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ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

February 22, 2018

Honorable Members of the
Los Angeles City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall

SUBJECT: 2018 NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL SUBDIVISION ELECTIONS

Honorable Members:

SUMMARY

As reported on January 19, 2017, to the Health, Education, and Neighborhood Councils Committee (CF-12-1681-S1), EmpowerLA has received four Neighborhood Council (NC) subdivision applications. They are as follows:

1. North Westwood NC from the Westwood NC
2. Little Bangladesh NC from the Wilshire Center-Koreatown NC
3. North Historic Cultural from the Historic Cultural NC
4. Laurel Grove NC from the NoHo NC and Greater Valley Glen Council

If EmpowerLA approves any of these applications, an election is required within a 90-day period. This year, EmpowerLA has requested that the Office of the City Clerk (City Clerk) assist them in conducting up to three NC subdivision elections between May and June.

To ensure a smooth election process, the City Clerk is proposing a full-range of election services, which include polling place recruitment, ballot production and tally, supply assembly, poll worker training, Election Day management, and vote-by-mail operations. The 2018 NC subdivision elections will not include an online voting component.

To effectively conduct subdivision elections in 2018, the City Clerk must be provided funds in the amount of \$128,000. The City Clerk is requesting that a portion of the funds originally allocated toward the continued build out/set up of online elections for possible use in future NC elections be reallocated toward the conduct of subdivision elections in 2018.

BACKGROUND

Proposed Neighborhood Council Subdivision Election Program

The City Clerk is proposing an at-poll paper-based election with a vote-by-mail component for the subdivision elections in 2018. The City Clerk recommends each election have two polling places, one within the existing NC and one within the proposed subdivision area, fully operated by trained City Clerk staff. The City Clerk will recruit these locations, with input from EmpowerLA, the existing NC, and the subdivision applicants. The City Clerk will also assemble all supplies for Election Day and work with EmpowerLA to develop a procedure that prevents stakeholders from voting more than once on Election Day.

Prior to each Election Day, the City Clerk will format and produce ballots for high-speed scanning during the tabulation of votes. The tally process, which will include vote-by-mail and provisional ballot processing, will begin one business day after each election. Following each election, the City Clerk and EmpowerLA will work toward resolving any election challenges that may arise.

The City Clerk and EmpowerLA will provide additional details on these and other election processes in a subdivision election guide.

Online Voting

An online voting option was available for the Skid Row subdivision election in 2017. Following this election, the City Council instructed the City Clerk to review and modify the current online voting system and set up the remaining 46 NC online portals for possible use in future NC elections (see CF 15-1022-S2).

However, the online voting vendor, Everyone Counts, has indicated that the current online voting system cannot be modified to resolve the issues that arose in the 2016 NC board member elections and the 2017 Skid Row subdivision election. The vendor is not making any changes to its legacy system while a new system is projected by the vendor to be launched in September, 2018. For this reason, the City Clerk does not recommend conducting online subdivision elections in 2018.

Further, because the current online voting system cannot be modified, the City Clerk recommends not proceeding with setting up the remaining 46 NC elections in accordance with City Council instructions. Instead, the City Clerk is exploring the new voting system with Everyone Counts while simultaneously obtaining NC feedback on the entire online voting process. The City Clerk expects to report on this matter later this year.

As an alternative to online voting in subdivision elections, the City Clerk can provide stakeholders with a vote-by-mail option to ensure that all eligible stakeholders have an opportunity to participate in the subdivision election process. Depending on specific NC rules, vote-by-mail applicants may be required to submit supporting eligibility documentation before receiving a ballot.

Additional details will be included in the aforementioned subdivision election guide.

Subdivision Election Timeline

In order to include any new NCs in the 2019 NC election roster, subdivision elections must take place and be certified by the end of this fiscal year. To ensure that staff has enough time to prepare for elections, avoid conflicts with the upcoming Statewide Primary Election on June 5, and to meet this fiscal year deadline, the City Clerk recommends that all subdivision elections take place between May 21, 2018 and June 23, 2018.

To maximize staff resources and outreach opportunities, the City Clerk recommends that each subdivision election be held on separate dates. The City Clerk will work with EmpowerLA on setting final dates.

Funding

In October 2017, the City Council authorized the City Clerk to use \$250,000, a portion of the funds originally allocated to conduct the 2018 NC elections, toward the continued build out/set up of the remaining 46 NC online elections and purchase of election hardware. For the latter, the City Clerk has already purchased laptop computers for Election Day voter processing. Since the current online voting system is no longer operable, as previously mentioned, the City Clerk is requesting that \$128,000 from the balance of the allocated amount be re-allocated toward the conduct of the 2018 NC subdivision elections.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

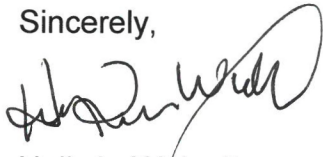
There is no impact to the General Fund as previously allocated funds will be used.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Instruct the City Clerk to disregard the Council's instructions (related to CF 15-1022-S2, Recommendation No. 7) and suspend the setup of the remaining 46 NC online portals for possible online voting use in future NC elections, as the current system is obsolete.
2. Reallocate \$128,000 toward the conduct of up to three NC subdivision elections from funds allocated in FY 2017-18 toward the continued build out/set up of online elections.

My staff and I look forward to conducting NC subdivision elections in 2018. If you have any questions, please contact me at (213) 978-1020. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Holly L. Wolcott
City Clerk