

SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER CHAPEL
JAPANESE CATHOLIC CENTER
LITTLE TOKYO



聖フランシスコ・ザビエル教会
日系カトリックセンター

222 SOUTH HEWITT STREET
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
Tel (213) 626-2279 - Fax (213) 628-1757
www.sfxcc.org • info@sfxcc.org

Councilmember David E. Ryu
Chair – Health, Education and Neighborhood Councils Committee
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: **Support for Community Interest Stakeholder category for Neighborhood Councils**

Dear Councilmember Ryu,

As a lifelong member of the St Francis Xavier (Maryknoll) Japanese Catholic Center, who went to school in Little Tokyo, to church in Little Tokyo and Arts District for over 50 years, whose family has owned business in Little Tokyo and who currently works, plays, shops and a member of the Neighborhood Council. I urge you to maintain the Community Interest Stakeholder category for Neighborhood Councils in the City of LA, and suggest that this category be an option that each Neighborhood Council may choose for its own circumstances. As a Little Tokyo organization/business/resident, the Community Interest Stakeholder category is a vital means to allow longtime community stakeholders to remain involved in Little Tokyo.

Little Tokyo is the regional center for Japanese and Japanese Americans in Los Angeles County and beyond. It is home to the country's sole Japanese American National Museum, which boasts over tens of thousands of members and donors. The largest Japanese American Cultural & Community Center in Southern California is based in Little Tokyo. Over a half dozen religious organizations, including *St Francis Xavier Chapel Japanese Catholic Center (Maryknoll) which is the last Japanese Catholic Center in the United States and has been serving the Japanese American community in Los Angeles since 1912*. Many of our parishioners and alumni are active in the Little Tokyo and Arts District and are active in various organizations, community based and or religious, shopping etc. There are other major religious centers such as Higashi Hongwanji (established 1904) and Nishi Hongwanji (established 1905) are located in Little Tokyo, serving generations of families who remain actively connected to Little Tokyo.

As with many ethnic neighborhoods in Los Angeles, Little Tokyo remains the focal point for many people who celebrate their culture in Southern California. Thousands of people attend Oshogatsu (Japanese New Year) festivities in Little Tokyo every year, and tens of thousands of people celebrate Nisei Week annually in Little Tokyo. It's vitally important that our stakeholders, many of whom live or work miles from downtown, can continue to participate and vote in Neighborhood Council issues that affect a neighborhood they have been active in for several generations.

Thank you for your leadership in undertaking reforms for the City's Neighborhood Council system. We hope you will seriously consider our recommendation for this important stakeholder category.

Sincerely,

Lynn Nakamura
Office Manager
St Francis Xavier Chapel – Japanese Catholic Center