

Venice BID Approved

By **Mei** - August 24, 2016



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The Los Angeles City Council has voted to certify the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) at Venice Beach.

In the special assessment district balloting, the BID was approved overwhelmingly, 77% to 23%. The City of Los Angeles, which has property in the BID area, supported formation of the BID, but even if the City had not cast its ballot, the BID would have been approved by a more than 2-1 margin.

"The Venice Beach BID will help create a cleaner and safer boardwalk for everyone to enjoy. BIDs are a commonly-used tool to help supplement public services for neighborhoods, and this BID will make it possible for us to expand the services that the neighborhood deserves. It is the kind of smart and effective public-private partnership we need," says Councilmember Mike Bonin.

Bonin has advocated for the creation of a BID since he was a candidate for City Council, often citing the added services a BID would bring Venice Beach – one of the most visited tourist destinations in the world.

However in the lead up to yesterday's approval of the BID many in Venice voiced concerns.

"During the approval process many people opposed to the BID, from inside and outside the assessment area, raised concerns about the BID. I have heard and respect those concerns, and I am committed to working with BID opponents to make sure that the BID is a vehicle that celebrates what it is special about Venice — its funky character, its diversity, and its tolerance of people of all walks of life," says Bonin.

Critics were afraid that the voting structure was not fair. However Bonin says is was consistent with the voting structure “used for each of the 42 BIDs and special assessment districts across Los Angeles and the hundreds of BIDs and special assessment districts throughout the state. The voting process complies with state law, and is done this way so that votes are based on how much property owners will be asked to pay into the BID.”

Since the City of Los Angeles owns land within the Venice BID boundaries it was able to vote. “State law says that public/government parcels are not exempt from assessments, and since anyone who will be assessed gets a vote, the City is allowed to vote based on the total value of the property it owns within the BID boundaries,” says Bonin.

Bonin says that State laws prevent gerrymandering. “The Venice BID boundaries were determined based on the same rules as every other BID, which excludes any residentially-zoned land (but includes commercially-zoned, industrially-zoned and government/public facilities-zoned parcels). The BID proponents decided to include all of the property that is eligible for assessment west of Abbot Kinney (which already has a Merchant’s Association that functions similarly to a BID). This is consistent with state and local law.”

As far as concerns that the BID will push crime and grime off the Boardwalk and into residential areas of Venice, Bonin says, “ the goal is not to push the problem elsewhere, but to provide a safer community for everyone. We will not tolerate an approach that sweeps people off of the Boardwalk into nearby neighborhoods, and the goal here is to provide a safer and cleaner neighborhood for everyone to enjoy.”



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