

Your Community Impact Statement has been successfully submitted to City Council and Committees.

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at NCsupport@lacity.org.

This is an automated response, please do not reply to this email.

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Woodland Hills-Warner Center

Name: Heath Kline

Phone Number:

Email: h.kline@whcouncil.org

The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(14) Nay(3) Abstain(1) Ineligible(5) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 12/12/2022

Type of NC Board Action: For if Amended

Impact Information

Date: 12/22/2022

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 23-0002-S1

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: Since the origination of LA's city council system, there have been 15 council districts. At the time, there were 200,000 people in the City of LA, with about 13,300 persons per district. That number is multiplied twenty times to over 3.85 million people today. Each Council District in Los Angeles has more people than the Cities of Burbank and Pasadena combined. There is scant evidence that this consolidation of power in such populated Districts is good for the residents and voters of LA. Therefore, the Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council wholeheartedly supports bringing Charter Reform Ballot Initiatives to the voters before 2024. These would increase and tie Council district sizes to population, expand the City Council to provide more representation to our communities and remove Councilmembers and other elected officials from redistricting. To this end, we ask that you review our attached Community Impact Statement that offers specific recommendations as to what changes should be put before Los Angeles voters to improve the way City Council districts are determined and right sizing the council so that it can effectively hear from and be accountable to constituents and lead city government infrastructure to be responsive to the needs of the residences of our great City.

Resolution/Community Impact Statement

Board

President Dena Weiss, Area 4 CB Org.
Vice Pres. Mihran Kalaydjian, Area 6 Bus.
Treasurer Paul Lawler, Area 2 Bus.
Secretary Karen DiBiase, Area 1 Bus.
Parliamentarian Leslie Simon, Area 6 Res.

Aaron M Quantz, Area 1 Res.
Mark Schwartz, Area 1 CB Org.
Reina Cerros McCaughey, Area 1 Alt.

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Phillip Swain, Area 2 Alt.

Mark Bell, Area 3 Res.
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Christopher Waddy, Area 5 Res.
Julie Waltrip, Area 5 Bus.
Theresa Campbell, Area 5 CB Org.
Gretchen Gasell, Area 5 Alt.

Heath Kline, Area 6 CB Org.

Aaron Williams, Area 7 Res.
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Houtan Hormozian, Area 7 CB Org.
Christine Robinson, Area 7 Alt.

August Steurer, At-Large
Bobbie Wasserman, At-Large Alt.

Talia Isaacs, Youth (At-Large)

Board Authorized Submittal
by Heath Kline
for
Dena Weiss, President
d.weiss@whcouncil.org

Action Passed on 12/12/2022

Members Present: 23
Quorum: 12

Members voting Aye: 14
Members voting Nay: 03
Members Abstaining: 01

Members Ineligible: 05
Members Recused: 00

Contact Person:
Heath Kline
818-312-5610
h.kline@whcouncil.org

Regarding

Council File 21-1472

November 2022 Ballot / Ballot Measure / City Charter Amendment /
Independent Redistricting Commission

Council File 23-0002-S1

Independent Redistricting Process / New Commission / New Redistricting
Maps / City of Los Angeles / April 2023 Special Election

Council File 22-1196

Charter Reform Ballot Initiative / 2024 / Redistricting Process / Los Angeles
City Council Seats / Representation Fixed to Population Growth

The Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council supports the creation of an independent redistricting commission. It is a necessary and overdue step for the City Council and Los Angeles Unified School Board Districts. During the 2021 redistricting process, many Neighborhood Councils had to expend significant energy and time to fight for their neighborhood in a polarized and politicized process. It is time for Los Angeles to catch up to California and Los Angeles County, which already have independent redistricting commissions.

We propose adding restrictions for applicant qualifications excluding any bidder, contractor, developer, or someone with a direct financial interest in the City's work from serving on the Commission. We also recommend excluding anyone affiliated with the management of an employee union, any recent candidate for a City of LA elected office, former elected officials in the City of LA, and anyone who has donated or raised above a certain threshold for local candidates.

The Redistricting process must follow a set of rank-ordered criteria to create new districts:

1. Population Equality: Districts must comply with the U.S. Constitution's requirement of "one person, one vote."
2. Federal Voting Rights Act: Districts must ensure an equal opportunity for minorities to elect a candidate of their choice
3. Geographic Contiguity: All areas within a district must connect as an undivided whole, except for the particular case of islands
4. Geographic Integrity: Without violating previous criteria, Districts shall minimize the division of Neighborhood Councils before minimizing the division of communities of interest to the extent feasible. Communities of interest are secondary to neighborhood councils. They must be a contiguous population sharing common social and economic interests that justify inclusion within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation.
5. Geographic Compactness: To the extent practicable, and where this does not conflict with previous criteria, districts must not bypass nearby communities for more distant communities of interest. Communities of interest cannot be considered broader than 7 miles.
6. To the extent practicable, Districts should not cross watersheds.
7. Drawing Districts shall not consider any effects on incumbents, office candidates, or political parties.

Resolution/Community Impact Statement

The City Council districts are currently too large to govern each area well. They have created an environment leading to opportunities for corruption by concentrating so much power in so few hands. A fifth of our City Council Members coming under indictment in the last decade is a strong indicator of opportunities for corruption. We also strongly believe in the expansion of the City Council's size.

It is simply impossible for 15 Council Members to govern 4 million people appropriately. Each City Council Member is supposed to represent over a quarter million residents. For comparison, in New York City (8.4 million people, 51 council districts), each council district represents approximately 160,000-170,000 people. In Chicago (2.71 million people, 50 wards), each alderperson represents about 54,000 people. The City of Fresno has a Council Member per 112,000 persons. We favor getting to somewhere in the middle.

We support a ballot measure to establish a new City Council, having one Council Member per 110,000 residents to the nearest whole number of Council Districts and expanding the number of Council Districts as the population increases.

Serving as Commission Co-chairs, two retired Superior Court Judges put forth by the presiding judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court shall select the Commission from a pool of about 80 candidates nominated across the City. At least one judge shall live in the City of Los Angeles.

To establish the pool of candidates, each Los Angeles Neighborhood Council may nominate at least one and up to 3 candidates at the rate of one per 50,000 in population to the nearest whole number, ideally resulting in selecting about 1 out of 5 candidates to the Redistricting Commission of 17 members plus the two Co-chairs.

We support ballot measures to increase the number of Council Districts and establish new redistricting procedures. They should appear on the same ballot. When voters pass one or both ballot measures as proposed, the City Council must immediately initiate the redistricting process to complete new redistricting in time for the 2024 election cycle.