

Communication from Public

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4/21/25

Dear Los Angeles City Council and Mayor Karen Bass:

Why is the City of Los Angeles entertaining this carveout today for the Historic-Cultural Monument the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and for removing Council's mandated role to approve the naming rights for additional stars, that have existed since the Walk of Fame's inception?

In my opinion, it's not to streamline that process, because this Council isn't doing the same for street naming, for park naming, or for alterations of any other HCM names. With the Walk of Fame in particular, it's not the Council's vote holding up the process; it's the Bureau of Engineering's complicated steps for permitting, and it was the BOE's violations in not receiving Board of Public Works' approval for the permits, as required under the existing law.

For public naming and commemoration, Los Angeles has recently pushed for the reverse of apathy—with the Civic Memory Working Group Report established by then Mayor Garcetti, the proposed deaccessioning policy introduced by then Councilmember O'Farrell, 2023's renaming of Yaanga Park, and the removal of Columbus' statue in coordination with the County and local indigenous leaders. Los Angeles has expressed very explicitly that it wanted a *more* intimate engagement with its streets and land and the figures it chooses to showcase, and this case honor; not less.

And now this Council is asking to remove itself from naming rights on the publicly-owned property that is the Hollywood Walk of Fame; one of the most, if not the most iconic monument in the entire city. I believe Council is doing this because it benefits the nonprofit organizations The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce and The Hollywood Historic Trust in their not having to receive the required legislative consent for installations. This amendment to the ordinance would

change what was once government speech to arguably nonprofit speech and expression, slated to be rubber-stamped solely by an administrative body—the Board of Public Works—which for years hasn’t even been following current law to approve Walk of Fame names, according to certain past Board of Public Works Commissioners’ statements and BPW records. The Board of Public Works was originally intended to work as an extra check alongside the City Council for star additions. This is verified by the 1957 City Attorney’s comments in the original ordinance’s file, stating “Although the proposed ordinance provides ample protection in passing judgment on the event or personality to be commemorated, because of the required approval of the Council and [the Board of Public Works] [...] In considering legislation, or preparing specifications affecting public ways, it has been the policy abutting property as well as to consider the effect of the proposed actions on the general public.” This Council today is asking to change that original intent.

Specifically, there is precedent of a City Councilmember objecting to certain names on the Walk of Fame. Louis R. Nowell, Chairman of the Public Works Committee objected to Charlie Chaplin’s name in 1972 because in his words “the conservative people in my district, and there are many of them, would object to my voting for a star for him.” As much as I disagree with Louis Nowell’s vote, I agree with him that the Council shouldn’t dismiss its own authority, and it certainly shouldn’t defer to a non-government entity concerning the public right of way.

The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce registered as a lobbyist in April of 2024 and is still registered as of today. They’ve lobbied on the convention center expansion among other issues, and Steve Nissen (a registered individual lobbyist) was in communication with former Council President Paul Krekorian’s office last year regarding the Hollywood Walk of Fame, around the same time this ordinance amendment was introduced. The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce

PAC spent \$325,400 in political contributions for 2024 alone, and many councilmembers on this current Council, in addition to the City Attorney, received contributions from that organization in 2024.

At the March 26th, 2025 Public Works Committee meeting on this item, Ted Jordan with the City Attorney's office told Councilmembers Hernandez, Hutt, and Padilla that this amendment would have no bearing on Council's ability to disapprove of a new star because of Council's authority to retain jurisdiction and veto certain board actions under L.A. Charter Section 245. I disagree. This Council knows that intervention of other city departments is rare, and Section 245 only provides Council to act within its next five meeting days. This amendment diminishes the City Council's ability to assert its role over this monument, if it chooses to.

I ask this Council to vote "no" and to urge the Board of Public Works and the Director of Public Works to correct BOE's recent violative actions, which I hope they are already doing. This amendment to Ord. #109896 (28.04(d)) is a problem allegedly searching for a solution.

Andrew Rudick

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Rudick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.