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Your Community Impact Statement Submittal - Council File Number: 24-0867

LA City SNow <cityoflaprod@service-now.com>
Reply-To: LA City SNow <cityoflaprod@service-now.com>
To: Clerk.CIS@lacity.org, commission@empowerla.org

Wed, Aug 21, 2024 at 1:29 PM

A Neighborhood Council Community Impact Statement (CIS) has been successfully submitted to your Commission or City Council. We provided information below about CISs and attached a copy of the CIS.

We encourage you to reach out to the Community Impact Statement Filer to acknowledge receipt and if this Community Impact Statement will be scheduled at a future meeting. Neighborhood Council board members are volunteers and it would be helpful if they received confirmation that you received their CIS.

The CIS process was enabled by the Los Angeles Administrative Code §Section 22.819. It provides that, "a Neighborhood Council may take a formal position on a matter by way of a Community Impact Statement (CIS) or written resolution." NCs representatives also testify before City Boards and Commissions on the item related to their CIS. If the Neighborhood Council chooses to do so, the Neighborhood Council representative must provide the Commission with a copy of the CIS or resolution sufficiently in advance for review, possible inclusion on the agenda, and posting on the Commission's website. Any information you can provide related to your agenda setting schedule is helpful to share with the NC.

If the CIS or resolution pertains to a matter *listed on the Commission's agenda*, during the time the matter is heard, the designated Neighborhood Council representative should be given an opportunity to present the Neighborhood Council's formal position. We encourage becoming familiar with the City Council's rules on the subject. At the Chair's discretion, the Neighborhood Council representative may be asked to have a seat at the table (or equivalent for a virtual meeting) typically reserved for City staff and may provide the Neighborhood Council representative more time than allotted to members of the general public. They are also permitted up to five (5) minutes of time to address the legislative body. If the CIS or resolution pertains to a matter *not listed on the agenda*, the designated Neighborhood Council representative may speak during General Public Comments.

We share this information to assist you with the docketing neighborhood council items before your board/commission. If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at empowerla@lacity.org.

***** This is an automated response, please DO NOT reply to this email. *****

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Reseda

Name: Jamie York

Email: jamiery@resedacouncil.org

The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(8) Nay(1) Abstain(2) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 08/19/2024

Type of NC Board Action: Against

Impact Information

Date: 08/21/2024

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees, Board of Neighborhood Commissioners

Council File Number: 24-0867

City Planning Number:

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: The Reseda Neighborhood Council (RNC) appreciates Councilmember Rodriguez's intent to increase diversity and foster leadership growth within the Neighborhood Council system. However, we have concerns about sweeping foundational changes such as term limits and mandatory youth seats being discussed outside the context of a larger discussion of improving the Neighborhood Council system. Indeed, these same concerns were salient at the inception of the Neighborhood Council system. Please see the attached pdf for our full statement.

Ref:MSG10968210



Reseda Neighborhood Council

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JIMMY REYES

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DOUGLAS SMITH

[CF-24-0867](#)

Neighborhood Council Bylaws / Youth Participation / Diversity Increase /
Leadership Growth

OPPOSED

The Reseda Neighborhood Council (RNC) appreciates Councilmember Rodriguez's intent to increase diversity and foster leadership growth within the Neighborhood Council system. However, we have concerns about sweeping foundational changes such as term limits and mandatory youth seats being discussed outside the context of a larger discussion of improving the Neighborhood Council system. Indeed, these same concerns were salient at the inception of the Neighborhood Council system.

IMPOSSIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING BY ORDINANCE

We draw attention to Article III, Section 2(b)(ii) of the Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils(the Plan), which states:

"Terms of members of the Governing Body shall be for two or four years, to be decided upon by individual Neighborhood Councils. Neighborhood Councils may limit the total number of terms that a member of the Governing Body may serve, if the term limitations are set forth in the Neighborhood Council's bylaws after the date this provision was amended."

This provision clearly establishes that: 1) Individual Neighborhood Councils have the authority to determine their own term lengths. 2) The implementation of term limits is at the discretion of each Neighborhood Council, to be set forth in their respective bylaws.

The current motion contradicts this established legal framework, which emphasizes local control and flexibility. Any attempt to impose universal term limits would require an amendment not just to the Plan, but also to the City Charter.

FURTHER CONCERNS

Even taking the motion as a set of well-intentioned suggestions for future Plan improvement, we oppose these suggestions for reasons including but not limited to the following:

1. **Lack of data:** There appears to be insufficient data on current board member retention rates, turnover, and the factors influencing participation.
2. **Risk to institutional knowledge:** Term limits may lead to a loss of experience and institutional memory, particularly if turnover rates for board members are very high.
3. **Existing challenges with retention:** Many Neighborhood Councils already struggle to fill board seats and retain members.
4. **Youth engagement:** Mandating youth seats without addressing the barriers to youth participation (such as time commitments, competing priorities, youth outreach, and City Council inaccessibility) won't achieve the desired outcome.
5. **Quorum concerns:** With DONE's mandate against floating quorums, some Neighborhood Councils struggle (and even fail) to maintain the minimum number of board members necessary for quorum.

SUGGESTIONS

Given these concerns, the Reseda Neighborhood Council suggests the following:

1. Defer consideration of these specific changes until after the completion of the ongoing Charter reform process, which may address Neighborhood Council governance more comprehensively.
2. Conduct a thorough study of current Neighborhood Council board member demographics, retention rates, and turnover, to inform any potential reforms.

3. Initiate a broader dialogue on Neighborhood Council optimization, involving DONE, current board members, and community stakeholders. This discussion should address:
 - a. Strategies for effective outreach and recruitment
 - b. Improving support and resources for Neighborhood Councils
 - c. Addressing barriers to participation, especially for youth and underrepresented groups
4. Implement specific strategies to increase diversity and youth engagement without resorting to term limits, such as:
 - a. Encouraging Neighborhood Councils to hold quarterly in-person meetings at local high schools or other youth-centric locations to facilitate outreach to young stakeholders.
 - b. Restructuring DONE to include a dedicated division for centralized outreach efforts, ensuring consistent and effective community engagement across all Neighborhood Councils.
 - c. Developing mentorship programs that pair experienced board members with new or potential members, particularly youth, to foster leadership development without losing institutional knowledge.
5. Address the systemic issues within DONE that have hindered Neighborhood Council effectiveness, including:
 - a. Improving transparency and accountability in funding allocations and contract awards
 - b. Enhancing training and support for Neighborhood Council board members
 - c. Streamlining administrative processes to reduce burdens on volunteer board members
6. The RNC is committed to fostering diverse, engaged, and effective community representation. This requires a data-driven approach that acknowledges the realities of volunteer-driven city advisory boards.
7. Enhance City Council accessibility:
 - a. Implement Zoom and phone participation for City Council meetings and City Council committee meetings
 - b. Hold meetings outside downtown and outside school hours
 - c. Consider adding youth representatives to the City Council itself
8. Equitable youth engagement:

- a. We commend the Olivia Mitchell LA City Youth Council initiative, which provides a \$50 stipend per meeting (up to \$1,100 annually) for youth participants
 - b. Consider extending similar stipends to youth members of Neighborhood Councils to encourage participation and recognize their contributions
9. Remove restrictive policies:
- a. Remove the limitation on youth seats of one per Neighborhood Council, allowing for more flexible youth representation

We believe these measures would more effectively address the goals of increased youth participation and diversity without compromising the autonomy and effectiveness of Neighborhood Councils. We urge the City Council to take a comprehensive view of NC reform and collaborate with DONE and current NCs. By tackling root issues, we can create a more vibrant NC system, without violating the Charter or the current Plan.

This statement was passed in a Brown Act compliant meeting on August 19, 2024 with a vote of 8 yes, 1 no, 2 abstain, 0 recused.