

New Chief Counts On LBPD To Shine

Neighbors Rally 'Round

Council Offers Strong Support

Dear Chief Jim McDonnell,

May I humbly welcome you and your family to our fine city of Long Beach. After reading the recent Press Telegram article about your style of leadership, I am absolutely convinced that you are the right man for the right job, and at the right time. Why? Because you are clearly bringing new ears, new eyes, and hopefully **new future forward ideas** to our city and its diverse communities.

While I know darn well that the job of Chief of Police is usually not mapped out to be a day at the beach, but I am writing this to hopefully earn your support for a program called:

“A DAY AT THE BEACH” or “A WALK IN THE PARK”



Statewide I have already shared these ideas with several other civic leaders, who have all eagerly encouraged me to please write these concepts up so they could present them to their local city council(s).

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This two-part blueprint is extremely easy to adopt, manage, and deploy.

Part One: A kid or adult who receives a citation for skating or biking, either in a Public park or on the street, can opt to perform park or beach clean up in exchange of their fine. Thus the programs title: A Day At The Beach.

Part Two: The current cost for any city to enforce these tickets, is tying up valuable human and financial resources of law enforcement, bogging down the Juvenile system, and creating a log jam in our courts, to the point where our **cities are actually losing money. Yes losing.** Largely in response to this fourteen other cities in California including the entire state of Arizona, and Oregon have already come to the conclusion that **ticketing in parks for safety gear is no longer a financially sustainable solution** and have adopted **“Skate At Your Own Risk.”**

HOW DOES A CITY BENEFIT FROM “A DAY AT THE BEACH”

- 1) **Reduces systemic costs** across the board.
- 2) **Improves relations between the public and law enforcement.** The Police are no longer “Kid’s Enemy Number One.” The Police are no longer ad hoc park baby sitters for parents who either can’t, or are unwilling, or unable to put their kids into safety gear. Police in “Skate At Your Own Rick” parks are now once again enjoying being viewed by our kids in a whole new light - as “The Good Guys.” Look folks, we all also want to break up gangs, but in order to achieve this we desperately need to start building back trust and reopen communication with our kids. Our parks are the pressure relief valves for all our neighborhoods. Let’s start there.
- 3) **Cleans up our parks and beaches.** I’ve met with folks from the Sierra Club, Surfrider Foundation, and our local hero’s John Rudd’s 30 minute Beach Clean Up Crew who have offered to share their “how-to-knowledge” in order to help set realistic program goals. So the expertise is in place, and standing by. I also know that our Mayor Bob Foster, and several City Council members including Suja Lowenthal, Gary Delong, Gerrie Schipske, and Vice Mayor Val Lerch, are themselves well known passionate supporters of beach and water clean up. So this is not at all a hard sell. Park clean up is also another obvious option for inland neighborhoods and communities. Thus the alternate title: A Walk In The Park.

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- 4) **The Program Pays for itself:** because we recycle the plastic, paper, glass, and aluminum cans. This money offsets **hard costs, which are only trash bags, plastic gloves, and reusable green “Day At The Beach” vests.** Things like bottled water, or even treats could even be donated by local businesses as a **thank you.** Imagine that. I can. I'll donate.
- 5) **Helps teach our younger *community responsibility, personal responsibility, and environmental stewardship.*** A ticket in this sense can now be viewed as an “esteem builder” rather than simply a war on parent's pocket books.
- 6) **Project easily overseen** by Parks Recreation and Marine who are already the hands on maid service for the ever-increasing flow of trash from the L.A. River system to our beaches. This effort already costs all of the City of Long Beach enormous amounts of money and human resources to run, and yet our parks and especially our beaches remain filthy. Let's roll up our sleeves.
- 7) **My favorite benefit for the collective community, is that kids will start to go back to the parks rather than retreat to the streets. Here everyone benefits.**

IMMEDIATE FISCAL BENEFIT FOR OUR POLICE

Throughout California the appetite for fiscal change is rife. The buck stops here. **With less money, there are less services to go around, and now everyone is being asked to do more with less including Law Enforcement. Something has to give.** Police have been recently forced to make budget decisions that say just one year ago would be unthinkable. **Cell phones have now been cut from Long Beach Law Enforcement.** What? Hey you guys need \$287,000.00?

“SKATE AT YOUR OWN RISK” IS A GAME CHANGER IN SAN DIEGO AND THEY SAVED \$287,000.00

The City of San Diego who last year was 43 Million in the red saved, that's right **SAVED \$287,000.00 just last year by NOT ticketing skaters** for non-compliance with wearing safety gear. Imagine that.

For those of us who are old enough may remember, the 55 mile per hour speed limit. Their slogan was “Save Gas, Save Lives, Drive 55.” It ended, not because of public outcry, but rather **because it bogged down the California court system and cost cities more to manage those tickets than they were bringing in.**

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Throughout California our courts are still clogged, yet this year we've now issued **court black out days because of budget issues**. Something has to give.

Does the City of San Diego, or Oregon and Arizona, with "Skate At Your Own

Risk," still have problems with bikes, skaters, and gangs, crime, graffiti, drugs, and violence? Of course.

However, if they deploy A DAY AT THE BEACH, or A WALK IN THE PARK, I believe they will all save even more money, and reap far-reaching rewards that are values not factored into a ticket.

This is tangible. When a skateboarder, biker, or a scooter kid, gets a ticket and cannot afford to pay it, because the tickets today are priced so high that they are actually becoming a hardship for many families. So what do the kids do? They stop going to our parks and turn to the streets for their playground. Just in a pure logistical sense our streets are exponentially larger in scale and thus far more costly to Police to supervise and patrol. Here we are all losing.

More over when our kids chose the streets, they find problems that no amount of safety gear can protect them from. What I have learned as a parent, as a community service veteran, and through working with Boy Scouts, is that **the biggest enemy to all of our kids is boredom**. When our kids become bored, they seek to self-nurture. When those same kids who are already bored also become rejected by society, by us – well you tell me what happens next.

Hello, my name is Geoff Millar, many members of my family are Long Beach residents. My dad is 81 and also a Long Beach resident and local commercial property owner here for 50 years. I have a wife and four kids. One is grown up and pursuing a career as a photographer, and three attend Wilson, Rogers, and Naples Academy. At the bottom of this letter I have attached a web link so that you can put a face on who I am, and where I am coming from. The "**Latest News**" section has a few press articles, along with the posting of this letter.

I have worked with kids on a pro bono basis for years, working hand-in-hand with civic leaders, social organizations, law enforcement, and "A" list industry throughout California and beyond.

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My goal in writing this is to win your valued input and support, along with any suggestions you may have in order to make A DAY AT THE BEACH a reality.

First and foremost I would love this program to start here in Long Beach, because I live here. So I have taken the liberty to cc this letter out to the Mayor and all members of City Council, and to the head of Parks Recreation and Marine in order to plant the seed and hopefully raise top down awareness to achieve group consensus.

Because I believe that the program can, and should be adopted in any city throughout all of California I have also forwarded this letter to several other folks in law enforcement, and city leadership throughout the state, along with a few magazines, and newspapers in order to raise bottom up public awareness.

Folks I'm no V.I.P., I'm not running for public office, I'm just a sideline cheerleader, who is playing Johnny Appleseed to what I consider a darn good idea. I believe that any civic leader facing today's budget hysteria, who can make lemonade out of lemons, and do more with less, can become an instant hero and role model for their community or even an entire state to pivot and follow, and it's as easy as A DAY AT THE BEACH or A WALK IN THE PARK. The idea almost sells itself right?

At your service,

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