



Senior Talk With Mike Bonin

CD11 Community Meeting

Hosted by the Mar Vista Community Council Aging in Place Committee and Windward School

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Organizers: Mike Ai - CD 11 Deputy District Director, Sherri Akers & Tatjana Leuthi – Co-Chairs of the [MVCC Aging in Place Committee](#), Jacqueline Varney - Assistant Director of Operations of [Windward School](#).

A little over two years ago, Tatjana and Sherri held a workshop exploring the needs, desires, fears, and hopes of our seniors related to aging in our community. A group of about 20 seniors identified the core concerns below.

- Maintaining independence
- Safety & living alone
- Finances on a fixed or restricted income
- Lack of concerned, local relatives able to help
- Companionship & community vs potential isolation
- Amenities and accommodations in the community
- Alternatives to traditional Assisted Living Facilities

Several dozen seniors from throughout the Westside met at [Windward School](#) on November 22nd for a thoughtful discussion with Mike Bonin, moderated by [Sherri Akers](#), about how the City and our neighborhoods can better serve our seniors. It is crucial for the City to understand how some of the largest and thorniest issues we face -- transportation, affordable housing, public safety -- have a disproportionate impact upon our seniors.

Mike opened the evening sharing his intention to discuss the needs of our Seniors in CD11 and throughout Los Angeles.

There are certain things that the city does for seniors that are good. Then there are other issues that come up in the city that impact seniors that have presented and voiced by the AIP committee. Mike Bonin wants to hear what the city is doing well, and not doing well, and what you may need more of. What kind of facilities do you use in the neighborhood? Like the Senior Center? What kind of services / activities would you like?

Integration and Intergenerational:

Discussion about the Felicia Mahood Senior Center and what is needed in senior services. A speaker addressed that there has been an age segregated concept of services. It would be good to generate intergenerational integration into the CD11 centers of and integrate seniors with schools, or childcare / daycare centers.

Mike: we could utilize more government building for such purposes. Would like to develop the West LA District Office building to have a library, senior center, childcare center and low income housing.

Mentioned - [Music Mends Minds](#) – a choir for seniors who are challenged with dementia and high school students offered at Windward School.

Mike referenced a CD11 preschool in a senior's facility (more info to follow).

Connect with like-minded others with a common need/situation/

A speaker would love to have an avenue to connect with people in her neighborhood that have similar situations and challenges (connect with like-minded others to create support).

Easier logistics and support to collaborate within our community

How can we communicate better about services available in our community (for example, [Stop Senior Scams Acting Program](#), [Felicia Mahood](#), [Affordable Living for the Aging](#), [Westside Pacific Villages](#), [JFS](#))?

To know more about what programs are available in our community for seniors, what's a good way to communicate with you? How do you get information about local events?

- Argonaut (local weekly newspapers) (7)
- Email newsletter's like Community Council or local home owners group (17)
- Facebook (4)
- Nextdoor.com (16)

For seniors not computer savvy, is there a way to contact through phone calls or mail?

Identification or notification of seniors in need (various needs) through the neighborhood watch network could function as a supportive in that intention.

Who belongs into a neighborhood watch? (10). Discussion about concerns to host these meetings in private homes for security and safety reasons. **Note** - *After the meeting, Jacqueline Varney offered Windwards assistance in hosting Neighborhood Watch meetings. (Perhaps hosting meetings in local schools and places of worship would be a solution?)*

Discussion after the meeting – The case of Nancy Paulikas, the woman with Alzheimers who went missing from LACMA and is still missing 6 weeks later demonstrates an issue of great concern and a breakdown in our ability to assist our most vulnerable residents.

<http://nancyissinging.blogspot.com/>

Housing and Granny Flats?

One attendee was trying to create a nanny flat, but permits / codes kept changing (converting your garage, or building/adding on to your current property). She wants to age in place and is caring for a spouse with Alzheimers. Adding a Granny Flat is essential to staying in her home for supplemental income and potentially caregiving later on.

Note – first public hearing on the proposed ordinance will be held on December 15th – info available here - <http://www.marvista.org/node/3818>

Sherri: 25% of aging boomers do not have kids. Isolation is an issue, a health issue, this concept of "I want to age in my house" we want to flip that and call it "I want to age in my community". If something happens, let's say you fall, you want somebody nearby. Our role, at AIP, and the issue Mike Bonin is looking at, is identifying what aspects are important to seniors.

Short Term Rentals:

Attendee: This is helping me on a lot of levels. But the main benefit is having people around me. I rent over 300 days of the year.

Attendee: we want to age in our house. With small fixed pension, I don't know what we would do if we couldn't do AirBnB anymore. I don't want to move in with my kids.

Short-term rentals:

Mike: is one of the issues that is challenging to discuss. We want to support situations you just described. On the other hand, we have seniors who lost their home because of short-term rentals due buyouts into a defacto hotel. We are driving to find a way to distinguish between those two categories. One is that you can use your primary residence. The question is...there are still a lot of folks, who do now know their neighbors because of the high turnover. There is a lot of pressure from certain neighborhoods with big turnover to put a cap on short-term rental. That's an issue the council wrestles with.

Attendee: I'm also a short-term rental host because I can maintain my independence, generating income for myself creating financial security, and it helps me avoid isolation. I've been unemployed for four years and renting out has allowed me to survive.

Attendees expressing this concern and renting out space in their home live in Venice, Mar Vista, Westchester, Brentwood.

Mike: there are certain policy issues we can address and others need to be address by the city: At City Hall we tend to hear from certain people, we would like to hear from you. I understand it might be hard for you to come down, if you can organize a group of people I will be happy to organize a bus for you to come down. **Note** – *this is something where the AIP committee could potentially act as an organizer and will discuss further.*

The city of LA has zoning, and transient occupancy is not zoned for residential areas. Government is not fast, it's designed to be slow and have long processes. Whenever we try to do something with technology and we try to get something passed, the technology has already changed.

Roommates

The conversation about short term rentals continued into a discussion about the dangers of isolation and the benefit of roommates. NYU has launched a program where students can get student housing with seniors in the community – could we develop something like that here with UCLA, SMC, LMU etc? <https://the1851chronicle.org/2016/11/19/senior-housing-takes-on-new-meaning/>. Many seniors have fond memories of hosting international exchange students – this program is similar.

[Affordable Living for the Aging](#) offers a wonderful program where seniors living alone who have a guest room and bath are matched with thoroughly vetted community members who need affordable housing.

Technology:

Sherri: we are sitting here close to Silicon Beach, and you Mike are very well connected to these executives. It would be great to have them involved in a technology needs-assessment meeting like this today and give them feedback on what is needed in the community. Mike was enthusiastic about exploring this possibility.

Attendee: there is a senior center in LA that puts on a conference on technology for seniors around technology on aging. *Note – will try to get info and add to notes.*

Attendee: I run a senior center in West Hollywood, yes, there is transportation, Jewish family services offers transportation. LAUSD teachers used to teach classes at our center, and we have other people who teach classes.

LAUSD used to teach classes for older adults, however, a lot of these teachers have been let go over the last couple years.

[Emeritus College](#) also offers great classes.

Great Streets Initiative:

Only about 10 were familiar with it.

Mike: When Mayor Garcetti took office, he wanted to do a discreet project here and there to energize and transform some areas. Great Streets Initiative is part of that project. We in Mar Vista set the standard for outreach and had people participate via surveys, and included local businesses to participate. Goals: making the area safer to walk and bike and making it a town center. We picked this area, because this was a street that began to take off and we could add some value to this stretch of street. Had to negotiate with the State, and now we own the street. Now we have more leverage to do things like create more mid-walk cross streets, narrow the street to slow down traffic, create outdoor seating around restaurants, plant more trees, have art. Turn it into a Main Street, create more traction and connect.

Attendee: I have some concerns about traffic if the street is narrowed. After Ocean Park Blvd narrowed down, the traffic took other routes and come up through neighborhoods.

Mike: we are doing traffic counts....

Transportation:

Attendee: I use Uber sometimes, but not every senior is comfortable not knowing who the driver is. Also, not every senior has a cell phone. It would be great if that would be adjusted for seniors to make it easier for a senior to "order" an uber.

[Westside Pacific Village](#) provides drivers, services and support – same concept, to help seniors aging in place (driving, taking out trash, help at home, etc).

There is a lack of information about organization and services that are available for seniors.

Attendee: I'm on the board of [Westside Pacific Village](#) and we get no support outside of MVCC AIP. Mike offered to meet to research funding opportunities.

Sherri – there is a shortage of caregivers that is only getting worse. If our home is not easily reached by public transportation it will be more difficult to hire home help.

Topics – those highlighted were touched on –

Driving

Public Transportation

Caregivers

Co-Housing

Granny Flats

Roommates

Intergenerational

Short Term Rentals

Senior Center

Great Street

Curb Cuts

Sidewalks

Shopping

Event Announcements:

Mar Vista Chamber of Commerce is doing an event, called "[Make It Mar Vista](#)" on Nov 28th, to encourage purchasing from our local small businesses.

The next [Mar Vista Artwalk](#) will be on December 1st.

Future meetings will be planned as part of the [Purposeful Aging LA](#) directive which will be doing a two year project of needs assessments. See screen shot below from the presentation by Laura Trejo at the Congress of Neighborhoods.

