



CITY OF  
LOS ANGELES  
CALIFORNIA



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## WEST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

### JOINT BOARD AND ZONING & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

**Tuesday, August 12, 2025 @ 6:30 p.m.**  
**Chaminade College Preparatory – Condon Center 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**  
**23241 W. Cohasset Street, West Hills, CA 91304**

**Enter Chaminade through the Cohasset Street entrance between Woodlake and Platt Avenues. Drive through the parking lot, bear left and continue over the hill until you see the Condon Family Technology Center on the left. Park in the nearest lot.**

In conformity with the October 6, 2023 enactment of California Senate Bill 411 (Portantino) and La City Council Approval on November 1, 2023, the West Hills Neighborhood Council Zoning & Planning Committee meeting will be conducted virtually, telephonically and in person.

- To attend online via Zoom Webinar: Click or paste the following link into your browser: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85777145429>
- To call in by phone, dial (669) 900-6833, then punch in this Webinar code when prompted: **8577 714 5429**, then press #.
- To attend in person, please attend Chaminade College Preparatory – Condon Center 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 23241 W. Cohasset Street, West Hills, CA 91304

This meeting is open to the public. Doors open 10 minutes before the meeting starts. Those who wish to speak during the meeting may be asked to complete a Speaker Card. Comments on matters not on the agenda will be heard during the Public Comment period. Those who wish to speak on an agenda item will be heard when the item is considered.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Call to order                           | Mr. Bill Rose, Co-Chair<br>Mrs. Charlene Rothstein, Co-Chair |
| 2. Establish Quorum                        | Mrs. Carolyn Greenwood, Secretary                            |
| 3. Comments from the Co-Chairs             | Mr. Bill Rose, Co-Chair<br>Mrs. Charlene Rothstein, Co-Chair |
| 4. Approve meeting minutes of July 8, 2025 | Mrs. Carolyn Greenwood, Secretary                            |
| 5. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items     | Mr. Bill Rose, Co-Chair<br>Mrs. Charlene Rothstein, Co-Chair |

#### **New Business**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 6. Discussion and possible action to join a rally with United Neighbors and other groups against SB 79 | Mr. Bill Rose, Co-Chair<br>Mrs. Charlene Rothstein, Co-Chair |
|--|--|

## **Old Business**

7. Discussion and possible action regarding Case #ZA-2023-1899-ZAD-HCA located at 8817-8815 Chatlake Drive West Hills  
Mr. Bill Rose, Co-Chair  
Mrs. Charlene Rothstein, Co-Chair  
Ms. Penny Newmark, Member
8. Discussion and possible action regarding revisions to the City Charter including Article IX  
Mr. Bill Rose, Co-Chair  
Mrs. Charlene Rothstein, Co-Chair
9. Meeting Adjournment – Next meeting is September 9, 2025

**SB 411 Updates** - If a Neighborhood Council has a quorum of board members in a physical location, board members who wish to join the meeting via teleconferencing must adhere to AB 2449 rules and regulations. If a Neighborhood Council does not have a quorum of board members in a physical location, they must adhere to SB 411 rules and regulations. In the event of a disruption that prevents the eligible legislative body 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 eligible legislative body's control that prevents members of the public from offering public comments using the call-in option or internet-based service option, the eligible legislative body 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 eligible legislative body from broadcasting the meeting may be challenged pursuant to Section 54960.1. The eligible legislative body shall not require public comments to be submitted in advance of the meeting and shall provide an opportunity for the public to address the legislative body and offer comments in real time. Notwithstanding Section 54953.3, an individual desiring to provide public comment through the use of an internet website, or other online platform, not under the control of the eligible legislative body, 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) An eligible legislative body that 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, provide public comment until that timed public comment period has elapsed. (ii) An eligible legislative body that 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) An eligible legislative body that provides a timed general public comment period that does not correspond to a specific agenda item 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.

**Public Input** - 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 Board's jurisdiction will be heard during the General Public Comment period. Please note that under the Brown Act, the Board is prevented from acting on a matter that you bring to its attention during the General Public Comment period; however, an issue raised by a member of the public may become the subject of a future Board meeting. Public comment is limited to two minutes per speaker, unless adjusted by the presiding officer of the committee.

**The Americans With Disabilities Act** - As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and upon request will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities. Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or other auxiliary aids and/or services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability of services, please make your request at least 3 business days (72 hours) prior to the meeting by contacting the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment by calling (213) 978-1551 or email: [NCsupport@lacity.org](mailto:NCsupport@lacity.org)

**Public Posting of Agendas** - WHNC agendas are posted for public review at Platt Village, on the Southside of Pavilions, closest to Nothing Bundt Cakes at 6534 Platt Avenue, West Hills, CA 91307 or at our website, [www.westhillsnc.org](http://www.westhillsnc.org) You can also receive our agendas via email by subscribing to [L.A. City's Early Notification System \(ENS\)](#)

**Notice to Paid Representatives** -If you are compensated 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 Section 48.01 et seq. More information is available at [ethics@lacity.org/lobbying](http://ethics@lacity.org/lobbying). For assistance, please contact the Ethics Commission at (213) 978-1960 or [ethics.commission@lacity.org](mailto:ethics.commission@lacity.org)

**Public Access of Records** - In compliance with Government Code Section 54957.5, non-exempt writings that are distributed to a majority or all of the board in advance of a meeting may be viewed at our website: [www.westhillsnc.org](http://www.westhillsnc.org) or at the scheduled meeting. In addition, if you would like a copy of any record related to an item on the agenda, please contact the WHNC's executive director via email at [michelle.ritchie@westhillsnc.org](mailto:michelle.ritchie@westhillsnc.org)

**Reconsideration and Grievance Process** - For information on the NC's process for board action reconsideration, stakeholder grievance policy, or any other procedural matters related to this Council, please consult the NC Bylaws. The Bylaws are available at our Board meetings and our website [www.westhillsnc.org](http://www.westhillsnc.org)

**Servicios De Traduccion:** Si requiere servicios de traducción, favor de avisar al Concejo Vecinal 3 días de trabajo (72 horas) antes del evento. Por favor contacte [Michelle.Ritchie@westhillsnc.org](mailto:Michelle.Ritchie@westhillsnc.org)



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## WEST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

### JOINT BOARD AND ZONING & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING DRAFT MINUTES

**TUESDAY, July 8, 2025 @ 6:30 P.M.**

**Chaminade College Preparatory – Condon Center 2nd Floor  
2341 W. Cohasset Street, West Hills, CA 91304**

1. Call to Order at 6:35 P.M. by Bill Rose
2. Quorum was established.

Committee Members Present: Aida Abkarians, Faye Barta, Carolyn Greenwood, Kim Koerber, Penelope Newmark, Chris Pike, Steve Randall (AB2449), Bill Rose and Charlene Rothstein. Glenn Jennings and Brenda Citrom were present and appointed to the Committee.

Committee Members Absent: Dan Brin, Saif Mogri and Myrl Schreibman.

Other Board Members Present: Brad Vanderhoof.

3. Comments from the Co-Chair(s). Bill advised that SB79 passed another committee and was moving forward.
4. Minutes from June 10, 2025 were amended and approved.
5. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items: A stakeholder, Fran Rubin, advised that she is calling Council District 12 regarding the vendors on Fallbrook and would be bringing the information back to the committee

#### **New Business:**

6. Discussion and possible action regarding a proposal for 8817 Chatlake Drive, West Hills

Owner, Nello Manciatì, advised that he has not obtained a petition from his neighbors. Three neighbors stated they don't want the project. Mr. Nello stated the changes he was

willing to make to get approval for the project. He stated that the LA Fire Department has approved the project. He will return to the next meeting on August 12th with documents showing what approvals have been given on the project. Mr. Nello was asked to be prepared to also provide the time frame for the construction and because of the area this project is in, what the plans are if they come across any artifacts during construction.

Matter tabled until the August 12th meeting.

7. Discussion and possible action on regarding Council Motions dated July 1, 2025

There was discussion on the three motions which relate to ADUs and streamlining the approval process. All of the motions require that the various departments, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), City Planning Department and the Bureau of Engineering and the Department of Building and Safety report back to the Council in 60 days on improvements and implementation of the process.

Item tabled.

8 Discussion and possible action to submit a letter to City Council and Officials regarding the necessity to take back local planning control with a request for city Council to initiate a motion.

Char has completed a rough draft letter and presented the points to be covered. After some discussion, a motion was made to prepare the letter for presentation to the Board for approval. Motion passed.

**Old Business:**

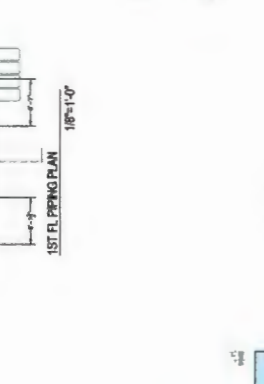
9 Discussion and possible action regarding revisions to the City Charter

Char stated that the City Charter Commission has been formed. They are scheduled to meet twice a month. The commission's recommendations will be submitted to the City Council and Mayor for potential inclusion on the November 2026 ballot. The Commission is mandated to solicit input from a wide range of stakeholders, including the public, city officials, experts, and academics, to ensure a comprehensive review process. Char and Bill asked that the committee review the Charter as it relates to the Neighborhood Councils and be prepared to make recommendation.

8. Bill adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.







Re 8817 Chatlake Drive

Nello Manciatì <nello1599@gmail.com>

Tue, Jul 22, 2025 at 3:18 PM

To: Char Rothstein <charwhnc@gmail.com>, Amir Samani <money26@gmail.com>, Olga Ayala <olga.ayala@lacity.org>

Good afternoon

Regarding the last meeting it was a concern about employees parking during construction phase, I sketched the location of the site for parking 4 cars park easily on the remaining space, any delivery will be done to the driveway which will be lightly concreted beforehand and it is 12' wide. And the other concern was the Fire department approval which I enclosed in this email. It was cleared by all departments last year, copy enclosed too. We calculate construction will take 10 to 12 months to complete. Funding is already available.

Thanks again for your help and consideration.

Nello

Clearances:

Address approval	Cleared	5/18/2022	ROMAN GUTIERREZ
BHO/Hillside ordinance	Cleared	5/19/2022	ROMAN GUTIERREZ
BHO/Hillside ordinance	Cleared	5/19/2022	ROMAN GUTIERREZ
BHO/Hillside ordinance	Cleared	5/19/2022	ROMAN GUTIERREZ
BHO/Hillside ordinance	Not Cleared	5/19/2022	Bureau of Engineering
BHO/Hillside ordinance	Not Cleared	5/19/2022	Bureau of Engineering
Eng Process Fee Ord 176,300	Cleared	5/20/2022	ROMAN GUTIERREZ
Sewer availability	Cleared	5/20/2022	ROMAN GUTIERREZ
Hydrant and Access approval	Cleared	7/1/2022	KURT CORRAL
Trees in Parkway	Cleared	11/8/2022	ADALBERTO VERA
Specific Plan	Cleared	11/27/2022	SARAH HOUNSFELI
Low Impact Development	Cleared	12/5/2022	SARAH YOUSSEF
Roof/Waste drainage to street	Cleared	12/15/2022	CARLOS AGUILERA
Disturb/Remove Protected Trees	Not Cleared	5/20/2024	Bureau of Street Services
Grading Pre-Inspection	Not Cleared	7/16/2024	Department of Building and Safety

[Quoted text hidden]

2 attachments

-  **APPROVED 8817 CHATLAKE FIRE SPRINKLERS OTC 03463 - M22VN02522 - 081822.pdf**  
6306K
-  **PARKING SPACES\_CHATLAKE (1).pdf**  
5706K



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# Public Events

Written public comment can be submitted to  
[ReformLAcharter@lacity.org](mailto:ReformLAcharter@lacity.org)

## NEXT MEETING

### Charter Reform Commission Meeting 6

#### Town Hall Study Session: Government structure

**Saturday, August 9, 2025 10:00 AM**

**Encino Community Center**

**4935 Balboa Blvd Encino, CA 91316**

[Zoom Link](#)

[Revised Agenda](#)

#### Materials

[Rick Cole Presentation](#)

[OUR LA Presentation](#)



West Hills Neighborhood Council  
Planning Committee

I am opposed to the request for relief from land use and building code restrictions for the project at 8817 Chatlake.

Our roads are substandard. The applicant is opposed to roadway improvements. The neighborhood has historic Zoning Administrator rulings, including:

1983 Tentative Tract 31359  
2003 ZA -3393  
2008 ZA -1062  
2023 ZA -1899 ( under advisement )

The project is insensitive to the neighborhood.

Please reject the request for relief from code restrictions.



LAURENCE SUMNER

signature  
*Laurence Blackstone*

08/05/2025  
date

8810 CHATLAKE DR, WEST HILLS, GA 91304  
address



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**Case # ZA-2023-1899-ZAD-HCA**

Amir Samani of GemStone Properties, LLC is requesting permission to build a 3723 sq. ft. house and an ADU at 8817 and 8815 North Chatlake Drive, West Hills, CA 91304.

Local residents made a presentation at a public hearing, asking that permission be denied. Jonathan Hershey, the Associate Zoning Administrator, stated he would review additional information provided by Gemstone, and make a decision at the end of July. The Neighbourhood Council including Bill Rose and Char Rothstein have since been advised of the residents concerns regarding building in this area, and have been given an extension by Mr Hershey until Aug 15th to submit their WHNC Zoning determination letter.

Chatlake Drive is a sub standard street, which is very narrow in places, with a one way in and one way out access road in a high fire risk area. (Residents can only obtain California Fair Plan home Insurance) There would be problems for downloading and storing materials. Additionally road or public parking for construction workers is not readily available. Traffic in the area has also increased. This includes home deliveries by various companies including Amazon, and FedEx.

Should an emergency occur it would create problems for City emergency vehicles, amongst others, to gain access and exit the area safely.

The area has been evacuated previously, and I do not understand that building in such a vulnerable area continues to be permitted, particularly in view of climate change and recent fires. We were previously evacuated due to the Wolsey fire, and we would have been evacuated because of the Kenneth fire, but for the wind changing direction. Every fire season we are aware of the risks to life and property.

I am truly concerned that Gemstone appears to see an opportunity to make money regardless of the dangers, and has

demonstrated a willingness to not conform to zoning and building requirements. Holes were drilled into the base of a live oak tree, which was fronting the property, with the purpose of killing it, which sadly was accomplished. My understanding is they also graded the site without permission.

We respectfully ask the WHNC Zoning Committee to review this case at their August 12th meeting, with a view to recommending planning permission being declined before a decision is made by the City of Los Angeles Zoning Administrator, Jonathan Hershey on August 15th, 2025

I fear for the safety of residents as building on this hillside surrounded by rocks could potentially create a Geologic hazard or geohazard.



Laurence D Sumner

08/05/2025

8810 Chatlake Drive, West Hills CA 91304  
818-448-6432



Jeanne (Tahdi) Blackstone

818 888 6004



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# Community Impact Statement to Strengthen Neighborhood Councils by Revision of City Charter Article IX

Jul 15, 2024 | Community Impact Statements, Full Board, News, WHIP

The Woodland Hills Issues and Policies (WHIP) Committee drafted a proposal for comprehensive revisions to Article IX of the Los Angeles City Charter, which governs the Neighborhood Councils

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 Article IX replacement text.

These proposed revisions to Article IX of the Los Angeles City Charter are a necessary response to the long-standing challenges and inconsistent support that Neighborhood Councils have experienced within the city government structure. These challenges have manifested in various forms, from the insufficient funding of Neighborhood Councils to the limited incorporation of their input in city decision-making processes, and from the need for more comprehensive training and support to the occasional oversight of their legal rights and powers under the City Charter.

Just as we have laws and systems in place to ensure the well-being and protection of vulnerable populations, we must also have robust safeguards and support for Neighborhood Councils, which serve as essential democratic institutions for empowering and engaging communities. City officials' inconsistent support for Neighborhood Councils is not merely an administrative shortcoming; it is a structural issue that can hinder the effectiveness of our local democracy.

By revising Article IX, the city can create a more robust, equitable, and accountable framework for the Neighborhood Council system, one that provides these grassroots



bodies with the recognition, support, and resources they require to thrive. The updated Charter provisions will not only clarify the obligations of city officials to foster and support Neighborhood Councils but also establish clear mechanisms for addressing any lapses in fulfilling these responsibilities.

The Neighborhood Council system in Los Angeles is an extensive and intricate network, comprising 99 councils with over 1,300 dedicated participants. These volunteers contribute their time, energy, and expertise to serve their communities and facilitate democracy at the grassroots level. However, despite their commitment and passion, many Neighborhood Councils face persistent operational challenges that can limit their ability to fully realize their mission and potential.

Notably, approximately one-third of Neighborhood Councils encounter difficulties in achieving quorum, the minimum number of members required to conduct official business. This participation challenge arises from various factors, including a shortage of candidates willing to step forward and serve, as well as the frustration and burnout that can lead to resignations among current council members.

These operational hurdles are not simply administrative inconveniences; they are indicators of a broader, long-standing pattern of inconsistent support that has affected the Neighborhood Council system. When councils struggle to attain quorum, they face limitations in advocating for their communities, providing meaningful input on city policies, and delivering the critical services and support that their constituents need.

The proposed amendments to Article IX of the City Charter seek to directly address these challenges by establishing a more supportive, empowering, and sustainable framework for Neighborhood Councils. By ensuring sufficient funding, training, and resources for councils, as well as elucidating the responsibilities of city officials to support and collaborate with these grassroots entities, the revisions aim to overcome the historical inconsistencies and empower Neighborhood Councils to flourish.

Furthermore, by instituting regular processes for the evaluation, improvement, and oversight of the Neighborhood Council system, the amended Article IX will facilitate the identification and resolution of operational issues before they escalate into more significant problems. This proactive approach will ensure that councils have the tools and support necessary to surmount challenges and effectively serve their communities.

In summary, the magnitude and intricacy of the Neighborhood Council system in Los Angeles, coupled with the significant operational challenges encountered by many councils, highlight the crucial importance of the proposed revisions to Article IX. By



codifying these reforms in the City Charter, we can establish a more resilient, responsive, and empowering framework for grassroots democracy—one that genuinely values and supports the remarkable work of our Neighborhood Councils and their dedicated volunteers.

## Suggested Draft of Article IX Revision





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

**Existing Sec. 900. Purpose.**

~~—To promote more citizen participation in government and make government more responsive to local needs, a citywide system of neighborhood councils, and a Department of Neighborhood Empowerment is created. Neighborhood councils shall include representatives of the many diverse interests in communities and shall have an advisory role on issues of concern to the neighborhood.~~

**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.

#### **Sec. 904. Development of the Neighborhood Council Plan.**

- ~~—The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment shall develop a Plan for a citywide system of neighborhood councils, in conformance with the following:~~
- ~~—(a) The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment shall seek public input in the formulation of the Plan.~~
  - ~~—(b) The Plan shall contain a statement of goals, policies and objectives of the Neighborhood Council system, and shall contain specific regulations, in draft ordinance format (Regulations) which, if adopted by ordinance, would be sufficient to implement the Plan.~~
  - ~~—(c) The Regulations shall establish the method by which boundaries of neighborhood councils will be determined. The system for determining boundaries shall maintain neighborhood boundaries to the maximum extent feasible, and may consider community planning district boundaries where appropriate.~~
  - ~~—(d) The Regulations must ensure that all areas of the City are given an equal opportunity to form neighborhood councils.~~
  - ~~—(e) The Regulations shall establish the procedure and criteria for recognition or certification of neighborhood councils.~~
  - ~~—(f) The Regulations shall not restrict the method by which the members of a neighborhood council are chosen, if the process otherwise satisfies the requirements of this Article.~~



~~—(g) The Regulations shall require that neighborhood councils adopt fair and open procedures for the conduct of their business.~~

~~—(h) The Mayor and Council shall provide for the creation of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment and appointment of the general manager within 120 days of the effective date of this Article.~~

~~-~~

#### **Existing Sec. 905. Implementation of the Plan.**

~~—The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment shall complete development of the Plan and present the Plan and all necessary Regulations for a system of neighborhood councils to the Council and Mayor within one year of the establishment of the department and commission. The Council shall consider the Regulations, and within six months after presentation of the Plan to Council may adopt ordinances to implement the Regulations as proposed, or as modified by the Council consistent with the requirements of the Plan set forth in Section 904. If implementing ordinances are not adopted within this time period, the Regulations shall become effective, and to the extent not inconsistent with law shall be binding upon all City departments and offices.~~

~~-~~

#### **Existing Sec. 901. Department of Neighborhood Empowerment.**

~~—The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment shall have the duties and responsibilities set forth in this Article and elsewhere in the Charter to implement and oversee the ordinances and regulations creating the system of neighborhood councils enacted pursuant to Section 905. Duties and responsibilities shall include:~~

~~—(a) prepare a plan for the creation of a system of neighborhood councils to ensure that every part of the City is within the boundary of a neighborhood council, and has an opportunity to form a neighborhood council (Plan);~~

~~—(b) assist neighborhoods in preparing petitions for recognition or certification, identifying boundaries that do not divide communities, and organizing themselves, in accordance with the Plan;~~

~~(c) arrange Congress of Neighborhood meetings if requested to do so by recognized neighborhood councils;~~

~~(d) assist neighborhood councils with the election or selection of their officers;~~

~~(e) arrange training for neighborhood councils' officers and staff;~~

~~(f) assist neighborhood councils to share resources, including offices, equipment, and other forms of support for them to communicate with constituents, other neighborhood councils and with government officials; and~~

~~(g) perform other duties as provided by ordinance.~~

### **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.

#### **Existing Sec. 902. Board of Neighborhood Commissioners.**

~~—(a) There shall be a board of seven commissioners to be known as the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (board). Commissioners shall be appointed by the Mayor, and shall be from diverse geographic areas, as further~~

~~specified by ordinance. Appointment and removal of commissioners shall otherwise be in accordance with Section 502.~~

~~—(b) The board shall be responsible for policy setting and policy oversight, including the approval of contracts and leases and the promulgation of rules and regulations, but shall not be responsible for day-to-day management.~~

~~—(c) The board shall operate in accordance with Sections 503 through 508 and 510 of the Charter.~~

## 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.

### **Existing Sec. 908. Powers of Neighborhood Councils.**

~~—Subject to applicable law, the City Council may delegate its authority to neighborhood councils to hold public hearings prior to the City Council making a decision on a matter of local concern.~~

## **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.

#### **Existing Sec. 910. Monitoring of City Services.**

~~—Neighborhood councils shall monitor the delivery of City services in their respective areas and have periodic meetings with responsible officials of City departments, subject to their reasonable availability.~~

#### **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.

### **NEW 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.

### **NEW 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.

#### **Existing Sec. 907. Early Warning System.**

~~—The Regulations shall establish procedures for receiving input from neighborhood councils prior to decisions by the City Council, City Council Committees and boards and commissions. The procedures shall include, but need not be limited to, notice to neighborhood councils as soon as practical, and a reasonable opportunity to provide input before decisions are made. Notices to be provided include matters to be considered by the City Council, City Council Committees, and City boards or commissions.~~

### **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.

### **Existing Sec. 903. General Manager.**

- ~~—(a) There shall be a general manager of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment who shall be appointed by the Mayor, subject to confirmation by the Council, and may be removed as provided in Section 508.~~
- ~~—(b) The general manager shall have those powers and duties set forth in Section 510.~~
- ~~—(c) The general manager shall appoint, discharge and prescribe the duties of staff, consistent with the civil service provisions of the Charter.~~

### **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.



**Existing Sec. 906. Certification of Neighborhood Councils.**

~~—(a) **By-laws.** Each neighborhood council seeking official certification or recognition from the City shall submit an organization plan and by-laws to the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment showing, at a minimum:~~

- ~~—(1) the method by which their officers are chosen;~~
- ~~—(2) neighborhood council membership will be open to everyone who lives, works or owns property in the area (stakeholders);~~
- ~~—(3) assurances that the members of the neighborhood council will reflect the diverse interests within their area;~~
- ~~—(4) a system through which the neighborhood council will communicate with stakeholders on a regular basis;~~
- ~~—(5) a system for financial accountability of its funds; and~~
- ~~—(6) guarantees that all meetings will be open and public, and permit, to the extent feasible, every stakeholder to participate in the conduct of business, deliberation and decision-making.~~

~~—(b) **Petitioning for Certification and Approval.** Neighborhood councils may petition for certification or recognition in accordance with rules and procedures set forth in the Plan.~~

**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.

### **NEW 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.

**Existing Sec. 911. Appropriation.**

The Mayor and Council shall appropriate funds for the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment and for the startup and functioning of neighborhood councils for the first two years after the effective date of this Article. Funds shall be appropriated into a special fund to be established by ordinance. The Mayor and Council shall thereafter appropriate funds for the department and neighborhood councils at least one year in advance of each subsequent fiscal year.

**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.

## **NEW 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.

**Existing Sec. 909. Annual City Budget Priorities.**

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~~—Each neighborhood council may present to the Mayor and Council an annual list of priorities for the City budget. The Mayor shall inform certified neighborhood councils of the deadline for submission so that the input may be considered in a timely fashion.~~

**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.

### **NEW 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.

## **NEW 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.

### **Existing Sec. 912. Review.**

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~~—The Mayor and Council shall appoint a commission as prescribed by ordinance to evaluate the provisions of this Article, the Regulations adopted pursuant to this Article, and the efficacy of the system of neighborhood councils no later than seven years after the adoption of the Charter. The commission shall make recommendations to the Council regarding changes to the Charter or the Regulations, as it deems appropriate.~~

## **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.

**Existing Sec. 905. Implementation of the Plan.**

~~The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment shall complete development of the Plan and present the Plan and all necessary Regulations for a system of neighborhood councils to the Council and Mayor within one year of the establishment of the department and commission. The Council shall consider the Regulations, and within six months after presentation of the Plan to Council may adopt ordinances to implement the Regulations as proposed, or as modified by the Council consistent with the requirements of the Plan set forth in Section 904. If implementing ordinances are not adopted within this time period, the Regulations shall become effective, and to the extent not inconsistent with law shall be binding upon all City departments and offices.~~

**Existing Sec. 913. Transfer of Powers.**

~~Notwithstanding any other provision of the Charter, the Mayor and Council shall not transfer powers, duties or functions of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment to any other department, office or agency pursuant to Section 514 during the first five years after implementation of the Plan pursuant to Section 905.~~

**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.

**Existing Sec. 914. Effect of Ordinances.**

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~~The Council may adopt ordinances concerning neighborhood councils consistent with requirements for the Plan set forth in Section 904 at any time, which ordinances shall supersede any inconsistent Regulations that have become effective pursuant to Section 905.~~

**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.