri Tippet

Terri Tippet
Chair, WNC