

Executive Officers

Chair – Phyllis Ling

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Secretary – Miho Murai

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—— Phone: (323) 716-3918 —— Email: hcnnc.board@gmail.com —— Website: hcnnc.org ——

May 27, 2025

To: CD1, CD14, Department of Recreation and Parks

Subject: Historic Cultural North NC - Park Needs Assessment Report

The Historic Cultural North Neighborhood Council (HCNNC) makes the following recommendations for the City of LA's Parks Needs Assessment:

- Increased fire mitigation throughout Elysian Park, especially on Radio Hill.
- Increased outreach and offers of shelter to the unhoused in Elysian Park, as well as all other city parks within HCNNC's boundaries (Ord Park, Alpine Park, and pocket parks), to discourage the proliferation of encampments in our parks.
- 24-hour park ranger patrols in Elysian Park.
- Activation of Radio Hill to encourage regular recreational use by residents.
- Sidewalks, bike lanes, and DASH bus service throughout Elysian Park to improve connectivity.
- Affordable after school and daycare programs through the Department of Recreation and Parks that would support low income parents in the community while enriching youth in activities through the parks system.
- Ensuring restrooms or porta potties are available at all parks 24 hours per day.
- Offering recreation classes for adults and for families at Alpine Recreation Center, on par with what is available in parks in more affluent areas.

Attached for reference is a request for action letter approved by the Historic Cultural North Neighborhood Council on February 24, 2025 that details the fire mitigation needs in Elysian Park.

We appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on the city's roadmap to equitable and fair capital investment in parks and recreation to meet the current and future needs of residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Phyllis Ling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phyllis Ling

Chair, Historic Cultural North Neighborhood Council

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February 24, 2025

To: CD1, CD13, Park Rangers, Department of Recreation and Parks

Cc: LAFD, LAPD

Subject: Request for Action on Elysian Park Fires

The Historic Cultural North Neighborhood Council represents communities that include homes in Solano Canyon, Chinatown, and Victor Heights that are flanked by Elysian Park. With embers capable of traveling for miles, Elysian Park is a tinderbox waiting to ignite. We need your partnership and collaboration to alleviate the extreme fire danger threatening the Elysian Park area.

Our immediate request is:

- **Remove all dead brush, trees, tumbleweeds, and limbs from the park immediately.**
- **Close Elysian Park during Red Flag Warnings.**
- **24-hour Park Ranger Patrols**
- **Remove all encampments in Elysian Park that are within 200 feet of any residential property, church, school, or commercial building.**
- **Increase outreach and offers of shelter to the unhoused in Elysian Park.**

Our communities are on high alert at all hours of the day and night. Both arson and campfire flare ups occur frequently in Elysian Park, especially on Radio Hill. Although the recent catastrophic fires in Altadena and the Pacific Palisades were not caused by unhoused individuals trying to keep warm, camp fires have in the past erupted in Elysian Park, less than 10 feet away from homes. If it is logistically impossible to eliminate all encampments in Elysian Park, there must be, at the very least, a buffer of defensible space from homes where the ban on camping is strictly enforced. In addition, camp fires and arsons in dry windy conditions are capable of spreading embers just as much as fires caused by other sources. We shouldn't have to wait for the widespread catastrophic destruction of our neighborhoods to mitigate the ongoing fire risks in Elysian Park.

What we don't want is for our park to be the place where the City relaxes enforcement of anti-camping bans because "out of sight is out of mind." The risks are not out of mind for residents who smell the campfires almost every night or hear the fire trucks racing down our streets. There is the reality that people living outdoors need to stay warm, and campfires in Elysian Park pose a huge safety risk. We need as much (if not more) attention, outreach, services, and effort to be dedicated to housing the unhoused who are camping in Elysian Park and as to those who are camping on our city streets. The Rangers and LAFD have responded rapidly and effectively to the continual fires that erupt on Radio Hill, but can we expect them to always be there in time when fires are burning there every night?

The LAPD's and LAFD's all-important communications system is also at risk. Radio Hill in Elysian Park houses communication towers for LAPD and LAFD. **Radio Hill is in a Very High Fire Hazard Zone**, and yet for years, encampments have been allowed. Over the years, fires have repeatedly broken out in and around Radio Hill. **If those towers caught fire and were destroyed, this could result in a catastrophic disruption of critical citywide communication systems.**

There are laws in place that are not being enforced.

LAMCC 63.44 - Overnight camping is not allowed in any City park, and yet people are living in the park and camping overnight.

LAMCC 57.25.14 Smoking and open fires are not allowed in the Park.

People - both unhoused and not - are constantly seen smoking or having open-fires in the park.

The Solano Canyon community is in a high-risk danger zone. Our over 300 wooden homes, along with Historic LAUSD school Solano Avenue Elementary, historic San Conrado Mission Church, and even Dodger Stadium are in the direct path of possible devastation. And as we've seen from the recent fires in Altadena and Pacific Palisades, a fire that starts in windy and dry conditions in a park such as Elysian Park can easily spread beyond the urban/wildland interface to destroy entire neighborhoods such as Solano Canyon, Chinatown, Echo Park, Elysian Valley, and Lincoln Heights, adding to the City's dire affordable housing shortage.

Very concerned residents have shared that they are ready to be of assistance and service in stopping the danger before it's too late. Residents are clearing areas around homes and yards, and are ready to mobilize able bodies to collect branches and tumbleweeds. We are requesting action from the City to assist residents in this effort. For example, where can residents take these branches and tumbleweeds for disposal?

Community members have asked the Dodgers organization to clear the brush area that surrounds their parking lots. Community members have reached out to Council District 1, Council District 13, and to LAPD. We understand that CD1 replied that the park gates are closed, and thus prevents activity that can result in fire. We disagree with this assessment because while the gates stop vehicular traffic, people can enter the park at any time by walking around the gates.

We respectfully request that all City entities addressed in this letter meet with stakeholders in our communities as soon as possible. We look forward to working with you on these concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Phyllis Ling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a stylized "L".

Phyllis Ling

Chair, Historic Cultural North Neighborhood Council