



Oakland Measure DD Community Coalition

TO: Mayor Libby Schaaf
Sabrina Landreth, City Administrator
Jason Mitchell, Director, Public Works Agency
Christine Daniel, Asst City Administrator for Homeless Programs
Joe DeVries, Asst to Asst City Administrator for Homeless Programs
J. Nicholas Williams, Director, Parks and Recreation
Anne E Kirkpatrick, Chief of Police

DATE: January 29, 2018

SUBJECT: Homeless Encampments and Public Access at Lake Merritt Estuary Channel

The matter of homeless encampments at Peralta Park and on the trails along the Lake Merritt Channel was discussed at the January 15 meeting of the Measure DD Community Coalition.

The Measure DD Community Coalition requests that homeless encampments under the Lake Merritt Blvd. Bridge and along the Lake Merritt Channel be permanently abated, and the area established as a “no camping” zone.

Wide, lighted walkable trails along both sides of the Channel were specifically identified in the Bond as safe and accessible public walks. The Coalition took notice that the trails and parkland installed by Measure DD are currently constrained or inaccessible to the public due to entrenched homeless encampments, particularly under both sides of the Lake Merritt Blvd. Bridge and in close proximity to the new Tot Lot near 10th Street. These campsites are violations of both the City's Municipal Code and the voters' mandate of the Measure DD election.

Impacts include:

- Park lighting (such as all the bridge soffit lights) has been deliberately destroyed to improve sleeping. This makes passage along the paths at night forbidding.
- Park irrigation has been destroyed, so the campers don't get watered by sprinklers at night.
- Tents and tarps on landscaped areas kill all plants beneath them, and have even killed large trees since the roots below get no winter rain.
- The formerly well-used Tot Lot is no longer used by children.
- The landscape areas and the tidal marsh are being used as a toilet.
- Large piles of garbage have accumulated.
- Trash is being tossed directly into the Lake and Channel.
- Essentially, our very limited public green space has been privatized by the campers, instead of being open to all.

The Coalition is aware of the City's intractable housing problems that have forced many Oakland families and individuals out of their homes and onto the streets and does not desire to magnify the misfortunes of the unsheltered population. However, some solution must be immediately implemented that equitably balances the right of safe public access and public health with the necessity and sufficiency of workable shelter.

Sincerely.

James E. Vann, on behalf of the Oakland Measure DD Community Coalition

CC: Lesley Estes, Program Manager, Measure DD Programs
Abel Guillen, Councilmember, District 2
Rebecca Kaplan, Councilmember, City At-Large