

Communication from Public

Name: Yasenia L. Conde Esq
Date Submitted: 06/25/2024 06:55 PM
Council File No: 24-0491
Comments for Public Posting: LETTER OF OPPOSITION



Reimagine L.A. Foundation

November 7, 2023

Greetings,

Reimagine LA Foundation proudly submits this letter of support in favor of the Guatemalan Square designation in the Westlake area of Los Angeles. As a proud partner of the Central American community, we recognize the efforts and contributions the Guatemalan community has made to the City of Los Angeles.

Establishing a square for the Guatemalan community would be a powerful symbol of inclusivity, cultural recognition, and social cohesion. It would provide a much-needed space for the community to gather, celebrate the rich heritage, and share the traditions with all citizens throughout Los Angeles. The square would build an identity that promotes pride, resilience, and the ability to leverage much-needed resources, like other communities in the surrounding areas, such as Historic Filipinotown, Koreatown, the El Salvador Corridor, and the most recent Maya Corridor.

Reimagine LA is proud to celebrate and uplift the rise of the Guatemalan community, and we look forward to working with other Central American and Caribbean communities in gaining that same recognition.

Sincerely,

Rashad Rucker

Executive Director & Co Founder
Reimagine LA Foundation

Raul Claros

Raul Claros
Co-Founder, Reimagine LA Foundation

Communication from Public

Name: Yasenia Conde Esq
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June 18, 2024

Dear Councilmembers,

I am writing on behalf of California Rising to express our strong opposition to the motion titled "The Guatemalan Community Landmark Naming Project" (Council File 24-0491). While we appreciate Councilwoman Hernandez's stated intention to recognize the Guatemalan community, we have serious concerns about how this current motion came about and believe it undermines a previous community-driven proposal in Council District 1.

In 2016, in the wake of the traumatic US Presidential election, a group of multicultural and multigenerational leaders came together in Council District 1 to support and advocate for our diverse communities. Since then, we have seen how critical it is for our elected officials to partner meaningfully with grassroots efforts, especially those arising from traditionally underserved neighborhoods like those in CD 1. It is in this context that, for nearly two years, a coalition of Guatemalan community members and organizations worked tirelessly to develop a landmark proposal called "The Guatemalan Square" (Council File 22-1094). They engaged in extensive outreach in CD 1 and followed the procedures they were directed to pursue in good faith. However, our understanding is that throughout this process, the applicants encountered significant challenges in working with the Councilwoman's office, including experiencing misleading communication and feeling disrespected. Most troubling are the indications that Councilwoman Hernandez and her staff actively took steps to undermine this original grassroots proposal from the CD 1 community. If true, this would be highly inappropriate and a betrayal of the community's trust and efforts. It raises serious questions about whether this new motion is a good-faith effort to celebrate the Guatemalan community in CD 1 or a political maneuver.

We strongly urge the City Council to put the current motion on hold and first conduct a full, independent investigation into the handling of the original "Guatemalan Square" proposal. The people of Council District 1 and all of Los Angeles deserve transparency and an opportunity to understand what happened before the Council moves forward on this matter. The Guatemalan American community in CD 1 deserves to be uplifted and recognized, but it must happen through an open and ethical process that respects community input and the hard work of the grassroots. We urge you to take the time necessary to properly investigate these concerning allegations, to center community voices in CD 1, and to proceed only with a landmark effort that has been developed through genuine partnership.

Our organization believes in building trust between City Hall and underserved communities like those in Council District 1. How the Council handles this matter will send a strong signal about its commitment to integrity, fairness, and meaningful engagement with the diverse residents of CD 1.

We look forward to continued dialogue on how we can work together to truly honor the Guatemalan community in Council District 1 and rebuild trust in the process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rashad Rucker', is written over the printed name.

California Rising
Rashad Rucker



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Name: Yasenia Conde Esq
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Reimagine L.A. Foundation

June 17, 2024

Councilmembers,

I am writing on behalf of the Reimagine LA Foundation, an organization deeply committed to supporting and uplifting the diverse communities of Council District 1. Our foundation has been actively involved in various programs and initiatives aimed at improving the lives of residents in the district, including food giveaways, cultural enhancements and program development.

It is with great concern that we have learned about the motion titled "The Guatemalan Community Landmark Naming Project" (Council File 24-0491), presented by Councilwoman Eunisses Hernandez. We believe that this motion is being fast-tracked through the City Council committees without proper consideration for the community's original efforts.

We have been made aware that a dedicated group of community members, residents, and local nonprofits had been working tirelessly for nearly two years on a proposal titled "The Guatemalan Square" (Council File 22-1094). The applicants, who are deeply connected to the district, followed proper procedures in good faith. However, they repeatedly felt misled and disrespected by the Councilwoman's office throughout the process. This is deeply troubling and undermines the principles of community engagement and transparency that are so essential to effective governance.

The Reimagine LA Foundation strongly urges the City Council to thoroughly investigate the handling of the "Guatemalan Square" proposal before allowing a vote on the new "Landmark Naming" motion. It is crucial that the Council ensure that the voices and efforts of the community members behind the original proposal are heard and properly addressed.

As an organization that stands for all Central American communities, we believe it is essential to foster a spirit of unity, collaboration, and mutual respect. We call upon the Council to uphold these values and to work towards a more inclusive and transparent decision-making process that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of the diverse communities within Council District 1.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We trust that you will take the necessary steps to investigate and address the concerns raised, and we look forward to working together to build a stronger, more equitable future for all residents of Council District 1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AS', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Amber Strange
Boardmember