

WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

July 14, 2021

Agenda Item # 14

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July 7, 2021

Los Angeles City Council 2021 Redistricting Commission
redistricting.lacity@lacity.org

Subject: Importance of maintaining Westwood Community Plan Area within a single Los Angeles City Council District

Dear Commissioners:

I appreciate this opportunity to tell you about our Westwood Community and why it is important that the entire community be incorporated within a single Council district located south of Mulholland Dr.

I am writing as a one who has lived, worked, and owned property in the Westwood area since 1962 and who remembers well the ill-conceived and monumentally inefficient 1993 redistricting that split the Westwood area into three separate council districts. The Westwood area has long since been reunited into a single district--Council District 5— and should remain so.

1. Westwood is geographically compact and has strong historical communities of interest

Westwood's boundaries and identity date from the 1920's when the Janss Investment Corporation undertook to develop eleven tracts extending west from Beverly Hills to Sepulveda Blvd. and south from Sunset Blvd. to Pico Blvd. North of Wilshire Blvd., the Janss plan provided a new University of California campus surrounded by residential neighborhoods (Westwood Hills and Holmby Westwood), served by a new business district (Westwood Village). These areas, together with residential tracts south of Wilshire and North of Santa Monica comprise the Westwood Community Plan area.

Within the Westwood Community Plan Area, residents are served by established schools and religious institutions, including Warner Ave., Fairburn Ave., and St. Paul's elementary schools and Emerson Junior High School. Churches include St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church, Sinai Temple, Westwood United Methodist Church, Westwood Presbyterian Church, and Westwood Hills Christian Church among others.

In the services realm, Westwood has two parks, the Westwood Recreation Center and Holmby Park, two Los Angeles Fire Stations and a Level 1 Emergency Trauma Center, located at UCLA's Reagan Hospital, and is represented within the City neighborhood council system by the Westwood Neighborhood Council.

In other areas, Westwood is fortunate to have UCLA as an economic, intellectual, and cultural engine, driving its economy by providing jobs and generating billions of dollars in spending. UCLA's daily population, which includes many residents in the Westwood Community Plan area, exceeds 80,000 students, faculty and employees. In addition thousands of hospital and medical center patients and visitors, adult education students, museum and theater patrons, sports fans and tourists visit Westwood daily.

2. Shared Issues Unite Westwood Community

*TRANSPORTATION is the biggest single issue confronting the Westwood Community. Westwood is home to one of the country's busiest intersections and three major transportation corridors; the 405 Freeway linking northern and southern county areas; Wilshire Blvd. linking east and west; and Westwood Blvd. linking the newly completed EXPO line with the UCLA Campus. The 405 Freeway serves as a clearly defined community boundary as does the City of Beverly Hills. A major subway terminal is under construction at Wilshire and Westwood Blvds. and a new north-south rail connection to LAX via the Sepulveda Pass and 405 is proposed.

*PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE is an issue closely related to expansion of the roadway and transit network. How to plan to accommodate changes brought about by changes in modes of transportation and the possibility of increased population and at the same time retain the unique qualities of place related to Westwood's history.

*UCLA EXPANSION: How to accommodate expansion of UCLA enrollment and facilities without sacrificing quality of life for residents has and will continue to be a major issue among Westwood Community Plan area residents who are challenged to accommodate demands for new transportation modes, such as bicycle lanes, additional housing and facilities.

*INFRASTRUCTURE AND CITY SERVICES: Residents of the area share a concern arising from aging infrastructure demonstrated most recently by a major project underway to replace deteriorating water pipes under Sunset Blvd. Off-campus student housing generates special demands on building code enforcement and sanitation. Similarly, Westwood's two parks experience very heavy use and recently have become encampments for un-housed persons.

3. Westwood should be included within a single council district located south of Mulholland Drive.

While there may be other communities of interest with Westwood which should be grouped with Westwood in a single Council district, because of the short notice for this hearing and the lack of demographic data, we are not able to provide a comprehensive proposal at this time. The Committee should expect to receive additional submissions of written testimony after the requisite data become available.

Meanwhile, in the interest of fair and efficient government, this Committee should recognize the common interests and issues shared by the Westwood community by including the entire Westwood Community Plan Area within a single Council district located south of Mulholland Dr. In addition, if at all possible, in the interest of shared concerns and efficiency, that district should include the entire original Westwood Janss tract area.

Very sincerely,

Carole Magnuson
Past President, Westwood Hills Property Owners Association