



April 26, 2017

Honorable Paul Krekorian
Honorable Budget and Finance Committee Members
200 N. Spring Street, 3rd Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: HPOZ FUNDING IN THE CITY PLANNING FY 2017-18 PROPOSED BUDGET

Honorable Paul Krekorian, Chairperson and Honorable Budget and Finance
Committee Members:

We are writing in support of the Department of City Planning's request for one additional City Planner and three City Planning Associates to staff the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) Unit within the Department's Office of Historic Resources.

HPOZs represent the City's most effective tool to protect the character of our most cherished historic neighborhoods and to manage change thoughtfully. The City of Los Angeles now has the second largest program of local historic zones in the U.S., with 35 historic districts encompassing over 21,000 parcels. Los Angeles' HPOZ program has grown to encompass a wide variety of neighborhoods, income levels, and demographics.

Our Council Districts have a long history of championing the HPOZ program in addition to the Department of City Planning's entire Neighborhood Conservation Initiative that resulted in the recently adopted Baseline Mansions Ordinance and R1 Variation Zones. We have been encouraged that the City Council has embraced the HPOZ tool by recently approving five new HPOZs (including Carhay Square in the 5th Council District and Sunset Square and Miracle Mile in 4th Council District) with a sixth soon to follow. However, with these new HPOZ approvals the HPOZ program has grown by approximately 20% in just a few months. If we fail to accompany these commitments with the staffing necessary to administer the new districts effectively, the new HPOZs will only generate frustration and animosity among applicants, homeowners, and community stakeholders.

These new HPOZs are being added to a program where staffing is already insufficient to keep up with increased demands. As a result of a continually increasing level of HPOZ requests and inquiries, applicants are currently suffering from lengthy delays that can last for up to several months, leaving urgent construction projects stalled.

To address these issues, the Department of City Planning has been taking numerous steps to enhance and streamline its administration of the HPOZ program. Just this week, the Council approved amendments to the citywide HPOZ Ordinance, advanced by the Department, to help reduce caseloads and allow for the sensible consolidation of HPOZ Boards. It has become clear that additional staffing is still essential to enable the HPOZ program to function appropriately.

For a very small investment in staffing, the City will reap the tangible and intangible benefits of protecting its historic resources and spark rehabilitation and reinvestment in communities across the city. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David E. Ryu
Councilmember, Fourth District



Paul Koretz
Councilmember, Fifth District

CC: Vince Bertoni, Director of Planning
Ken Bernstein, Principal City Planner