

May 2, 2013

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL BOARD MEMBERS & all STAKEHOLDERS  
of the Los Angeles City NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

FROM: Daniel Wiseman

I hope you find this description useful and helpful.

## **RE: COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENTS**

### **WHAT ARE COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENTS?**

Community Impact Statements (CIS's) are one of the most effective ways with which your Neighborhood Council can make its opinions known to the City Council. **CISs are Official Statements and positions adopted by a NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL on issues pending before the City's deliberators and decision makers.**

In mid-2003, the City began a new system through which Neighborhood Councils can submit Community Impact Statements, documents that summarize its official position on City issues. Creating a CIS puts your Neighborhood Council's opinion squarely in the deliberation and decision making process of the City Council. **The existence of and access to NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL Community Impact Statements are noticed, directly, on the meeting agendas of City Council, Council Committee and Commission meetings, making it hard for those deliberators and decision makers to ignore your Neighborhood Council's position.** The CIS becomes a permanent part of that Council File.

In the past, some City Council Members have been quoted to say that they do not pay attention to CIS's but that they rely on their staff to keep them up-to-date on "what is important." That said, it is particularly important to support, follow and publicize the materials in your CISs. It has become **more and more common for City Council Members to point to the support of Neighborhood Councils when they advocate a position**

Creating and submitting a CIS is a unique and unprecedented way for each Neighborhood Council's voice to be **known to the City Hall decision-makers and to the world before they vote or take action on the issue.**

Of course, that means that your Neighborhood Council must be aware of, informed of and continuously involved in the issue so that you can provide create timely and well-documented opinions.

For more information on the City's basic principles and practices, refer to "Legislative Process and Community Impact Statements," a document authored by Shannon Hoppes in March 2013 which explains more details regarding the City's recently revised website (**lacity.org**), the Council File Management System (CFMS) and Community Impact Statements.

The following FACSIMILE EXAMPLE of an Internet-entry form submission will provide the structure for the rest of this discussion. Other formats submitted other ways may be used, too.

## [FACSIMILE EXAMPLE of a recent INTERNET-STYLE COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT](#)

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Neighborhood Council: [West Hills Neighborhood Council](#)

Name: Daniel Wiseman

Phone Number: 818-635-4033

Email: [dwisemanmd@yahoo.com](mailto:dwisemanmd@yahoo.com)

Date of NC Board Action: [04/04/2012](#)

Type of NC Board Action: Against Proposal

Impact Information

Date: [04/05/2012](#)

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: [09-1914-S6](#)

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

### **BRIEF SUMMARY:**

**WHEREAS:** the West Hills NC (WHNC) received and considered materials related to the activities of the Business Tax Advisory Committee (BTAC).

**RESOLVED:** WHNC would like to advise the City Council to NOT decrease the Business Tax unless that decrease is replaced with an equal or greater, concurrent increase in revenue to offset this action. ([286 characters, maximum allowed is 450 characters](#))

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** ([no limits on the amount which may be added, here.](#))

On March 1, 2013, the BTAC received the reports of two expert consultants (Swenson and Blue Sky). Neither report produced any new methods or data. The two reports showed severe methodological flaws and yet reached diametrically opposite conclusions. Both reports appear to be scientifically invalid.

The CAO report (November 7, 2011, CAO No. 016009) spoke of the devastating effect eliminating the Business Tax (which creates over \$ 400 million in revenue per year) would have on the City's Budget.

**COPY of the MARCH 1, 2013 AD HOC BTAC MEETING**

<p>AD HOC BUSINESS TAX REFORM COMMITTEE, SPECIAL MEETING</p> <p>FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2013</p> <p>ROOM 1060, CITY HALL - 1:30 PM</p> <p>200 NORTH SPRING STREET, LOS ANGELES, CA 90012</p> <p>MEMBERS: COUNCILMEMBER PAUL KREKORIAN, CHAIR COUNCILMEMBER ERIC GARCETTI COUNCILMEMBER JOE BUSCAINO COUNCILMEMBER MITCHELL ENGLANDER COUNCILMEMBER JOSÉ HUIZAR COUNCILMEMBER DENNIS ZINE</p> <p>(Eric Villanueva - Legislative Assistant - 213-978-1051, e-mail <a href="mailto:Eric.Villanueva@lacity.org">Eric.Villanueva@lacity.org</a>) Click <a href="#">here</a> for agenda packet</p> <p>Note: For information regarding the Committee and its operations, please contact the Committee Legislative Assistant at the phone number and/or email address listed above. Upon 24-hour advance notice, assistive listening devices, and other accommodations, such as sign language interpretation and translation services are available at the meeting. Contact the Legislative Assistant listed above for the needed services.</p>	<p>09-1914-S8</p> <p>(3)</p> <p><b>CONTINUED FROM 2-6-2013</b> Communication from the City Administrative Officer and Chief Legislative Analyst relative to the elimination of the gross receipts tax in order to create jobs in the City of Los Angeles.</p> <p>Fiscal Impact Statement Submitted: Yes</p> <p>Community Impact Statement: None submitted</p>	<p>Ad Hoc Business Tax Reform Committee, Special Meeting Friday, March 1, 2013</p>
<p><b>SUBJECT</b></p> <p>(1)</p> <p><b>CONTINUED FROM 2-6-2013</b> Motion (Alarcón - Paris) relative to Chief Legislative Analyst and City Administrative Officer to report with input from the Business Tax Advisory Committee, Office of Finance and Professor Swenson, on a phased in approach to eliminating the City's gross receipt tax.</p> <p>Community Impact Statement: Yes</p> <p>Against Proposal: West Hillis Neighborhood Council</p>	<p>09-1914-S14</p> <p>(4)</p> <p>Motion (Perry - Krekorian) relative to Chief Legislative Analyst and City Administrative Officer to report with input from the Business Tax Advisory Committee, Office of Finance and Professor Swenson, on a phased in approach to eliminating the City's gross receipt tax. (Also referred to the Budget and Finance Committee).</p> <p>Community Impact Statement: None submitted</p> <p>(Materials related to an item on this agenda submitted to the Committee after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the City Clerk's Office at 200 North Spring Street, Room 395, City Hall, Los Angeles, CA 90012 during normal business hours.)</p> <p>b030113ep.doc</p>	<p>Ad Hoc Business Tax Reform Committee, Special Meeting Friday, March 1, 2013</p>
<p><b>SUBJECT</b></p> <p>(2)</p> <p><b>CONTINUED FROM 2-6-2013</b> Communication from the Office of Finance relative to a Business Tax Advisory Committee report on "Recommending How to Eliminate Gross Receipts Business Tax."</p> <p>Fiscal Impact Statement Submitted: No</p> <p>Community Impact Statement: None submitted</p>	<p>09-1914-S7</p>	<p>Ad Hoc Business Tax Reform Committee, Special Meeting Friday, March 1, 2013</p>

**PROGRESS OF THE ISSUE:** The WHNC CIS was attached to the Ad Hoc Committee on Business Tax Reform (aka Business Tax Advisory Committee or BTAC) CF #09-1914-S6 one year ago; on April 5, 2012. This CF was on the agenda of March 1, 2013 when a representative of WHNC was present and referred to it in a Public Comment Statement. However, apparently because no further submissions were made, the WHNC CIS was not cited when BTAC modified their recommendation into CF #09-1914-S7 and CF #09-1914-S8 or CF #09-1914-S8.

These “new” CFs changed the BTAC’s proposed “phase-in” schedule from “immediate” to 5-years and then to 15 years with no Fiscal Impact Statement (from the CLA and/or CAO). It is WHNC policy (a policy recommended for ALL NCs) to resubmit CISs as necessary to remain current and visible when similar issues (“new” CFs) are created. A review of the issue by WHNC needs to be done to proceed in this case.

The effect of the West Hills NC’s CIS in this case is hard to evaluate but the BTAC’s action (to continue their deliberations) was consistent with the WHNC recommendation and, because of that, WHNC may be reassured that their opinion was heard and considered.

## **ISSUES WORTHY of the EFFORT to CREATE a COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Usually, the issue, concept or concern will have been discussed and deliberated by a NC Committee and by the NC, as a whole. **CIS’s are always directed toward a pending or created Council File.** That File will be designated CF#xx-xxxx or CF#xx-xxxx-Sx. As noted in the example above, the CIS must be resubmitted after each Council or Committee Action if it is to remain “current.” Therefore, a systematic approach for CIS submissions, stating NC policy, procedures and established practices is useful.

The issues may be LOCAL. Each NC Committee may create a specific list of concerns related to City Services specific to their area:

1. PROPERTY & LAND USE ISSUES
  - a. Proposals scheduled to go before a Planning Commission or Hearing
  - b. Mitigated Negative Declarations considered by the City Council.
  - c. Other Land Use Issues
  
2. INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES
  - d. Potholes and “broken” streets
  - e. Street maintenance and repair
  - f. Sewer maintenance and repair
  - g. Creation, maintenance and operations of parks and green spaces.
  - h. Other Infrastructure issues.
  
3. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
  - i. Proposals scheduled to go before a Planning Commission or Hearing
  - j. Mitigated Negative Declarations considered by the City Council.
  - k. Other Environmental Issues
  
4. PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY
  - l. Community Policing and local “hot spots”
  - m. Fire and EMS coverage (response times, hillsides and “remote locations”, etc.)
  - n. Potential or recognized Pollution sites
  - o. Local Water Problems (opened pools, child safety, mosquito abatement, etc.)
  - p. Animal Hazards and Welfare (wild animals, coyotes, domesticated animals, etc.)
  - q. Other Public Health and Safety Issues

The issues may be CITY WIDE. These issues may come from many sources, including:

1. Radio, TV and Internet-based news (media) reports
2. Community interest groups
3. City Officers (the Mayor, Council, Controller, City Attorney, Department Heads)
4. DONE (EmpowerLA)
5. Your NC, itself, or other NCs
6. Regional Alliances (VANC, WRAC, SLAANC, NECA, NELA, HANC, the LA Alliance of NCs) or the Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition (LANCC).

Keeping informed and being appropriately informed by City Agencies is essential to the process.

## **GETTING SET UP to submit CISs**

Each Neighborhood Council with an elected board needs to notify the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (Tel: **1-213-978-1551**) of **up to five official representatives** who are authorized to submit its statements. A copy of the Neighborhood Council's board minutes appointing the representatives or a letter from the Neighborhood Council President is required to confirm the authorized representative(s) identity. **DONE will send each representative a username, password, and instructions on how to use the system.** The City will trust that they will be transmitting only official and authorized Community Impact Statements.

NOTE: Anyone may send a direct communication (called a Communication from the Public) to the City Clerk which will be made part of the specified Council File ... but not noticed on the agenda like a CIS.

## **STEPS in the PROCESS of SUBMITTING a CIS**

### **The First Step – Drafting the CIS:**

Once approved by your NC or once consistent with your NC's policies and practices, Internet-based submission of a CIS has three parts (already displayed in the FACSIMILE EXAMPLE);

1. The **CONTACT INFORMATION** which is necessary to establish the contact with the City Clerk. The "date of NC Board Action" and an "attached" copy of a NC Agenda or Minutes are required. Sometimes, effective submission must precede an "approval" of the minutes.

In those cases, it may be necessary to hand-carry or to fax the document.

2. The **BRIEF SUMMARY** which is your specific message, opinion or recommendation. It is limited to 450 characters (approximately 100 words) and every letter should be checked carefully and/or counted by your computer ("Tools" → Word Count, etc.). Be succinct, direct and very clear. Carefully review and proof read all parts of your CIS document(s).
3. The **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** section which contains as much background, source documents, graphs, pictures or other materials as you think will explain and support your position. There is another box for 450 characters and 2.5 Megabytes of "Attachments."



## The Second Steps – Drafting and Creating CIS document:

No matter how you plan to deliver the CIS to the City Clerk, it is worth the effort to create a draft document, first, which follows the format of the FACSIMILE EXAMPLE, above. That way, you will have all the essential items ready. You may find more help on the City Clerk's website (<http://cityclerk.lacity.org>) or by calling [1-213-978-1139](tel:1-213-978-1139) or [1-213-978-1050](tel:1-213-978-1050).

## The Third Step – Delivering the CIS document to the City Clerk:

Your document can be delivered in several ways:

1. Hand-carry or Mail a SIGNED COPY to: City Clerk – Public Counter  
Downtown City Hall,  
200 N. Spring St., Room 395  
Los Angeles, CA 90012
2. Fax a SIGNED COPY to: 1-213-978-1079
3. Send an email or fax SIGNED COPY to the Legislative Assistant of the Committee

The above submission methods (#1 through #3) do not have any limit on characters or style.

4. Using the City Clerk's Website: <http://cityclerk.lacity.org/CIS/>

ENTER your USER NAME and PASSWORD in the spaces provided and HIT "Login"



Angeles

ENS (Early  
Notification  
System)

Department of  
Neighborhood  
Empowerment

City Calendar

City Clerk

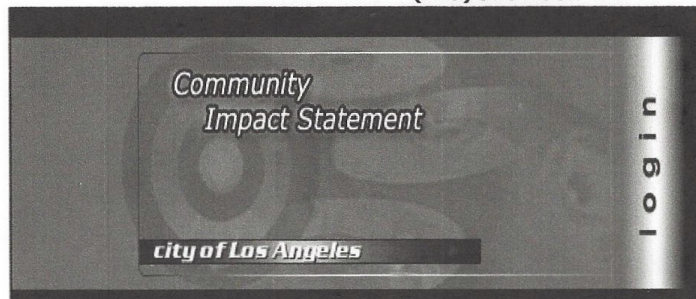
### Welcome to the City of Los Angeles Community Impact Statement

You must have a valid user name (userid) and password to access this system.

This system is for authorized Neighborhood Council representatives for providing input to City Committees, Commissions, Boards and City Council on topics of impact and interest to your Neighborhood Council.

Please use succinct wording and refrain from language which could be considered offensive or insensitive to others.

If you need assistance or require access, contact:  
**Department of Neighborhood Empowerment**  
**(213) 978-1551**



User Name

Password

Login

Property of The City of Los Angeles. Maintained by the City Clerk Systems Division.

| Home | Contacts | City of LA | Disclaimer |

## The City Clerk's Job

The City Clerk will accept statements only from Neighborhood Councils that have governing boards in place, that have voted in a public meeting to establish the submitter's position or have established in a public meeting some other process for establishing official submitter positions and practices. The City Clerk will review the document for completeness and the presence of a Council File Number. The City Clerk will not edit statements except in accordance with City Council rules. Statements containing offensive or defamatory language will be returned with an explanation by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment.

The City Clerk will attach the original statement to the official City Council file and will scan the statement into the CFMS so that it can be retrieved by the public through the Internet. The CFMS is described in the City Clerk's document: [Legislative Process and Community Impact Statements](#).

If the statement is received by the City Clerk in a timely way, it will be printed on the agenda below the Fiscal Impact Statement for the item. The full statement and any attachments will be placed in the City Council file.

Even if the statement is received late but before the meeting, it will be included in the City Council file, copies will be distributed at the City Council meeting and the Clerk will announce at the City Council meeting that a statement has been received from a Neighborhood Council. At the direction of the City Council President or the City Council, the statement may be read into the record. (This is a way ...not always advisable... to get maximum recognition of your issue.)

A Neighborhood Council may submit only one statement for each agenda item. If several Neighborhood Councils submit statements on the same issue, the agenda will note that fact, and identify the Neighborhood Councils that submitted the statements. The Internet input asks if the Neighborhood Councils action is a general comment or in support or opposition to the issue.

In all cases, the original statement will become part of the official record.

Neighborhood Councils may submit a statement on any agenda item it wishes. Neighborhood Councils are not restricted to commenting on matters within its boundaries because many important issues may not be geographically based, or may directly affect more than one Neighborhood Council.

Neighborhood Councils may use its statement to request a delay of a vote or change of process. However, the City Council may not comply with these requests. The City Attorney has advised the City Council to make reasonable efforts to comply with the spirit and intent of the law and to notify Neighborhood Councils as soon as possible prior to making decisions.

The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) recommends that either the Brief Statement or the Additional Information section, include other enlightening information about NCs' proceedings; such as listing the votes, explaining the other side of a divided vote, commenting on any advisory vote that may have been taken among the stakeholders, presenting a community survey or a describing the reversal of a previous position. For instance, if the vote is less than unanimous, decision-makers may want to know the reasoning of the other side ... a minority opinion ... for the sake of clarity.

It is also suggested that information be included in the ADDITIONAL MATERIALS section that explains who made the decision and how (i.e., Was it a vote by the entire governing board? By an officer authorized by the board to take such action? Was there a minority opinion?).