



Committee Members:

Co-Chairperson Heath Kline, 818-312-5601

Co-Chairperson August Steurer,

Peter Haber, Julie Waltrip, and Aaron Williams

Si requiere servicios de traducción, favor de avisar al Concejo Vecinal 3 días de trabajo (72 horas) antes del evento. Por favor contacte Karen DiaBiase, Secretaria, al 818-639-9444 o por correo electrónico www.whcouncil.org para avisar al Concejo Vecinal.

IN CONFORMITY WITH THE OCTOBER 6, 2023 ENACTMENT OF CALIFORNIA SENATE BILL 411 (PORTANTINO) AND LA CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL ON NOVEMBER 1, 2023, THIS WOODLAND HILLS WARNER CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE AVAILABLE VIRTUALLY.

Every person wishing to address the Committee must enter the meeting via the above Zoom link or dial (669) 900-6833 and enter **811 6494 5111**, and then press # to join the meeting. When prompted by the presiding officer to provide public input at the **Meeting of the Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council [WHWCNC] WHIP Committee [WHIP]** meeting, the public will be requested to dial *9 by phone or use the Raise Hand option on Zoom, to address the **WHIP** on any agenda item before the **WHIP takes action** on an item. Comments from the public on agenda items will be heard only when the respective item is being considered.

Comments from the public on other matters not appearing on the agenda that are within the **WHIP's** jurisdiction will be heard during the General Public Comment period. Please note that under the Brown Act, the **WHIP** is prevented from acting on a matter that you bring to its attention during the General Public Comment period; however, the issue raised by a public member may become the subject of a future **WHWCNC** Board or **WHIP** meeting. Public comment is limited to 2 minutes per speaker unless adjusted by the presiding officer of the **WHIP**.

SB 411 Updates:

In the event of a disruption that prevents the **WHIP** from broadcasting the meeting to members of the public using the call-in option or internet-based service option, or in the event of a disruption within the **WHIP** control that prevents members of the public from offering public comments using the call-in option or internet-based service option, the **WHIP** shall take no further action on items appearing on the meeting agenda until public access to the meeting via the call-in option or internet-based service option is restored. Actions taken on agenda items during a disruption that prevents the **WHIP** from broadcasting the meeting may be challenged pursuant to Section 54960.1.

The **WHIP** shall not require public comments to be submitted in advance of the meeting and shall provide an opportunity for the public to address the **WHIP** and offer comments in real time.

Notwithstanding Section 54953.3, an individual desiring to provide public comment using an internet website, or other online platform, not under the control of the **WHIP**, that requires registration to log in to a teleconference may be required to register as required by the third-party internet website or online platform to participate.

(i) If the **WHIP** provides a timed public comment period for each agenda item shall not close the public comment period for the agenda item, or the opportunity to register, pursuant to subparagraph to provide public comment until that timed public comment period has elapsed.

(ii) If the **WHIP** does not provide a timed public comment period, but takes public comment separately on each agenda item, shall allow a reasonable amount of time per agenda item to allow public members the opportunity to provide public comment, including time for members of the public to register pursuant to subparagraph (D), or otherwise be recognized for the purpose of providing public comment.

(iii) If the **WHIP** provides a timed general public comment period that does not correspond to a specific agenda item, then it shall not close the public comment period or the opportunity to register, pursuant to subparagraph (D), until the timed general public comment period has elapsed.

Contact Person: Heath Kline, 818-312-5601

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Virtual SPECIAL Meeting Agenda

**A WHIP Committee Meeting Will be Held:
Wednesday, April 24, 2024, @ 7:00 pm**

Zoom Meeting Online or By Telephone

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81164945111>

Or Dial **(669) 900-6833** to Join the Meeting

Then Enter This Webinar ID: **811 6494 5111** and Press #

1. Call to Order

2. Establish Quorum:

Roll Call — Peter Haber, Heath Kline, August Steurer, Julie Waltrip, Aaron Williams

3. Comments from the Public regarding Issues NOT on the Agenda but within the Committee's purview for later action.

All public comments are limited to 2 minutes per speaker unless adjusted by the presiding member of the Committee.

4. Approval of Minutes for past meetings:

Roll Call Votes

5. Agenda Items for Discussion and Possible Action by the Committee:

Item No (A): Speaking Rights for Community Councils CF 15-0389-S2

*Discussion and possible action on a draft motion
Board Approval of a CIS in opposition to granting
Community Councils speaking rights equal to
Neighborhood Councils.*

The Los Angeles City Council is considering a motion (CF 15-0389-S2) to grant Community Councils the same speaking rights at city meetings as Certified Neighborhood Councils. However, Community Councils are not subject to the same requirements and oversight as Neighborhood Councils, which ensure transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct. These include the Brown Act, Public Records Act, policies of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, City Clerk's Neighborhood Council funding program, and Elections Division. Additionally, Neighborhood

Council members must complete Ethics, Anti-bias, and Gender Bias training and comply with the Code of Conduct.

The advantages of Community Councils, such as fewer regulations, ability to raise outside funds, engage in political activities, and control membership, may tempt some Certified Neighborhood Councils to decertify. This could lead to an unequal playing field, misrepresentation of community interests, confusion for community members, and potential decertification of Neighborhood Councils. Disgruntled community members could also form competing Community Councils.

The co-existence of Community Councils and Neighborhood Councils in the same area could result in duplication of efforts, competition for resources and attention, and undermining of Neighborhood Council legitimacy. Requiring city officials to give equal time and attention to both types of councils could strain limited resources and divert staff time from working with formally recognized and regulated Neighborhood Councils.

Item No (B): CF 23-0172 Reduced requirements for Faith-Based Owned and Non-Profit Educational Organization Affordable Housing Projects

Discussion and possible action on a draft motion Board Approval of a CIS in opposition unless amended to relaxing requirements of SB4. In summary:

The Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council (WHWCNC) opposes, unless amended, the action recommended by city planning in CF-23-0172 regarding affordable housing development on nonprofit-owned properties under Senate Bill 4 (SB 4). While WHWCNC recognizes the need for affordable housing and the potential for religious institutions and nonprofits to contribute, they have concerns about the implementation of SB 4 and the proposed city ordinance. WHWCNC believes the ownership requirement in SB 4 should be maintained to prevent developers' abuse. They support allowing 20% market-rate units for feasibility, but contingent upon community input. They recommend limiting reduced requirements to properties on commercial corridors or adjacent to existing facilities to mitigate impacts on single-family neighborhoods. WHWCNC is concerned about the loss of neighborhood amenities and increased demands on city services. They recommend requiring ground-floor commercial space or community facilities, community benefit agreements, and robust community input. They also suggest minimum requirements for property management and guidance on tax implications for land subdivisions and ground leasing. WHWCNC urges the city to consider these issues and looks forward to working with stakeholders to address affordable housing needs while ensuring responsible development and community benefit.

See attached draft CIS.

Roll Call Vote

Item No (C): Neighborhood Council Funding as part of the City Budget CF 24-0600

Discussion and possible action on a revised previous motion referred to the committee for amendment and resubmission for a Board approval of a CIS seeking increased funding for Neighborhood Councils. In summary:

The Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council Board seeks the collaboration of Bob Blumenfield, City Council Budget Committee Chair, and Mayor Bass to address the funding challenges Neighborhood Councils (NCs) face in Los Angeles. The CIS, intended for submission to the city's 2024-2025 budget discussions, underscores the disparity between the city's budget growth and the diminishing funding allocated to NCs. Initially provided with \$50,000, NCs now operate with a significantly reduced budget of \$32,000, which, when adjusted for inflation, falls short by \$53,000 of what is needed to maintain their initial operational fiscal capacity. The CIS calls for immediate budget increases to match inflation-adjusted levels, reinstatement of the 3-year fund rollover policy, a base-plus-per-resident funding model, and additional support for NCs with unique challenges. It highlights the increased costs associated with digital and traditional stakeholder engagement, the necessity for professional digital marketing skills, and the financial strain of maintaining a digital presence across multiple platforms. The motion also points out NCs' dilemma between funding community non-profits through Neighborhood Purpose Grants and fulfilling their primary goals. The CIS seeks support from the City to equip NCs with the necessary resources for effective community engagement in the digital era, emphasizing the critical role of digital communication in involving stakeholders in city governance. See attached draft CIS.

Roll Call Vote

Item No (D) – Amending Los Angeles Charter Article IX as part of CF 23-1027

A discussion with possible action to request the Board issue a Community Impact Statement suggesting Revisions to Article IX of the Los Angeles City Charter.

Article IX of the Los Angeles City Charter established the Neighborhood Council system as a critical component of the City's governance structure over 20 years ago. The City Council is considering a ballot initiative to amend several Articles of the City Charter. There is the opportunity to propose revisions to Article IX to strengthen this system's effectiveness, inclusivity, and impact by clarifying roles and responsibilities, enhancing support and resources, and promoting greater collaboration between Neighborhood Councils and City government.

In summary, the proposed CIS addresses the following:

The Los Angeles Neighborhood Council system, comprising 99 councils and over 1,300 dedicated volunteers, faces significant operational challenges that hinder its ability to effectively serve communities. Roughly one-third of councils struggle to achieve quorum, a symptom of a deeper pattern of neglect and lack of support. These challenges prevent councils from advocating for their communities and providing vital services. The proposed revisions to Article IX of the City Charter aim to address these issues by creating a more supportive, empowering, and sustainable framework for Neighborhood Councils. The amendments seek to ensure adequate funding, training, and resources, clarify the responsibilities of city officials, and establish regular processes for evaluation and improvement. By enshrining these reforms in the City Charter, the revisions aim to create a more resilient and responsive system that values and supports the work of Neighborhood Councils and their volunteers.

See attached draft CIS and Draft Article IX

Roll Call Vote

The Recommended Draft Document Proposes Key Revisions to Article IX of the City Charter and Justifications:

1. Purpose and Mission

- Clarifies the role of Neighborhood Councils as the primary conduit for community engagement and empowerment.
- Emphasizes the importance of diverse and inclusive participation.
- Mandates City officials to recognize and support Neighborhood Councils as partners in governance.
- Justification: Provides a clear, compelling vision for the Neighborhood Council system and institutionalizes its importance within City governance.

2. Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE)

- Expands DONE's responsibilities to include training, resources, and support for Neighborhood Councils.
- Emphasizes DONE's role in facilitating collaboration between Neighborhood Councils and City Departments.
- Mandates DONE to provide digital tools, platforms, and training to support Neighborhood Councils.
- Justification: Strengthens DONE's capacity to support and empower Neighborhood Councils, particularly in the digital age.

3. City Departments and Officials

- City Departments must proactively engage with Neighborhood Councils and incorporate their input into decision-making.
- Mandates timely and substantive responses to Neighborhood Council communications and recommendations.
- Obliges the City Council and Mayor to provide adequate funding and resources for the Neighborhood Council system.
- Justification: Institutionalizes a strong, collaborative relationship between Neighborhood Councils and City government.

4. Neighborhood Council Powers and Operations

- Clarifies the scope and purpose of Neighborhood Purpose Grants (NPGs).
- Strengthens the role and responsibilities of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC).
- Establishes a process for the certification, decertification, and boundary adjustment of Neighborhood Councils.
- Mandates an Early Warning System to identify and address challenges facing Neighborhood Councils.
- Expands the powers of Neighborhood Councils to include monitoring and providing input on City services.

- Justification: Provides a comprehensive framework for the effective and accountable operation of Neighborhood Councils.

5. Funding and Resources

- Establishes an Independent Neighborhood Council Funding Commission to assess and recommend funding levels for the system.
- Mandates a more equitable, needs-based funding model for individual Neighborhood Councils.
- Justification: Ensures adequate, sustainable funding for Neighborhood Councils based on their specific needs and circumstances.

6. System Evaluation and Improvement

- Requires a comprehensive review of the Neighborhood Council system every seven years.
- Mandates a straightforward process for the transition to and implementation of the revised Article IX.
- Justification: Institutionalizes a commitment to continuous improvement and system adaptation over time.

7. Elections and Outreach

- Mandates semi-annual Citywide Neighborhood Council Conferences to promote education, collaboration, and best practices.
- Requires DONE and the City Clerk to conduct year-round outreach and education to promote Neighborhood Council elections and participation.
- Justification: Enhances the visibility, accessibility, and participation in the Neighborhood Council system, particularly in underrepresented communities.

The proposed revisions to Article IX represent a comprehensive effort to strengthen the Neighborhood Council system as a vital part of Los Angeles City governance. By clarifying roles, enhancing resources, and promoting collaboration, these amendments aim to empower Neighborhood Councils to serve as effective advocates for their communities and partners in shaping a more inclusive, responsive, and vibrant Los Angeles.

Ref: LA Charter Article IX

https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los_angeles/latest/laac/0-0-0-3722

Ref: DONE Reply https://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2023/23-1027_rpt_DONE_01-22-24.pdf

Roll Call Vote

Item No (E) -Discussion with possible action for calling for an NC Event on the Community Plan or for CIS on the City-wide Housing Incentive Program [CHIP] concept:

The Citywide Housing Incentive Program Ordinance will amend the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) to enable streamlined project review procedures and introduce bold new incentives for eligible

project types. The aim is to expand access to affordable housing near transit, jobs, along corridors, and in higher-opportunity areas. The Draft Community Plan is now available with possible revisions to be made to comply with the proposed CHIP initiative. Comments are due before the end of summer. Consideration of the proposals will require a time-significant effort if the Board is to provide substantive comment. WHIP is proposing a joint effort of WHIP, PLUM and Board members to develop a response for the Board. Consideration of an action to request the Board to fund and hold an event for this purpose before the end of the Fiscal Year.

Community Plan References:

- [Draft Land Use chapter of the Policy Plan](#)

<https://planning.lacity.gov/plans-policies/community-plan-update/southwest-valley-community-plans-update#draft-plan>

- [Draft interactive Zoning Map](#)

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/7c8569d3b47e468f890455789d055418/page/Draft-Zoning-Map-/>

- [Updated draft General Plan Land Use Designation Map](#)

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/7c8569d3b47e468f890455789d055418/page/Draft-General-Plan-Land-Use-Map/>

City-wide Housing Incentive Program [CHIP] references:

Reference City Planning PDF: https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/a38fe378-2c4b-4260-807e-af66a053a95b/FD_CHIP_Fact_Sheet.pdf

Reference City Planning Page: <https://planning.lacity.gov/plans-policies/housing-element-rezoning-program#concept-explorer>

Item No (F) - Discussion with possible action on Issues for Future Meetings:

Members and public to suggest future topics of consideration.

6. Adjournment of Meeting

• **Public Input on Agenda Items** – The public may address the Committee on any agenda item before the Committee acts on an item. The Committee will accept comments from the public on agenda items only when the Committee considers the individual item.

• **Public Input on Matters not appearing on the agenda** – During the General Public Comment period, the Committee listens to comments from the public on other matters not appearing on the agenda within the Committee's jurisdiction. * Please note that the Brown Act prevents the Committee from acting on an issue you bring to its attention during the General Public Comment period; however, the issue raised by a public member may become the subject of a future Committee meeting.

• **Notice to Paid Representatives** - If you receive compensation to monitor, attend, or speak at this meeting, City law may require you to register as a lobbyist and report your activity. See Los Angeles Municipal Code §§ 48.01 et seq. More information is available at ethics.lacity.org/lobbying. For assistance, please get in touch with the Ethics Commission at (213) 978-1960 or ethics.commission@lacity.org

Meeting dates for the 2023-2024 year: The Committee generally meets on the first and third Wednesdays of every month at 7:00 p.m. Check the NC website calendar for a complete list of committee and board meetings. Meeting dates and times are subject to change. Check the NC calendar for updated meeting schedules.

The next Regular Committee Meeting will be held in person on **May 1st, 2024**. Please visit the calendar page at whcouncil.org for the complete details and confirm the location, date, and time.

• **THE AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT** - As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate based on disability and, upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities. Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, and other auxiliary aids or services may be provided upon request.

- To ensure the availability of services, please make your request at least (3) business days (72 hours) before the meeting you wish to attend by contacting Dena Weiss by email at d.weiss@whcouncil.org or the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at (213) 978-1551 EmpowerLa@LACity.org.
- SERVICIOS DE TRADUCCIÓN - Si requiere servicios de traducción, favor de avisar al Concejo Vecinal 3 días de trabajo (72 horas) antes del evento. Por favor contacte a Joyce Fletcher de la Mesa Directiva, at d.weiss@whcouncil.org o por correo electrónico avisar al Concejo Vecinal.

• **PUBLIC ACCESS OF RECORDS** – In compliance with Government Code section 54957.5, the Committee provides non-exempt writings distributed to most of the Committee Members before a meeting on the WHWCNC website: www.whcouncil.org or via the scheduled meeting video presentation. In addition, if you would like a copy of any record related to an item on the agenda, please get in touch with Dena Weiss by email to d.weiss@whcouncil.org

• **PUBLIC POSTING OF AGENDAS** –

A copy of this agenda is also physically posted outside of Fire Station 84, 21050 Burbank Blvd, Woodland Hills, CA 91367. Attendees must park across Burbank Blvd.

Agendas are also posted for public review at www.whcouncil.org. Go to the Calendar page and click on the date.

You can also receive Committee agendas via email by subscribing to LA City's Early Notification System at <https://www.lacity.org/subscriptions>

• **RECONSIDERATION AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS** - For information on the WHWCNC process for board action reconsideration, stakeholder grievance policy, or other procedural matters related to this Council, please consult the WHWCNC Bylaws. The Bylaws are available at our website at www.whcouncil.org

WHWCNCN WHIP DRAFT CIS regarding CF 15-0389-S2

CIS Portal Summary for CF 15-0389-S2:

The Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council (WHWCNC) opposes the motion to grant Community Councils the same speaking rights as Certified Neighborhood Councils at city meetings. The WHWCNC urges the City Council to recognize the importance of inclusive participation and community engagement provided by Neighborhood Councils and to explore alternative ways to ensure all community voices are heard while maintaining clear standards and responsibilities. However, Community Councils are not subject to the same requirements and oversight as Neighborhood Councils, which ensure transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct. These include the Brown Act, the Public Records Act, policies of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, the City Clerk's Neighborhood Council funding program, and the Elections Division. Additionally, Neighborhood Council members must complete Ethics, Anti-bias, and Gender Bias training and comply with the Code of Conduct. The advantages of Community Councils, such as fewer regulations, ability to raise outside funds, engage in political activities, and control membership, may tempt some Certified Neighborhood Councils to decertify. This could lead to an unequal playing field, misrepresentation of community interests, confusion for community members, and potential decertification of Neighborhood Councils. Disgruntled community members could also form competing Community Councils. The co-existence of Community Councils and Neighborhood Councils in the same area could result in duplication of efforts, competition for resources and attention, and undermining of Neighborhood Council legitimacy. Requiring city officials to give equal time and attention to both types of councils could strain limited resources and divert staff time from working with formally recognized and regulated Neighborhood Councils.

MOTION IN OPPOSITION TO GRANTING COMMUNITY COUNCILS ENHANCED SPEAKING RIGHTS AT CITY MEETINGS

WHEREAS, the Los Angeles City Council is considering a motion (CF 15-0389-S2) to grant Community Councils the same speaking rights at city meetings as Certified Neighborhood Councils; and

WHEREAS, Certified Neighborhood Councils are subject to extensive requirements and oversight to ensure transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct, including the Brown Act, Public Records Act, policies of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, City Clerk's Neighborhood Council funding program, and Elections Division; and

WHEREAS, Certified Neighborhood Council members must complete Ethics, Anti-bias, and Gender Bias training and comply with the Code of Conduct; and

WHEREAS, Community Councils are not subject to these requirements and oversight, and can raise outside funds, support or oppose political candidates and ballot measures, sue the city,

restrict membership, charge fees, and are not required to give public notice of meetings, meet ADA requirements, or hold open public meetings; and

WHEREAS, the advantages of Community Councils, such as fewer regulations, ability to raise outside funds, engage in political activities, and control membership, may tempt some Certified Neighborhood Councils to decertify; and

WHEREAS, granting Community Councils equal speaking rights without holding them to the same standards as Neighborhood Councils could lead to an unequal playing field, misrepresentation of community interests, confusion for community members, and potential decertification of Neighborhood Councils; and

WHEREAS, disgruntled community members could see the advantages of forming a Community Council to compete with a Certified Neighborhood Council; and

WHEREAS, the co-existence of Community Councils and Neighborhood Councils in the same area could result in duplication of efforts, competition for resources and attention, and undermining of Neighborhood Council legitimacy; and

WHEREAS, requiring city officials to give equal time and attention to both types of councils could strain limited resources and divert staff time from working with formally recognized and regulated Neighborhood Councils.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council (WHWCNC) opposes the motion to grant Community Councils the same speaking rights as Certified Neighborhood Councils at city meetings and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the WHWCNC urges the City Council to recognize the importance of inclusive participation and community engagement provided by Neighborhood Councils and to explore alternative ways to ensure all community voices are heard while maintaining clear standards and responsibilities and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the WHWCNC will file a Community Impact Statement (CIS) to CF 15-0389-S2 stating its opposition and inform Councilmember Blumenfield and the General Manager of DONE of its position.

WHWCNCN WHIP DRAFT CIS regarding CF 23-0172

The Woodland Hills Issues and Policies Committee recommends that the Board of the Woodland Hills—Warner Center Neighborhood Council adopt the following Position statement and file it on the Community Impact Statement portal for the City of Los Angeles. Additionally, the Board shall inform Council District 3 and City Planning of the Board’s position regarding CF 23-0172.

CIS Portal Summary for CF-0172

The Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council (WHWCNC) opposes, unless amended, the action recommended by city planning in CF-23-0172 regarding affordable housing development on nonprofit-owned properties under Senate Bill 4 (SB 4). While WHWCNC recognizes the need for affordable housing and the potential for religious institutions and nonprofits to contribute, they have concerns about the implementation of SB 4 and the proposed city ordinance. WHWCNC believes the ownership requirement in SB 4 should be maintained to prevent developers' abuse. They support allowing 20% market-rate units for feasibility, but contingent upon community input. They recommend limiting reduced requirements to properties on commercial corridors or adjacent to existing facilities to mitigate impacts on single-family neighborhoods. WHWCNC is concerned about the loss of neighborhood amenities and increased demands on city services. They recommend requiring ground-floor commercial space or community facilities, community benefit agreements, and robust community input. They also suggest minimum requirements for property management and guidance on tax implications for land subdivisions and ground leasing. WHWCNC urges the city to consider these issues and looks forward to working with stakeholders to address affordable housing needs while ensuring responsible development and community benefit.

Community Impact Statement on Affordable Housing Development on Nonprofit-Owned Properties as found in CF 23-0172

The Woodland Hills - Warner Center Neighborhood Council [WHWCNC] opposes unless amended, the action recommended by city planning in CF-23-0172. WHWCNC generally accepts the intent of Senate Bill 4 (SB 4) to facilitate the development of 100% affordable housing on properties owned by religious institutions and nonprofit higher education organizations. WHWCNC recognizes the urgent need for affordable housing in our city and the potential for these organizations to contribute to solutions by developing underutilized properties.

However, we have some concerns about the implementation of SB 4 and the proposed City ordinance relaxing the requirements that warrant further consideration:

1. Ownership requirement: SB 4 limits eligibility to properties owned by the nonprofit before January 1, 2024. We believe this requirement should be maintained in the City ordinance to prevent abuse by developers who might form religious organizations solely for the purpose of purchasing and developing properties with reduced requirements. The affected non-profits should not be enticed into becoming property developers instead of following their original purpose.
2. Affordability requirements: We support the proposed City ordinance allowing 20% of units to be market-rate if it is necessary for project feasibility. However, this flexibility

should be contingent upon meaningful community input and engagement in the development process.

3. Location of properties: We are concerned about the potential impact on single-family neighborhoods if nonprofits are allowed to develop affordable housing on properties that are remote from their main campus or activities, such as properties that may have been donated to the organization. We recommend that any reduced requirements in the City ordinance be limited to properties on commercial corridors or adjacent to the nonprofit's existing facilities.
4. Preservation of neighborhood amenities: While we support the development of affordable housing on commercial corridors, we are concerned that this could lead to the loss of amenities needed in the neighborhood vicinity. We recommend that the city require developers to incorporate ground-floor commercial space or community-serving facilities into their projects, as appropriate, to help preserve the viability of the neighborhood.
5. Impact on city services: As these properties are developed with higher-density affordable housing, it will place increased demands on city infrastructure and services without an increase in property taxes. We urge the city to consider strategies for mitigating these impacts, such as requiring community benefit agreements or other contributions from developers.
6. Community input: While we support streamlining the approval process for these affordable housing developments, we believe it is essential to maintain robust opportunities for community input and engagement. The City should establish clear guidelines for notifying and involving neighborhood councils and other community stakeholders throughout the development process.
7. Management requirements: Recognizing that most religious institutions and nonprofits may not have experience managing multi-family properties, we recommend that the City establish minimum requirements for professional property management and maintenance to ensure the long-term viability and quality of the affordable housing developments.
8. Tax considerations for land subdivision and ground leasing: To facilitate the development of affordable housing on nonprofit-owned properties, the City should provide guidance and consider tax implications for land subdivision and ground leasing arrangements. This may include working with county and state authorities to ensure a clear and consistent approach to property tax assessments in these situations.

We urge the City to consider these issues as it moves forward with implementing SB 4 and developing a local ordinance. The Woodland Hills - Warner Center Neighborhood Council looks forward to working with the city, nonprofit organizations, and affordable housing developers to find solutions that address our city's affordable housing needs while ensuring responsible development and community benefit.

WHWCNCN WHIP DRAFT CIS regarding CF 24-0600

Portal Summary:

The Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council Board seeks the collaboration of Bob Blumenfield, City Council Budget Committee Chair, and Mayor Bass to address the funding challenges Neighborhood Councils (NCs) face in Los Angeles. The CIS, intended for submission to the city's 2024-2025 budget discussions, underscores the disparity between the city's budget growth and the diminishing funding allocated to NCs. Initially provided with \$50,000, NCs now operate with a significantly reduced budget of \$32,000, which, when adjusted for inflation, falls short by \$53,000 of what is needed to maintain their initial operational fiscal capacity. The CIS calls for immediate budget increases to match inflation-adjusted levels, reinstatement of the 3-year fund rollover policy, a base-plus-per-resident funding model, and additional support for NCs with unique challenges. It highlights the increased costs associated with digital and traditional stakeholder engagement, the necessity for professional digital marketing skills, and the financial strain of maintaining a digital presence across multiple platforms. The motion also points out NCs' dilemma between funding community non-profits through Neighborhood Purpose Grants and fulfilling their primary goals. The CIS seeks support from the City to equip NCs with the necessary resources for effective community engagement in the digital era, emphasizing the critical role of digital communication in involving stakeholders in city governance.

Proposed Resolution:

WHWCNC Community Impact Statement on Neighborhood Council Funding:

The Woodland Hills Issues and Policies Committee recommends that the WHWCNC Board endorse a resolution calling on Mayor Karen Bass and city officials to urgently address the funding inadequacies facing Neighborhood Councils (NCs). This resolution highlights the financial challenges that undermine NCs' ability to engage stakeholders effectively. It advocates for necessary budget reforms to enhance their role in promoting community participation in city governance. The resolution identifies critical issues and offers targeted solutions:

1. **Budgetary and Inflationary Disparities:** Despite a 150% increase in the City of Los Angeles budget from \$5.14 billion in 2003-2004 to over \$13 billion in 2023-2024, NC funding has never kept pace, severely affecting their operational capacity.
 - Initially allocated \$50,000 with rollover options 20+ years ago, NCs now work with a diminished budget of \$32,000, representing a 36% decrease before accounting for inflation.
 - However, when adjusting for inflation, NC funding should exceed \$85,000, representing a current \$53,000 deficiency in funding to be equal to the start.
 - Ideally, if NC's budget matched the city's budget growth, NCs would have access to over \$125,000 for 2024-2025.
 - Over the years, the importance of funding for NCs has diminished by 74%.

2. **Expanded Engagement and Communication Costs:** While traditional means of outreach continue with inflationary costs, the increasing shift to digital communications triggers significant additional costs. Effective and meaningful stakeholder engagement and outreach cost money. It cannot be done effectively with current funding. Whether the engagement is via more traditional communication like community events, street furniture ads, street banners, and local print media, when you include engaging our stakeholders online via targeted social media ads, email blasts, bulk text messages, text bots, website upkeep, and content creation, the simple fact is that reaching our stakeholders costs money. Much is required today for an NC to fulfill its duties of stakeholder engagement. Some of the new challenges include:
 - **Professional Skills:** Effective digital engagement requires content creation (sometimes paid for), digital marketing services (also paid for), and marketing expertise to reach and involve diverse community segments. It requires teams of diverse skills.
 - **Increased Service and Tools Costs:** A comprehensive functional communication system is often complex. The financial demands of maintaining a digital presence—covering website upkeep, content tools, social media tools, automation tools, emailing service, utilizing online advertising for visibility, and the needs for specialist assistance—have escalated.
 - **Multi-Platform Consistency:** Serving all demographics and community segments requires a presence on various platforms. Engaging stakeholders today demands a coordinated, cohesive presence across multiple digital platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, plus any new platforms. These all require more resources.
 - **Event/Facility use:** Serving all ages and demographic segments also requires meeting stakeholders with a physical presence. ADA-compliant spaces add costs as they are few and more expensive. Engaging stakeholders today also demands a coordinated, cohesive in-person presence beyond just online platforms, which requires yet even more resources.
3. **Neighborhood Purpose Grants (NPGs):** NPGs are an important tool for NCs to support local community organizations and projects. However, given the limited resources available to NCs, it is crucial to carefully assess each NPG's return on investment in terms of its effectiveness in promoting community participation in local governance through NCs. Prioritize NPGs that demonstrate the strongest potential to engage diverse stakeholders and foster meaningful involvement in city decision-making processes.
4. **Needed Budget Solutions:**
 - **Increase NC Budgets:** Immediately increase NC budgets back to their inflation-adjusted initial level and facilitate future inflation-indexing adjustments.
 - **Return the 3-year Fund Rollover:** Advocate for a policy that allows funding rollovers, promoting strategic financial planning for periodic major community projects such as the Olympics or Community Planning.

- **Use a Base-Budget-Plus-Per-Resident Allocation:** To align funding more equitably with community size and needs, initiate a base budget of \$30,000 (for example) plus an additional \$1 per resident. Even the smallest NC would not get less than now.
 - **Supplemental Budgets for Unique Needs:** Consider additional budget funding for NCs facing distinct challenges or serving underserved areas.
5. **Collaborative Action Request:** Urge Council Member Bob Blumenfield, Chair of the Budget, Finance, and Innovation Committee, to lead these efforts in partnership with Mayor Karen Bass and other council members. This collaboration is vital for providing NCs with the resources for effective community engagement in the digital era.

This resolution addresses the urgent need for updated funding models that accommodate the evolving dynamics of community engagement, emphasizing the growing importance of digital communication. It aims to equip NCs with the capabilities to involve stakeholders more effectively in city governance.

Furthermore, the Committee recommends advising the Mayor and the City Council of its resolution and filing a Community Impact Statement to File CF 24-0600.

WHWCNCN WHIP DRAFT CIS regarding CF 23-1027

The Woodland Hills Issues and Policies Committee recommends the Board of the Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council adopt the following Position statement and file it on the Community Impact Statement portal for the City of Los Angeles and additionally inform Council District 3 of the Board’s position regarding CF 23-1027.

The Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council proposes that the City Council place a ballot measure to amend Article IX of the City Charter per the separate accompanying revised Article IX text.

These proposed revisions to Article IX of the Los Angeles City Charter are a necessary response to the long-standing pattern of abuse and neglect that Neighborhood Councils have suffered at the hands of the city government. This abuse and neglect have taken many forms, from the chronic underfunding of Neighborhood Councils to the marginalization of their voices in city decision-making processes, and from the lack of adequate training and support to the disregard for their legal rights and powers under the City Charter.

Just as we have laws and systems in place to protect children, elders, and dependent adults from abuse and neglect by their caregivers, we must also have strong protections and support for Neighborhood Councils, which serve as vital democratic institutions for empowering and engaging communities. The neglect of Neighborhood Councils by city officials is not just a bureaucratic oversight; it is a form of institutional abuse that undermines the very foundations of our local democracy.

By rewriting Article IX, the city can create a more robust, equitable, and accountable framework for the Neighborhood Council system, one that treats these grassroots bodies with the respect, support, and resources they deserve. The revised Charter provisions will not only clarify the responsibilities of city officials to nurture and support Neighborhood Councils but also establish clear consequences for the neglect or abuse of these duties.

The Neighborhood Council system in Los Angeles is a vast and complex network, encompassing 99 councils with over 1,300 dedicated participants. These volunteers give their time, energy, and expertise to serve their communities and make democracy work at the grassroots level. However, despite their commitment and passion, many Neighborhood Councils struggle with chronic operational issues that hinder their ability to fulfill their mission and potential.

Shockingly, roughly one-third of Neighborhood Councils experience difficulties in achieving quorum, the minimum number of members required to conduct official business. This crisis of participation stems from a variety of factors, including a lack of candidates willing to step forward and serve, as well as the frustration and burnout that lead to resignations among existing council members.

These operational challenges are not merely administrative inconveniences; they are symptoms of a deeper pattern of neglect and abuse that has plagued the Neighborhood Council system for far too long. When councils struggle to muster a quorum, they are unable to advocate for their

communities, provide meaningful input on city policies, or deliver the vital services and support that their neighbors need.

The proposed revisions to Article IX of the City Charter aim to address these challenges head-on by creating a more supportive, empowering, and sustainable framework for Neighborhood Councils. By ensuring adequate funding, training, and resources for councils, as well as clarifying the responsibilities of city officials to support and collaborate with these grassroots bodies, the amendments seek to break the cycle of neglect and empower Neighborhood Councils to thrive.

Moreover, by establishing regular processes for the evaluation, improvement, and oversight of the Neighborhood Council system, the revised Article IX will help to identify and address operational issues before they become crises and ensure that councils have the tools and support they need to overcome challenges and serve their communities effectively.

In short, the scale and scope of the Neighborhood Council system in Los Angeles, combined with the dire operational challenges faced by many councils, underscore the vital importance of the proposed revisions to Article IX. By enshrining these reforms in the City Charter, we can create a more resilient, responsive, and empowering framework for grassroots democracy, one that truly values and supports the incredible work of our Neighborhood Councils and their dedicated volunteers.

The new version of Article IX accomplishes the following:

Section 900. Purpose and Mission of Neighborhood Councils

- Clarifies the role of Neighborhood Councils as the primary conduit for community engagement and empowerment.
- Emphasizes the importance of diverse and inclusive participation.
- Mandates City officials to recognize and support Neighborhood Councils as partners in governance.

Section 901. Department of Neighborhood Empowerment - Duties and Responsibilities

- Expands DONE's responsibilities to include training, resources, and support for Neighborhood Councils.
- Mandates DONE to provide digital tools, platforms, and training to support Neighborhood Councils.
- Establishes a dedicated Marketing and Engagement Support Unit within DONE.

Section 902. Board of Neighborhood Commissioners

- Strengthens the role and responsibilities of BONC in providing oversight and policy guidance.
- Ensures diverse and inclusive representation on the Commission.
- Clarifies the relationship between BONC and DONE.

Section 903. Powers and Legitimacy of Neighborhood Councils

- Enhances the powers and legitimacy of Neighborhood Councils in City decision-making processes.
- Ensures Neighborhood Councils are treated with respect and professionalism.
- Mandates City Departments to establish clear protocols for incorporating Neighborhood Council input.

Section 904. Neighborhood Council Monitoring and Input on City Services

- Empowers Neighborhood Councils to monitor and provide input on the delivery of City services.
- Requires City Departments to provide regular updates and reports to Neighborhood Councils.
- Mandates the Mayor and City Council to give substantial weight to Neighborhood Council input on City services.

Section 905. City Departments - Engagement and Collaboration with Neighborhood Councils

- Requires City Departments to actively engage and collaborate with Neighborhood Councils.
- Mandates City Departments to provide training and resources to support Neighborhood Council participation in outreach activities.
- Establishes clear protocols for City Departments to respond to Neighborhood Council communications.

Section 906. City Council and Mayor - Engagement with and Support for Neighborhood Councils

- Requires the City Council and Mayor to recognize and support Neighborhood Councils as partners in governance.
- Mandates the allocation of sufficient funds and resources for Neighborhood Councils.
- Prohibits the use of Neighborhood Purpose Grants to justify reducing core funding for Neighborhood Councils.

Section 907. Utilization of the Early Warning System and Departmental Collaboration with Neighborhood Councils

- Establishes an Early Warning System for timely communication and collaboration between Neighborhood Councils and City entities.
- Requires City Departments to provide early notification and detailed information to Neighborhood Councils on issues impacting their communities.
- Mandates the Mayor and City Council to ensure the effectiveness of the Early Warning System.

Section 908. General Manager of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment

- Establishes the roles, responsibilities, and qualifications for the General Manager of DONE.
- Prioritizes the development of training and resources to support Neighborhood Councils.
- Mandates the allocation of resources to support the Marketing and Engagement Support Unit within DONE.

Section 909. Certification and Decertification of Neighborhood Councils

- Establishes a transparent and inclusive process for the certification and decertification of Neighborhood Councils.
- Provides guidance and support to ensure equitable access to the certification process.
- Considers the volunteer nature of Neighborhood Councils in the certification and decertification processes.

Section 910. Neighborhood Council Elections and Selections

- Provides Neighborhood Councils with the option to hold elections or selections for board members.
- Mandates the development of a comprehensive outreach and education campaign to promote Neighborhood Council elections and selections.
- Requires the establishment of a centralized database of Neighborhood Council stakeholders to facilitate election outreach and voter verification.

Section 911. Appropriation and Independent Funding Commission

- Establishes an Independent Funding Commission to evaluate and recommend appropriate funding levels for Neighborhood Councils.
- Mandates the development of a more equitable and needs-based funding model for Neighborhood Councils.
- Requires the Commission to operate with transparency and make its findings and recommendations publicly available.

Section 912. Neighborhood Purpose Grants

- Provides Neighborhood Councils with the option to issue Neighborhood Purpose Grants (NPGs) to support community-based projects.
- Establishes a clear process for the administration and oversight of NPGs.
- Requires Neighborhood Councils to report annually on their use of NPGs and the outcomes achieved.

Section 913. Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates

- Establishes an independent alliance of Neighborhood Council members to review and analyze the City budget.
- Empowers Budget Advocates to provide input and recommendations on the City budget to inform and advise Neighborhood Councils, the Mayor, and the City Council.

- Requires the Mayor and City Council to give substantial weight to the input and recommendations provided by the Budget Advocates.

Section 914. Citywide Neighborhood Council Conferences

- Mandates the organization of regular Citywide Neighborhood Council Conferences to provide education, training, and networking opportunities.
- Requires the City to provide adequate funding for the planning and execution of the conferences.
- Establishes the conferences as an essential component of the City's support for the Neighborhood Council system.

Section 915. Evaluation and Improvement of the Neighborhood Council System

- Establishes a comprehensive framework for the regular evaluation and continuous improvement of the Neighborhood Council system.
- Requires DONE to conduct a bi-annual assessment of the effectiveness and challenges of the Neighborhood Council system.
- Mandates a five-year comprehensive review of the Neighborhood Council system to identify areas for strategic improvement.

Section 916. Comprehensive Review of the Neighborhood Council System

- Mandates a rigorous, independent, and comprehensive review of the Neighborhood Council system every nine years.
- Requires the review to assess the effectiveness, funding, support, and impact of the Neighborhood Council system.
- Mandates the development of a public action plan to implement necessary changes and improvements based on the review's recommendations.

Section 917. Transfer of Powers and Continuation of the Neighborhood Council System

- Provides for the orderly transfer of powers and continuation of the Neighborhood Council system during the implementation of the revised Article IX.
- Requires DONE and BONC to work collaboratively with Neighborhood Councils to develop a clear and comprehensive transition plan.
- Mandates the allocation of adequate resources to support the successful implementation of the revised Article IX.

Section 918. Effecting the Ordinance

- Establishes the legal and practical implications of adopting the amended Article IX.
- Provides for the resolution of challenges or conflicts arising from the interpretation or application of the amended Article IX.
- Requires the City Attorney to provide legal guidance to ensure the consistent and lawful implementation of the amended Article IX.

Draft for an Amended
**Article IX - Department of Neighborhood Empowerment and
Neighborhood Councils**

Introduction to Article IX.

Department of Neighborhood Empowerment and Neighborhood Councils

In a city as vast and diverse as Los Angeles, ensuring that every voice is heard, and every community is well-served is a critical challenge. Article IX of the Los Angeles City Charter establishes the Neighborhood Council system as a vital bridge between its residents and their government. By creating a network of grassroots, community-based councils, Article IX aims to foster a more accessible, responsive, and inclusive system of governance that brings decision-making closer to the people it affects.

The Neighborhood Council system is designed to serve as a two-way conduit for communication and collaboration between the City and its residents. These councils provide a platform for community members to express their needs, concerns, and aspirations directly to City officials and decision-makers. At the same time, they serve as a channel for the City to keep residents informed about important issues, policies, and initiatives that impact their neighborhoods. By facilitating this ongoing dialogue and partnership, Neighborhood Councils help to build a stronger, more cohesive, and more responsive City government.

Article IX creates a robust Neighborhood Council system by providing a clear, comprehensive, and empowering framework for its operation. Through the essential funding, training, and support for Neighborhood Councils, increased opportunities for collaboration with City departments and officials, and a commitment to continuous improvement and adaptation, these amendments aim to maximize the impact and effectiveness of this vital participatory system. Ultimately, investing in the success of Neighborhood Councils is an investment in the future of Los Angeles as a city where every community has a strong voice and a meaningful role in shaping its destiny.

Section 900.

Purpose and Mission of Neighborhood Councils

- (a) The purpose of the Neighborhood Council system is to promote more inclusive and participatory governance in the City of Los Angeles by empowering community members to have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives and their neighborhoods.
- (b) Neighborhood Councils shall serve as the primary means for the City to engage with and obtain input from stakeholders on issues of concern to their communities. They shall have a formal role in the City's decision-making processes and shall be treated as integral partners in the governance of the City.
- (c) The mission of Neighborhood Councils is to:
1. Foster a sense of community and civic engagement among stakeholders.
 2. Identify and prioritize the needs and concerns of their communities.
 3. Develop and advocate for policies, programs, and projects that address community needs and improve quality of life.
 4. Provide a forum for discussion and deliberation on community issues.
 5. Facilitate communication and collaboration between community members, City Departments, the City Council, and the Mayor.
 6. Empower stakeholders to actively shape the future of their neighborhoods and the City.
- (d) Engaging stakeholders in local government through Neighborhood Councils means:

1. Proactively reaching out to and involving a diverse range of community members, including those who have been historically underrepresented or marginalized.
2. Providing multiple and accessible opportunities for stakeholders to learn about, discuss, and provide input on City policies, programs, and decisions.
3. Ensuring that stakeholder input is carefully considered and incorporated into City decision-making processes.
4. Fostering ongoing dialogue and collaboration between Neighborhood Councils, City Departments, elected officials, and community members.
5. Empowering stakeholders with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to effectively participate in and influence local government.
6. Continuously evaluating and improving the processes and structures for stakeholder engagement to ensure maximum effectiveness and inclusivity.

(e) The City Council, the Mayor, City Departments, and all agencies and officers of the City shall recognize, respect, and support the critical role of Neighborhood Councils in engaging stakeholders. They shall partner to achieve more responsive, accountable, and participatory governance in Los Angeles.

(f) To fulfill their purpose and mission, Neighborhood Councils shall receive adequate and consistent core funding from the City, separate from and in addition to any funds available through optional Neighborhood Purpose Grants. This core funding shall be sufficient to support the basic operations, successful outreach, and participation of Neighborhood Councils in City decision-making processes.

(g) Neighborhood Councils shall prioritize the development and implementation of effective marketing and communication strategies to engage, inform, and mobilize their stakeholders, recognizing that these skills are essential to fulfilling their purpose and mission in the digital age.

Section 901.

Department of Neighborhood Empowerment - Duties and Responsibilities

The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) shall have the primary responsibility to support, facilitate, and enhance the role of Neighborhood Councils as the primary agents for engaging stakeholders in local government.

DONE shall:

- (a) Assist Neighborhood Councils in achieving their full potential as effective advocates for their communities and advisors to city government.
- (b) Provide training, resources, and technical assistance to help Neighborhood Councils effectively engage stakeholders, develop their organizational capacity, and participate in city decision-making processes.
- (c) Facilitate communication and collaboration between Neighborhood Councils and City Departments, as outlined in Section 902, to ensure a robust flow of information and opportunities for input.
- (d) Work with City Departments to develop and implement effective strategies for utilizing Neighborhood Councils as a primary means of interfacing with stakeholders in their communities.
- (e) Collaborate with the City Clerk's office to ensure that the funding and resources allocated to Neighborhood Councils are administered promptly, equitably, and in compliance with applicable rules and regulations.
- (f) Regularly consult with Neighborhood Councils to assess their needs and priorities and identify opportunities to improve the support and resources provided by DONE and City Departments.
- (g) Advocate within city government for the recognition and consideration of Neighborhood Council input in decision-making processes, and for City Departments' compliance with their obligations under Section 902.

- (h) Maintain a system for sharing information and best practices among Neighborhood Councils, and for connecting them with relevant community organizations and resources.
- (i) Periodically review and assess the effectiveness of the Neighborhood Council system and recommend improvements to the City Council and Mayor.
- (j) Provide administrative, operational, and logistical support to the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC) as outlined in Section 902(g), to ensure that BONC can effectively carry out its policymaking and oversight functions for the Neighborhood Council system.
- (k) Develop, implement, and maintain digital platforms, tools, and resources to facilitate online engagement, communication, and collaboration among Neighborhood Councils, stakeholders, and City agencies, ensuring equitable access and addressing potential barriers to digital participation.
- (l) Establish data governance policies and provide training and support to Neighborhood Councils on data management best practices, ensuring effective utilization of data to inform decision-making, evaluate impact, and enhance transparency.
- (m) Prioritize digital literacy training and resources for Neighborhood Council members and stakeholders, promoting inclusive digital participation and skill development.
- (n) Implement appropriate cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive data and maintain stakeholders' privacy, and conduct regular cybersecurity audits and training for DONE staff and Neighborhood Council members.
- (o) Provide comprehensive training, resources, and support to Neighborhood Councils to develop and continuously enhance their marketing and engagement capabilities, including:
 - 1. Offering in-depth training programs on marketing strategy development, branding, content creation, social media management, email marketing, and other essential marketing skills.
 - 2. Providing access to professional marketing tools, templates, and resources to help Neighborhood Councils effectively plan, execute, and measure their marketing and engagement efforts.
 - 3. Connecting Neighborhood Councils with marketing experts and mentors who can provide guidance, feedback, and support in developing and implementing effective marketing strategies.
 - 4. Encouraging and facilitating the sharing of marketing best practices, success stories, and lessons learned among Neighborhood Councils to foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement.
 - 5. Assessing the impact and effectiveness of Neighborhood Councils' marketing and engagement efforts regularly and providing data-driven insights and recommendations for optimization.
- (p) Establish a dedicated Marketing and Engagement Support Unit within DONE to provide specialized assistance, resources, and consulting services to Neighborhood Councils in developing and executing their marketing and engagement strategies.

In carrying out these duties, DONE shall respect the autonomy and independence of Neighborhood Councils and shall not interfere with their internal affairs or decision-making processes, except as necessary to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Section 902.

Board of Neighborhood Commissioners

- (a) The Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC) shall serve as a policymaking and oversight body for the Neighborhood Council system, working in collaboration with the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) and Neighborhood Councils to promote the system's effective and equitable functioning.

(b) BONC shall comprise fourteen members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. Commissioners shall meet the following qualifications:

1. Substantial experience serving on a Neighborhood Council Board, and a demonstrated track record of effective leadership, community engagement, and problem-solving.
2. Deep knowledge of the Neighborhood Council system, including its purpose, structure, functions, and challenges, gained through direct involvement in Neighborhood Council operations and activities.
3. Strong understanding of the diverse needs, issues, and aspirations of Los Angeles neighborhoods, with a proven ability to engage and empower community stakeholders from all walks of life.
4. Demonstrated commitment to the values and goals of the Neighborhood Council system, including promoting civic participation, community empowerment, and inclusive decision-making.
5. Proven skills in communication, collaboration, and consensus-building, with the ability to foster productive working relationships among Neighborhood Councils, City officials, and other key stakeholders.
6. Familiarity with the laws, policies, and procedures governing Neighborhood Councils, including the City Charter, the Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils, and other relevant documents.
7. A reputation for integrity, transparency, and ethical conduct, with no conflicts of interest or other disqualifying factors as determined by the City's Ethics Commission.
8. Willingness and ability to devote sufficient time and energy to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of a BONC Commissioner, including regular attendance at meetings, community events, and other official functions.
9. Residency in the City of Los Angeles, with a strong preference for individuals who have lived in and demonstrated a deep understanding of the City's diverse neighborhoods and communities.

(c) In making appointments to BONC, the Mayor and City Council shall strive to ensure that the Commission reflects the city's geographic, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity and includes a balance of perspectives from different Neighborhood Councils and community stakeholder groups.

(d) BONC Commissioners shall serve four-year staggered terms, with a no maximum of consecutive terms. The initial terms of the Commissioners shall be determined by lot, with Commissioners serving an initial one, two, three or four-year term to establish the staggered rotation in 3,4,3,4 manner across the city's planning areas.

(e) BONC Commissioners may be removed from office by the Mayor, with the consent of the City Council, for cause including neglect of duty, misconduct, or inability to perform the duties of the office.

(f) If BONC cannot achieve a quorum for a scheduled meeting, the meeting shall be rescheduled to the earliest possible date when a quorum can be achieved. If a lack of quorum persists for more than two consecutive scheduled meetings, the Mayor and City Council shall take immediate steps to fill any vacancies and ensure that BONC can function effectively.

(g) BONC shall collaborate with DONE to support the Neighborhood Council system but shall not have direct management authority over the department. The general manager of DONE shall report to the Mayor and City Council, with input from BONC, on matters related to the Neighborhood Council system.

(h) BONC shall not have its own dedicated staff. Instead, DONE shall provide administrative, operational, and logistical support to BONC, including but not limited to:

1. Preparing and posting agendas for BONC meetings.
2. Taking and maintaining minutes of BONC meetings.

3. Providing staff reports and analysis to inform BONC's decision-making.
4. Assisting with the implementation of BONC's policies and directives.
5. Facilitating communication between BONC, Neighborhood Councils, and other City agencies.
6. Providing other support necessary for BONC to effectively carry out its duties and responsibilities.

(i) BONC shall work with DONE to establish policies and guidelines for Neighborhood Councils' digital engagement and marketing efforts, ensuring that these activities align with the mission and purpose of the Neighborhood Council system and adhere to principles of transparency, inclusivity, and accountability.

Section 903.

Powers and Legitimacy of Neighborhood Councils

(a) Neighborhood Councils shall serve as the official voice of their respective communities and shall have the power to:

1. Provide advisory recommendations to the City Council, Mayor, City Departments, and other governmental entities on issues, policies, and legislation that impact their communities.
2. Participate in developing and reviewing City plans, policies, and budgets that affect their communities and provide input and recommendations to ensure alignment with community needs and priorities.
3. Engage in collaborative problem-solving and decision-making with City agencies and other stakeholders to address community challenges and opportunities.
4. Advocate for allocating City resources and services to meet the specific needs of their communities.
5. Conduct outreach and engage with community stakeholders to gather input, build consensus, and foster participation in the Neighborhood Council system and City governance processes.

(b) Neighborhood Councils shall be recognized as legitimate and professional bodies, deserving of respect and cooperation from all aspects of City governance, including the City Council, Mayor's office, City Departments, and other governmental entities.

(c) The City Council, Mayor, and all City Departments shall give substantial weight to the input, recommendations, and Community Impact Statements provided by Neighborhood Councils. It shall provide a written explanation when decisions are made that differ from the positions or advice offered by the Neighborhood Councils.

(d) In public hearings, meetings, and other forums where community input is sought, Neighborhood Councils shall be given a higher status than the general public in providing comments and recommendations. This includes:

1. Designated speaking time for Neighborhood Council representatives separate from the general public comment period
2. Priority in the speaking order, with Neighborhood Council representatives being called upon to provide input before opening the floor to the public.
3. Opportunity for Neighborhood Council representatives to engage in dialogue and ask questions of City officials or staff, beyond the scope of general public comment.

(e) City Departments shall work with Neighborhood Councils to establish clear protocols and procedures for incorporating their input and recommendations into decision-making processes, giving due consideration to the unique role and expertise of Neighborhood Councils in representing their communities.

- (f) Neighborhood Council board members shall be treated with the same professionalism and courtesy accorded to other elected officials and City staff, recognizing their voluntary service and dedication to their communities.
- (g) Neighborhood Council board members shall, in turn, demonstrate professionalism and respect in their interactions with the City Council, Mayor, City Departments, and other governmental entities. Failure to maintain appropriate decorum and respect may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the Neighborhood Council board, per the procedures outlined in the Neighborhood Council's bylaws and the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment's (DONE) policies.
- (h) The City shall provide Neighborhood Councils access to City data, information, and resources necessary to effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities, subject to applicable legal and confidentiality requirements.
- (i) Neighborhood Councils shall have the right to agendaize and discuss any matter of community concern at their meetings, and to request the presence of City officials or staff to address these matters, subject to reasonable notice and availability.
- (j) The City shall provide ongoing training, support, and resources to help Neighborhood Council board members develop the skills, knowledge, and expertise necessary to effectively serve their communities and engage in City governance processes.
- (k) Neighborhood Councils' input and positions shall be explicitly considered in the deliberations and decisions of City commissions, boards, and other advisory bodies that impact their communities.

Section 904.

Neighborhood Council Monitoring and Input on City Services

- (a) Neighborhood Councils shall have the power and responsibility to monitor the delivery and quality of City services in their respective communities, and to provide input and recommendations to the City Council, Mayor, and City Departments on improving and enhancing these services.
- (b) Neighborhood Councils shall establish standing committees or working groups focused on key areas of City services, such as public safety, infrastructure, transportation, sanitation, and parks and recreation, to facilitate the monitoring and evaluating these services at the community level.
- (c) These committees or working groups shall:
 - 1. Regularly assess the effectiveness, responsiveness, and equity of City services in their communities, using a variety of methods such as surveys, community feedback, and data analysis.
 - 2. Identify gaps, challenges, or opportunities for improvement in the delivery of City services and develop recommendations for addressing these issues.
 - 3. Collaborate with relevant City Departments, the Mayor's office, and the City Council to share their findings, recommendations, and community input on City services.
 - 4. Advocate for allocating resources, policy changes, or other actions needed to enhance the quality and responsiveness of City services in their communities.
- (d) City Departments shall provide regular updates and reports to Neighborhood Councils on the delivery of services in their communities, including performance metrics, challenges, and improvement plans. These updates shall be provided through the Early Warning System (EWS) and in-person presentations at Neighborhood Council meetings, as requested.
- (e) Neighborhood Councils shall have the right to request and receive data and information from City Departments related to the delivery of services in their communities, subject to applicable legal and confidentiality requirements.

(f) The Mayor and City Council shall give substantial weight to the input, recommendations, and Community Impact Statements provided by Neighborhood Councils regarding City services and shall provide a written response addressing how this input was considered and incorporated into decisions and actions related to service delivery.

(g) The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) shall provide training, resources, and support to Neighborhood Councils to help them effectively monitor and provide input on City services, including best practices for data analysis, community engagement, and advocacy.

(h) Neighborhood Councils shall collaborate, through regional alliances or issue-based coalitions, to share information, best practices, and advocacy strategies related to monitoring and improving City services across multiple communities.

Section 905.

City Departments - Engagement and Collaboration with Neighborhood Councils

(a) All City Departments shall recognize Neighborhood Councils as important stakeholders and valuable partners in engaging with their communities.

(b) City Departments shall make every effort to consult with Neighborhood Councils early in the decision-making process on issues that may impact their communities and give due consideration to their input.

(c) City Departments shall designate liaisons to work with Neighborhood Councils and to facilitate regular communication and collaboration between the department and the councils.

(d) City Departments shall utilize Neighborhood Councils as a primary means of interfacing with stakeholders in their respective communities. They shall work with the councils to develop effective community outreach and engagement strategies.

(e) City Departments shall provide training and resources to Neighborhood Councils to enhance their capacity to participate in departmental outreach activities effectively. This training shall include:

1. Best practices for community outreach and engagement
2. Strategies for effective communication and collaboration with City Departments
3. Use of digital tools and platforms for outreach and engagement
4. Techniques for gathering and incorporating community input into decision-making processes

(f) City Departments shall actively involve Neighborhood Councils in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of their community outreach activities, such as:

1. Public meetings and workshops
2. Surveys and feedback mechanisms
3. Community events and festivals
4. Outreach campaigns and initiatives

(g) City Departments shall collaborate with DONE to provide Neighborhood Councils with access to relevant data, digital tools, and platforms that can enhance their engagement and outreach efforts while ensuring appropriate data governance and security measures are in place.

(h) City Departments shall work with DONE to integrate Neighborhood Councils into the City's digital infrastructure, such as shared data platforms, online collaboration tools, and digital service delivery, to facilitate seamless communication and collaboration between Neighborhood Councils and City agencies.

(i) City Departments shall provide a written response to any formal communication, including Community Impact Statements, from a Neighborhood Council within 30 days of receipt. The response shall include:

1. Acknowledgment of the communication and the issues, concerns, or recommendations raised by the Neighborhood Council.
 2. Describe how the department will consider or utilize the input provided by the Neighborhood Council in its decision-making processes.
 3. Once a determination has been made, information on the outcome or resolution of the issue, policy, or legislation addressed in the Neighborhood Council's communication will be provided.
- (j) If an outcome or resolution has not been reached within the initial 30-day response period, the City Department shall provide the Neighborhood Council with regular updates on the progress of the matter until a final determination is made.
- (k) DONE shall work with City Departments to develop and implement protocols for tracking and monitoring departments' responsiveness to Neighborhood Council communications and shall report on the effectiveness of these protocols to the City Council and the Mayor annually.

Section 906.

City Council and Mayor - Engagement with and Support for Neighborhood Councils

- (a) The City Council and the Mayor shall recognize Neighborhood Councils as important partners in the city's governance and accord them due respect and consideration in all matters affecting their communities.
- (b) The City Council shall consult with Neighborhood Councils on all major policy decisions and legislative actions that may impact their communities and give substantial weight to their input in the decision-making process.
- (c) The Mayor shall ensure that all City Departments and agencies under the Mayor's jurisdiction comply with their obligations to engage with Neighborhood Councils, as outlined in Section 902. They shall hold them accountable for doing so.
- (d) The City Council and the Mayor shall work with Neighborhood Councils to identify and address issues of concern to their communities and collaborate with them in developing solutions and initiatives to meet community needs.
- (e) The City Council and the Mayor shall provide regular updates to Neighborhood Councils on their activities and decisions and be responsive to requests for information or assistance from the councils.
- (f) The City Council and the Mayor shall ensure that Neighborhood Councils have the resources and support they need to effectively fulfill their role as the primary agents of community engagement. This shall include:
1. Allocating sufficient funds in the annual City budget to support the operations, outreach, and participation of Neighborhood Councils.
 2. Ensuring that the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment is adequately staffed and resourced to carry out its duties under Section 901.
 3. Providing dedicated funding for Neighborhood Council members' training, capacity-building, and leadership development programs.
 4. Regularly reviewing and adjusting funding levels based on the evolving needs and priorities of Neighborhood Councils and their communities.
- (g) The City Council and the Mayor shall not use the availability of Neighborhood Purpose Grants to justify reducing or limiting the core funding and support provided to Neighborhood Councils.
- (h) The City Council and the Mayor shall ensure that Neighborhood Councils have access to the digital infrastructure, tools, and resources to effectively engage with their stakeholders and participate in City decision-making online.

(i) The City Council and the Mayor shall support DONE's efforts to provide training, resources, and support to Neighborhood Councils in building their digital marketing and engagement capacities, recognizing the critical role of these skills in fostering robust civic participation in the digital age.

Section 907.

Utilization of the Early Warning System and Departmental Collaboration with Neighborhood Councils

(a) The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC), and all other City departments shall actively utilize the City's existing Early Warning System (EWS) to provide timely and relevant information to Neighborhood Councils about issues, changes in projects or policies, and other matters that may impact their communities.

(b) The EWS, managed by the City's Information Technology Department, shall be used to:

1. Distribute regular reports and updates to Neighborhood Councils on identified issues, concerns, or changes in City projects or policies.
2. Facilitate timely communication and collaboration between City departments and Neighborhood Councils to address challenges and ensure community awareness of relevant developments.
3. Provide Neighborhood Councils with a minimum of 60 days' advance notice of any proposed changes, a clear and concise summary of the potential impacts on the community and an opportunity for the Neighborhood Councils to provide input and feedback.

(c) All City departments, boards, commissions, and other agencies shall be required to work proactively with DONE and Neighborhood Councils to provide early notification and detailed information through the EWS about any proposed changes to projects, policies, or other matters that may affect the communities served by the Neighborhood Councils.

(d) DONE and BONC shall work with the Information Technology Department to ensure that the EWS is effectively utilized and maintained as a critical tool for communication and collaboration between City departments and Neighborhood Councils.

(e) Neighborhood Councils shall have the right to submit Community Impact Statements to the City Clerk's Council File System and any relevant City department, board, commission, or agency regarding any matter that affects their community. These statements shall be given due consideration in the decision-making process. The recipient of a Community Impact Statement shall provide a written response to the submitting Neighborhood Council within 30 days, acknowledging receipt of the statement, outlining how the statement will be considered or utilized, and providing information on the outcome or resolution of the issue, policy, or legislation addressed in the statement.

(f) DONE shall work proactively with Neighborhood Councils and City departments to facilitate effective communication, collaboration, and problem-solving, focusing on capacity building, leadership development, and stakeholder engagement strategies.

(g) The use of the EWS and departmental collaboration processes shall be designed and implemented in a supportive, transparent, and empowering manner for Neighborhood Councils and their communities.

(h) DONE shall provide regular updates to the City Council and the Mayor on the effectiveness of the EWS and departmental collaboration, along with recommendations for further support or resources needed to strengthen the Neighborhood Council system.

Section 908.

General Manager of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment

- (a) The General Manager of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) shall be appointed by the Mayor, subject to confirmation by the City Council, and shall serve at the mayor's pleasure.
- (b) The General Manager shall be responsible for DONE's overall administration, management, and operation, ensuring that the department effectively carries out its duties and responsibilities as outlined in Section 901.
- (c) The General Manager shall have the following core responsibilities:
1. Providing leadership, direction, and supervision to DONE staff in supporting and empowering Neighborhood Councils.
 2. Developing and implementing strategies, programs, and initiatives to enhance the effectiveness and impact of the Neighborhood Council system.
 3. Managing DONE's budget and resources to ensure they are used efficiently and aligned with the department's mission and priorities.
 4. Collaborating with other City agencies, the City Council, and the Mayor's office to promote the integration of Neighborhood Councils into City decision-making processes;
 5. Regularly engaging with Neighborhood Councils to understand their needs, concerns, and priorities, and to gather feedback on DONE's support and services.
 6. Providing administrative, operational, and logistical support to the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC) as outlined in Section 902(g).
 7. Reporting to the Mayor and City Council on the activities, achievements, and challenges of DONE and the Neighborhood Council system.
- (d) The General Manager shall possess the following minimum qualifications and capabilities:
1. Demonstrated community engagement, grassroots organizing, and/or civic participation expertise.
 2. Strong leadership, management, and communication skills.
 3. Deep understanding of the Neighborhood Council system and its role in Los Angeles City governance.
 4. Ability to build and maintain effective relationships with diverse stakeholders, including Neighborhood Councils, City agencies, elected officials, and community organizations.
 5. Commitment to transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making.
 6. Experience in public administration, organizational development, and/or program management.
 7. Knowledge of City budgeting, contracting, and administrative processes.
 8. Knowledge of digital engagement strategies, online collaboration tools, and data management best practices.
 9. Experience in developing and implementing effective digital marketing and communication strategies for community-based organizations.
 10. Demonstrated expertise in marketing, branding, and communication strategies for community-based organizations.
 11. Proven track record of successfully developing and implementing marketing and engagement initiatives that drive stakeholder participation and mobilization.
- (e) The Mayor and City Council shall ensure that the General Manager receives the necessary resources, support, and authority to effectively fulfill their responsibilities and to enable DONE to carry out its mission of supporting and empowering Neighborhood Councils.

(f) The General Manager shall prioritize allocating resources and staff to support the Marketing and Engagement Support Unit within DONE, recognizing its critical role in empowering Neighborhood Councils to effectively engage and mobilize their stakeholders.

(g) The General Manager shall prioritize developing and implementing training programs, resources, and support initiatives to build the digital marketing and engagement capacities of Neighborhood Councils, recognizing the critical role of these skills in fostering effective civic participation in the digital age.

Section 909.

Certification and Decertification of Neighborhood Councils

(a) The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), in collaboration with the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC), shall establish and maintain a transparent, fair, and inclusive process for the certification and decertification of Neighborhood Councils.

(b) The certification process shall ensure that proposed Neighborhood Councils:

1. Represent a diverse and inclusive community stakeholder base.
2. Have developed a clear purpose, mission, and governance structure.
3. Have demonstrated a commitment to engaging and empowering their stakeholders.
4. Have a plan for marketing, outreach, and communication with their stakeholders, considering the volunteer nature of the board members.
5. Have a leadership team that reflects the diversity of their community and is committed to the principles of inclusive, participatory governance.

(c) DONE shall provide guidance, resources, and support to assist community groups in forming and certifying new Neighborhood Councils, ensuring that all interested parties have equitable access to the certification process. This support shall include training and resources tailored to the needs of volunteer board members.

(d) BONC shall have the authority to approve or deny the certification of a proposed Neighborhood Council based on the criteria established by DONE and the provisions of this Article while considering the volunteer status of the board members.

(e) Once certified, a Neighborhood Council shall be subject to the provisions of this Article and any other applicable laws, regulations, and policies governing the Neighborhood Council system. However, these provisions shall be applied in a manner that recognizes the volunteer nature of the board members and does not place undue burdens on their participation.

(f) DONE, in collaboration with BONC, shall establish a process for decertifying Neighborhood Councils that fail to meet the minimum standards of operation, engagement, and governance, as outlined in this Article and the Plan for Neighborhood Councils. This process shall consider the volunteer status of the board members and provide adequate support and resources to help struggling councils address any deficiencies.

(g) The decertification process shall include:

1. Explicit criteria for initiating decertification proceedings, with due consideration given to the challenges faced by volunteer-led organizations.
2. Adequate notice and opportunity for the Neighborhood Council to respond to and address any deficiencies, along with guidance and support from DONE.
3. A fair and impartial hearing before BONC to consider the evidence and arguments for and against decertification, taking into account the volunteer nature of the board.
4. A final decision by BONC, subject to appeal to the City Council.

(h) DONE shall work with any decertified Neighborhood Council to address the issues that led to decertification and support re-establishing a new, certified council in the affected community if community stakeholders desire. This support shall be tailored to the needs and constraints of volunteer-led organizations.

Section 910.

Neighborhood Council Elections and Selections

(a) Neighborhood Councils shall have the option to hold either elections or selections for their board members, as determined by their bylaws and in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) and the City Clerk.

(b) The City Clerk shall be responsible for administering and overseeing Neighborhood Council elections and selections, ensuring that they are conducted fairly, transparently, and in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and procedures.

(c) DONE, in collaboration with the City Clerk and Neighborhood Councils, shall be responsible for the year-round promotion, outreach, and education efforts related to Neighborhood Council elections and selections, with the goal of maximizing candidate recruitment, voter participation, and stakeholder engagement.

(d) DONE and the City Clerk shall develop and implement a comprehensive and multi-faceted outreach and education campaign to promote Neighborhood Council elections and selections, which shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Creating and disseminating informational materials, such as brochures, flyers, and videos, explaining the purpose, process, and importance of Neighborhood Council elections and selections.
2. Conducting targeted outreach to underrepresented communities and stakeholder groups to encourage their participation as candidates and voters.
3. Partnering with community-based organizations, schools, and other local institutions to spread awareness and build support for Neighborhood Council elections and selections.
4. Utilizing traditional and digital media channels, including social media, local news outlets, and public service announcements, to promote elections and selections and encourage stakeholder participation.
5. Hosting candidate forums, workshops, and other events to educate potential candidates and voters about the Neighborhood Council system and the election/selection process.
6. Providing technical assistance and support to Neighborhood Councils in their own outreach and promotion efforts related to elections and selections.

(e) The City shall allocate adequate funding to support the year-round promotion and outreach efforts for Neighborhood Council elections and selections and the administration of the polls and selections themselves.

(f) DONE and the City Clerk shall work collaboratively with Neighborhood Councils to continuously assess and improve the effectiveness of the election and selection processes and related outreach and promotion efforts, based on metrics such as candidate recruitment, voter turnout, and stakeholder satisfaction.

(g) The City Clerk, in consultation with DONE, shall establish and maintain a centralized database of Neighborhood Council stakeholders to verify voter eligibility and facilitate election outreach efforts while ensuring appropriate privacy protections.

(h) DONE and the City Clerk shall provide regular reports to the City Council, Mayor, and Neighborhood Councils on the status, outcomes, and challenges of Neighborhood Council elections and selections, including recommendations for improvements and any necessary policy or resource interventions.

Section 911.

Appropriation and Independent Funding Commission

- (a) The City shall appropriate funds for the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) and the Neighborhood Councils each fiscal year to ensure their proper functioning and the fulfillment of their duties and responsibilities as outlined in this Article.
- (b) An Independent Neighborhood Council Funding Commission (INCFC) shall be established to evaluate and recommend the appropriate level of funding necessary for Neighborhood Councils to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities and serve as a vital link between communities and City governance.
- (c) The INCFC shall be composed of seven members, appointed as follows:
1. Two members appointed by the Mayor.
 2. Two members appointed by the City Council.
 3. Two members appointed by the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC);
 4. One member appointed by the Controller.
- (d) The members of the INCFC shall have demonstrated expertise in public budgeting, community engagement, and/or the Neighborhood Council system, and shall not be current City employees or Neighborhood Council board members.
- (e) The INCFC shall, on a tri-annual basis:
1. Conduct a review and comprehensive update assessment of neighborhood council funding needs, considering factors such as community outreach, meeting expenses, administrative costs, and project and program implementation.
 2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the current funding allocation and distribution process for Neighborhood Councils.
 3. Review the overall budget of DONE and assess its adequacy in supporting the Neighborhood Council system.
 4. Based on their findings and analysis, provide recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on the appropriate level of funding for Neighborhood Councils and DONE.
- (f) The Mayor and City Council shall give substantial weight to the INCFC's recommendations in developing the annual City budget and shall provide a written justification for any significant deviations from these recommendations.
- (g) The INCFC shall also provide guidance and recommendations to Neighborhood Councils on best practices for financial management, budgeting, and the effective use of allocated funds to maximize their impact in the community.
- (h) The INCFC shall operate with complete transparency and make its findings, recommendations, and methodologies available to the public and Neighborhood Councils in a timely and accessible manner.
- (i) The City shall provide the INCFC with the necessary resources, staff support, and access to information to carry out its duties effectively and independently.
- (j) The INCFC shall develop recommendations for a more equitable and needs-based funding model for Neighborhood Councils, considering factors such as:
1. The population size and demographic characteristics of each Neighborhood Council's community.
 2. The geographic size and density of each Neighborhood Council's area.
 3. Each community has unique socio-economic challenges and needs, such as poverty, unemployment, and language barriers.
 4. The level of civic engagement and participation in each Neighborhood Council's activities.

5. The operational and administrative costs of running a Neighborhood Council in each community.
- (k) In developing these recommendations, the INCFC shall:
1. Consult with Neighborhood Councils, community stakeholders, and City Departments to gather input and perspectives on funding needs and challenges.
 2. Research and evaluate funding models used by other jurisdictions with similar neighborhood council or community engagement systems.
 3. Conduct public hearings and workshops to present proposed funding models and gather feedback from Neighborhood Councils and the public.
 4. Develop clear criteria and guidelines for implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed funding model.
- (l) The INCFC shall present its recommendations for a new Neighborhood Council funding model to the Mayor, City Council, and BONC within one year of adopting this amended Article IX.
- (m) The Mayor and City Council shall give substantial weight to the INCFC's recommendations. It shall work collaboratively with BONC and DONE to implement a more equitable and needs-based funding model for Neighborhood Councils within a reasonable timeframe.
- (n) The INCFC shall conduct an interim review after 18 months to assess the effectiveness of the implemented funding model and provide recommendations for further improvements as needed.

Section 912.

Neighborhood Purpose Grants

- (a) Neighborhood Councils may issue Neighborhood Purpose Grants (NPGs) to support community-based projects and initiatives that align with their mission and priorities, as outlined in Section 900, subject to the provisions of this section.
- (b) The issuance of NPGs shall be at the discretion of the City Council and the Mayor, who shall determine annually whether to authorize the NPG program and, if so, at what funding level.
- (c) If authorized, the City Council and the Mayor shall allocate specific funds for the NPG program during the annual budget process. The City Clerk shall be responsible for administering these funds and overseeing the NPG program in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the City Council and the Mayor.
- (d) If the City Council and the Mayor do not authorize the NPG program each year or allocate insufficient funds to meet the needs of all Neighborhood Councils, DONE shall work with the Neighborhood Councils to identify alternative ways to support community-based projects and initiatives, such as through partnerships, in-kind resources, or other funding sources. Additionally, at its discretion, the City Council may authorize the City Clerk to accept monetary donations to an NPG account for a Neighborhood Council to provide NPGs.
- (e) The issuance of NPGs shall not detract from or substitute for neighborhood councils' core responsibilities and functions in engaging stakeholders and participating in City decision-making processes.
- (f) DONE shall provide guidance and oversight to ensure that any authorized NPGs are used appropriately and in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies.
- (g) Neighborhood Councils shall report annually to DONE on their use of NPGs, including the projects and initiatives supported, the outcomes achieved, and any challenges or lessons learned. DONE shall compile these reports and provide an annual summary to the City Council and the Mayor, along with any program improvements or adjustments recommendations.

Section 913.

Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates

- (a) There shall be an independent alliance of Neighborhood Council members, known as the Budget Advocates, which shall be empowered to:
1. Review and analyze the Mayor's proposed budget on behalf of Neighborhood Councils;
 2. Conduct interviews with City Department heads and other key officials to gather information and insights on budgetary matters.
 3. Based on their analysis and findings, issue reports and recommendations to inform and advise Neighborhood Councils, the Mayor, and the City Council on the City budget.
 4. Coordinate with Neighborhood Councils to gather input, priorities, and concerns related to the city budget, and to incorporate this feedback into their reports and recommendations.
 5. Advocate for allocating City resources and funding to meet the specific needs and priorities of Neighborhood Councils and their communities.
- (b) The Budget Advocates shall be composed of representatives from each Neighborhood Council, selected through a fair and transparent process as outlined in the Neighborhood Council bylaws and the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment's (DONE) policies.
- (c) While the Budget Advocates serve a crucial role in representing the interests of Neighborhood Councils in the City budget process, they shall operate as an independent entity and are not an official part of City governance.
- (d) Notwithstanding their independent status, the Budget Advocates shall be entitled to receive funding from the City to support their work, including but not limited to expenses related to research, analysis, meetings, and the production of reports and recommendations.
- (e) The Budget Advocates shall receive regular training and support from DONE and the City Administrative Officer (CAO) to enhance their understanding of the City budget process, financial management, and effective advocacy strategies.
- (f) The Mayor and City Council shall give substantial weight to the Budget Advocates' reports, recommendations, and input. It shall provide a written response addressing how their input was considered and incorporated into the final City budget.
- (g) The Budget Advocates shall work collaboratively with DONE, the Neighborhood Councils, the Mayor's office, and the City Council to ensure that the City budget reflects the needs, priorities, and concerns of the communities served by the Neighborhood Councils.
- (h) To foster transparency and accountability in the budget process, the Budget Advocates shall provide regular updates and reports to the Neighborhood Councils on their activities, findings, and the impact of their advocacy efforts.

Section 914.

Citywide Neighborhood Council Conferences

- (a) The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), in collaboration with Neighborhood Councils, shall organize and host semi-annual Citywide Neighborhood Council Conferences in March and September of each year.
- (b) The purpose of these conferences shall be to:
1. Provide education, training, and resources to Neighborhood Council members and the public on topics relevant to the Neighborhood Council system and effective community engagement.
 2. Foster discussion, collaboration, and networking among Neighborhood Councils, City officials, and community stakeholders on issues of importance to Neighborhood Councils and their communities.

3. Showcase best practices, innovations, and successes of Neighborhood Councils in addressing community needs and promoting civic participation.
 4. Gather input and feedback from Neighborhood Councils and the public on ways to improve and strengthen the Neighborhood Council system and its impact on City governance.
- (c) DONE shall work collaboratively with Neighborhood Councils to develop each conference's agenda, content, and format, ensuring that the events are responsive to the needs and interests of Neighborhood Councils and their stakeholders.
- (d) The City shall provide adequate funding for the planning, promotion, and execution of the Citywide Neighborhood Council Conferences, including but not limited to:
1. Securing appropriate venues and facilities.
 2. Providing necessary audio-visual equipment, materials, and supplies.
 3. Covering the costs of speakers, facilitators, and other program participants.
 4. Offering translation and interpretation services to ensure language accessibility.
 5. Providing refreshments and meals as appropriate.
 6. Supporting outreach and promotion efforts to maximize attendance and participation.
- (e) The Citywide Neighborhood Council Conferences shall be open to all Neighborhood Council members, stakeholders, and interested members of the public, with no admission fee required.
- (f) DONE shall work with Neighborhood Councils and other City Departments to identify and secure additional resources, partnerships, and sponsorships to enhance the conferences' quality, reach, and impact.
- (g) DONE shall provide a report to the City Council, Mayor, and Neighborhood Councils within 60 days after each conference, summarizing the key outcomes, learnings, and recommendations from the event and any plans for follow-up actions or improvements.
- (h) The Citywide Neighborhood Council Conferences shall be considered an essential component of the City's support for the Neighborhood Council system and its commitment to fostering a strong, vibrant, and inclusive system of participatory governance in Los Angeles.

Section 915.

Evaluation and Improvement of the Neighborhood Council System

- (a) The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), in collaboration with the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC), shall establish a comprehensive framework for the regular evaluation and continuous improvement of the Neighborhood Council system.
- (b) DONE shall conduct a bi-annual assessment after elections of the effectiveness, impact, and challenges of the Neighborhood Council system, considering factors such as:
1. Stakeholder engagement and participation.
 2. Diversity and inclusivity of Neighborhood Council membership and leadership.
 3. Collaboration and communication between Neighborhood Councils, City Departments, and other stakeholders.
 4. Impact of Neighborhood Council activities and initiatives on their communities.
 5. Effectiveness of Neighborhood Council marketing and engagement strategies.
 6. Allocation and utilization of resources and support provided to Neighborhood Councils.

- (c) Based on the findings of the bi-annual assessment, DONE shall develop and present to BONC and the City Council a set of recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the Neighborhood Council system.
- (d) DONE shall work with Neighborhood Councils, City Departments, and other stakeholders to implement the approved recommendations and continuously monitor their progress and outcomes.
- (e) Every five years, DONE shall conduct a comprehensive review of the Neighborhood Council system, including an evaluation of the existing Plan for Neighborhood Councils, to identify areas for strategic improvement and make recommendations for amendments to the Plan or the City Charter, as necessary.
- (f) The City Council and the Mayor shall ensure that DONE has the necessary resources, support, and authority to effectively carry out its responsibilities for evaluating and improving the Neighborhood Council system.

Section 916.

Comprehensive Review of the Neighborhood Council System

- (a) Every nine years, the City shall issue a rigorous, in-depth, and impartial comprehensive review of the Neighborhood Council system, assessing its effectiveness, identifying areas for improvement, and making recommendations for any necessary amendments to this Article or other relevant policies and procedures.
- (b) Conducting the comprehensive review process shall begin seven years after completing the previous review's final report and be conducted over two years.
- (c) The comprehensive review shall be conducted by an independent, external entity with demonstrated expertise in community engagement, local governance, and organizational evaluation. The entity shall be selected through a competitive bidding process and shall not have any conflicts of interest with the City or the Neighborhood Council system.
- (d) The comprehensive review shall build upon the findings and recommendations of the annual reviews conducted by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) and the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC) during the preceding 5 years, as outlined in Section 907.
- (e) The comprehensive review shall include, but not be limited to, a thorough assessment of:
 - 1. The overall effectiveness of the Neighborhood Council system in promoting civic engagement, community empowerment, and meaningful participation in City governance.
 - 2. The adequacy and equity of funding and resources provided to Neighborhood Councils.
 - 3. The effectiveness of the support, training, and resources provided by DONE and other City Departments to Neighborhood Councils.
 - 4. The level of collaboration and engagement between Neighborhood Councils, City Departments, the Mayor's office, and the City Council.
 - 5. The effectiveness of the Early Warning System (EWS) and other communication and notification processes.
 - 6. The Impact of Neighborhood Council Input and recommendations on City decision-making and Service delivery.
 - 7. Any barriers or challenges to effective participation and representation in the Neighborhood Council system.
- (f) In conducting the comprehensive review, the independent entity shall:
 - 1. Engage extensively with Neighborhood Councils, community stakeholders, City Departments, and other relevant entities to gather input, feedback, and recommendations.

2. Review data, metrics, and reports related to Neighborhood Council performance, funding, and impact, including the findings of DONE and BONC's annual reviews.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of any changes or improvements implemented since the last comprehensive review.
4. Identify best practices and innovations from other jurisdictions or organizations that could be adapted to strengthen the Neighborhood Council system.
5. Conduct a rigorous analysis of the findings using appropriate research methodologies and evaluation frameworks.

(g) Based on the comprehensive review's findings, the independent entity shall develop a detailed report with specific, actionable recommendations for improvements, reforms, or amendments to the Neighborhood Council system, including any proposed changes to this Article.

(h) The report and recommendations shall be presented to the Mayor, City Council, DONE, BONC, and the public within six months of the completion of the comprehensive review.

(i) The Mayor and City Council shall carefully consider the recommendations from the comprehensive review. It shall develop a public action plan, in collaboration with DONE, BONC, and Neighborhood Councils, to implement necessary changes and improvements promptly and transparently.

(j) The City shall allocate adequate resources and funding to support the comprehensive review process and implement recommended changes and improvements.

Section 917.

Transfer of Powers and Continuation of the Neighborhood Council System

(a) Upon the adoption of this amended Article IX, all powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC), and the Neighborhood Councils shall be transferred to and assumed by their respective entities as described in this Article.

(b) All existing Neighborhood Councils shall continue to operate under their current certification, bylaws, and election procedures until they are required to comply with any new provisions or amendments to this Article, as determined by DONE and BONC.

(c) DONE and BONC shall work collaboratively with Neighborhood Councils to develop a clear and comprehensive transition plan for the implementation of the revised Article IX, including:

1. Updating certification requirements, bylaws, and election procedures to align with the new provisions.
2. Providing training, resources, and support to Neighborhood Councils to facilitate a smooth transition.
3. Establishing a timeline for compliance with new provisions, considering the varying needs and capacities of individual Neighborhood Councils.
4. Monitoring and evaluating the progress of the transition process and making necessary adjustments to ensure its success.

(d) During the transition process, DONE shall continue to provide all necessary support and resources to Neighborhood Councils to ensure their ongoing operation and effectiveness in serving their communities.

(e) The City Council shall approve a transitional budget allocation for DONE and the Neighborhood Councils sufficient to support the successful implementation of the revised Article IX.

(f) All existing contracts, agreements, and partnerships entered into by DONE, BONC, or any Neighborhood Council shall remain in effect unless and until they are amended, terminated, or superseded in accordance with their respective terms and the provisions of this Article.

(g) The Mayor, City Council, DONE, and BONC shall work collaboratively to address any challenges or obstacles during the transition process. They shall make necessary adjustments to ensure the continued vitality and success of the Neighborhood Council system.

(h) The transition process shall prioritize transparency, inclusivity, and ongoing communication with Neighborhood Councils and community stakeholders to ensure that their voices are heard, and their needs are met throughout the implementation of the revised Article IX.

Section 918.

Effecting the Ordinance

(a) Upon adopting this amended Article IX, all previous versions of Article IX shall be superseded and replaced by the provisions contained herein.

(b) Any existing ordinances, regulations, or policies inconsistent with the provisions of this amended Article IX shall be null and void to the extent of such inconsistency.

(c) The City Council shall have the authority to adopt additional ordinances, regulations, or policies as necessary to implement and enforce the provisions of this amended Article IX, provided that such enactments are consistent with the spirit and intent of this Article.

(d) The adoption of this amended Article IX shall not affect the validity of any actions, decisions, or agreements made by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC), or any Neighborhood Council before the effective date of this Article, provided that such actions, decisions, or agreements were valid under the previously applicable provisions of Article IX.

(e) Any challenges, disputes, or legal proceedings arising from the interpretation or application of this amended Article IX shall be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution processes established by DONE and BONC, or through the appropriate judicial channels as necessary.

(f) The provisions of this amended Article IX shall be severable. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this Article is held invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Article.

(g) The City Attorney shall have the authority to review and interpret the provisions of this amended Article IX and to provide legal guidance to DONE, BONC, the Neighborhood Councils, and other City entities as necessary to ensure its consistent and lawful implementation.

(h) The relationship between Neighborhood Councils and the City Attorney shall be governed by the following principles:

1. The City Attorney shall provide legal advice and representation to Neighborhood Councils on matters related to their official powers, duties, and functions as described in Article IX, subject to the resources and priorities of the City Attorney's Office.
2. Neighborhood Councils shall have the right to request and receive legal opinions from the City Attorney on their operations, decision-making processes, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
3. In the event of a potential conflict of interest between the legal interests of a Neighborhood Council and those of the City, its departments, or other entities, the City Attorney shall promptly notify the affected Neighborhood Council and work collaboratively to identify and implement appropriate measures to address the conflict, which may include:
 - a) Assigning separate legal counsel within the City Attorney's Office to represent the Neighborhood Council and the City entity, respectively.
 - b) Engaging outside legal counsel to represent the Neighborhood Council, subject to the approval of the City Council and the Mayor.

- c) Developing ethical screens or other safeguards to ensure that the Neighborhood Council's legal representation is not compromised by the City Attorney's obligations to the City.
 - 4. The City Attorney shall develop and implement policies and procedures to identify, disclose, and mitigate potential conflicts of interest in the legal representation of Neighborhood Councils, and shall provide regular training to Neighborhood Council board members on their legal rights and responsibilities.
- (i) This amended Article IX shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by the City Council and approval by the Mayor, unless otherwise specified in the adopting ordinance.