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February 5, 2020

Honorable Members of the Health, Education,
Neighborhoods, Parks, Arts, and River Committee
c/o Office of the City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**SUBJECT: COUNCIL FILE 18-0467 - NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL SYSTEM
REFORMS UPDATE**

BACKGROUND

As instructed by Council File 18-0467 on the Neighborhood Council (NC) System Reforms, adopted by the Los Angeles City Council on January 16, 2019, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (Department) continues to develop additional resources for the Neighborhood Council System, provides a report back on the implementation of trainings, and conducts further analysis of the governing structure of Neighborhood Councils.

SUMMARY

The reforms were enumerated in twelve parts covering the categories of outreach and engagement, board structure, board member training, use of City facilities, consideration of same-day voting, revisions to the definition of Neighborhood Council 'stakeholder' to include a 'community stakeholder' definition and to enable the rollover of a portion of unused funding into the subsequent fiscal year. Of these, three have been completed, four are *in progress*, and five will involve *long-term* strategies and

partnerships. This report updates the Committee on areas still *in progress* or requiring a *long-term* plan to accomplish.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Department is assessing the extent to which implementation of these reforms can be embraced in its current operational infrastructure. The fiscal impact of long-term reform measures requires a review. In its proposed Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget, the Department has included an incremental request for an increased direct Neighborhood Council support structure. If funded, this support would ensure the Department's ability to implement the reforms in progress.

UNIFORM AGE FOR VOTING, BOARD PARTICIPATION, AND OPTIONAL YOUTH SEAT (in progress)

On October 29, 2019, Council requested that the City Attorney draft an ordinance to enable the Neighborhood Council System to establish uniformity as it pertains to 1) the minimum age of voters participating in Neighborhood Council s/elections, 2) the minimum age of board members, 3) youth participation on Neighborhood Councils boards.

The Department has developed a preliminary implementation plan for the purpose of guiding Neighborhood Councils on the bylaw amendments that will be necessary to implement the Council's instructions, once the ordinance is adopted by the City Council. A brief summary is provided below.

The Department will partner with Neighborhood Councils on the implementation of these reforms, as it will require Neighborhood Councils to amend their bylaws and may require additional changes to the Neighborhood Council's governing structure, which will require the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners' approval.

To begin the process, the Department will solicit input from each Neighborhood Council by issuing a "Stipulation Worksheet," which guides the Neighborhood Council's implementation of these reforms. Each Neighborhood Council will discuss and take Board action as necessary, then submit the completed Stipulation Worksheet to the Department for review and implementation.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL SELECTION (completed)

The City Council's instructions included a request to "develop formal rules, guidelines and a process for neighborhood council selections, including minimum requirements for outreach and allowable seat criteria." The Department currently provides a set of formal rules, guidelines, and a process for Neighborhood Council selections.

The Department requires Neighborhood Councils to submit a "Selection Procedures Stipulation Worksheet," which supplements the policies and procedures of the Neighborhood Council Election Manual. The "Selection Procedures Stipulation Worksheet" requires the currently five Neighborhood Councils using the selection process to submit an outreach plan which outlines the outlets and strategies a Neighborhood Council will utilize to recruit candidates and publicize the selection.

The Department will be collaborating with Neighborhood Councils who will be having selections in 2020. This process was implemented for the upcoming selection for the Chatsworth Neighborhood Council.

CITY ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITIES (long-term)

The City Council instructed the Department to develop proven and reliable techniques (best practices) for Neighborhood Council use when engaging with communities. The City Council also instructed the Department to develop best practices for City Department use when engaging with Neighborhood Councils.

In December, the Department completed a poll of City Departments to survey their various community engagement efforts. Over 30 departments responded to the survey. The results of the survey were presented to participating departments where they were polled further about their engagement experiences and shared their challenges and successes. The data from these two City department focused efforts will be used to develop a Public Engagement Handbook for use by City employees.

Additionally, the Department is supporting efforts led by the Personnel Department to develop training on community engagement for City employees. The Department will provide updates on these efforts in future reports to the HENPAR Committee.

The Department has developed a roster of City "engagement" staff and will continue to develop a more robust rolodex of City staff to be shared with the Neighborhood Council System. The Department is also assisting the Neighborhood Councils coordinate with

City Departments for the annual Congress of Neighborhoods to facilitate additional community engagement opportunities.

BOARD SEAT ALLOCATION, NC DEMOGRAPHICS, DATA LITERACY (long-term)

Included in the City Council's instructions, was a request for the Department to develop demographic and neighborhood data to Neighborhood Councils that would point out areas where current seat allocations, when compared to demographic data, may not be "equitable." The Department was additionally requested to provide written suggestions on ways each Neighborhood Council might amend their bylaws to create a more equitable allocation of seats if the data shows potential inequities. To implement this reform, the Department will need to continue developing a comprehensive strategy to achieve the City Council's intent.

The Department is additionally participating in the Mayor Garcetti's Census 2020 Initiative on the development of Neighborhood Census Liaisons and the Census Ambassadors Program for additional outreach in hard-to-count communities throughout the City of Los Angeles to encourage a more accurate count. As the grassroots arm of the City government, we have experienced recent successes with NC Census Ambassadors organizing community-based events educating hundreds of residents on the importance of participating in the Census.

Due to the wide variety of seat categories within the Neighborhood Council System, determining the proportion of seats allocated to specific stakeholder categories, further analysis is required to determine the best method for recommending an 'equitable' allocation of board seats. The Department is working to train staff to utilize data management programs and data mapping software to generate data sets that can inform our future strategies.

For the last 12 months, the Department started to develop its own tools and resources to provide enhanced information to leaders of the neighborhood council system and the general public. These tools are now available on the new page on the Department's website: empowerla.org/data. Among the different tools and tutorial available through this page, demographics information per neighborhood council is made available whether through digital and interactive way or through PDF data sheets:

- Select a Region
- Region 1 - North East Valley
 - Region 10 - South LA 1
 - Region 11 - West LA
 - Region 12 - Harbor
 - Region 2 - North West Valley
 - Region 3 - South West Valley
 - Region 4 - South East Valley
 - Region 5 - Central 1
 - Region 6 - Central 2
 - Region 7 - East
 - Region 8 - North East LA
 - Region 9 - South LA 2

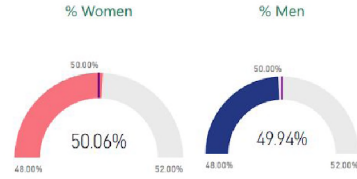
- Select the Neighborhood Council
- East Hollywood
 - Echo Park
 - Elysian Valley Riverside
 - Empowerment Congress Central
 - Empowerment Congress North
 - Empowerment Congress Southeast
 - Empowerment Congress Southwest
 - Empowerment Congress West
 - Encino
 - Foothill Trails District
 - Glassell Park
 - Granada Hills North
 - Granada Hills South
 - Greater Cypress Park
 - Greater Toluca Lake
 - Greater Valley Glen
 - Greater Wilshire
 - Harbor City
 - Harbor Gateway North
 - Harbor Gateway South

Total Population
3,904,696

- Gender and Age
- Language
- Race
- Housing
- Income & Poverty
- Education

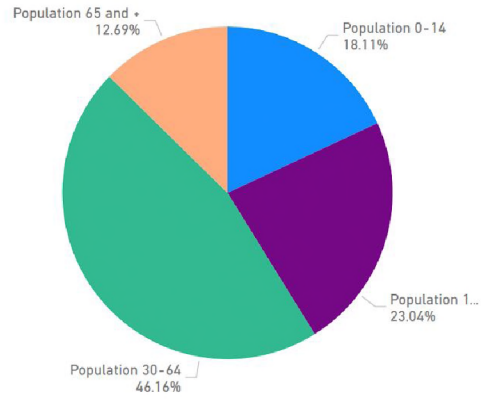
GENDER & AGE

2019 Female Population	1,954,775
2019 Male Population	1,949,915
Median Age	35.61
2019 Population Age 21+	2,888,064



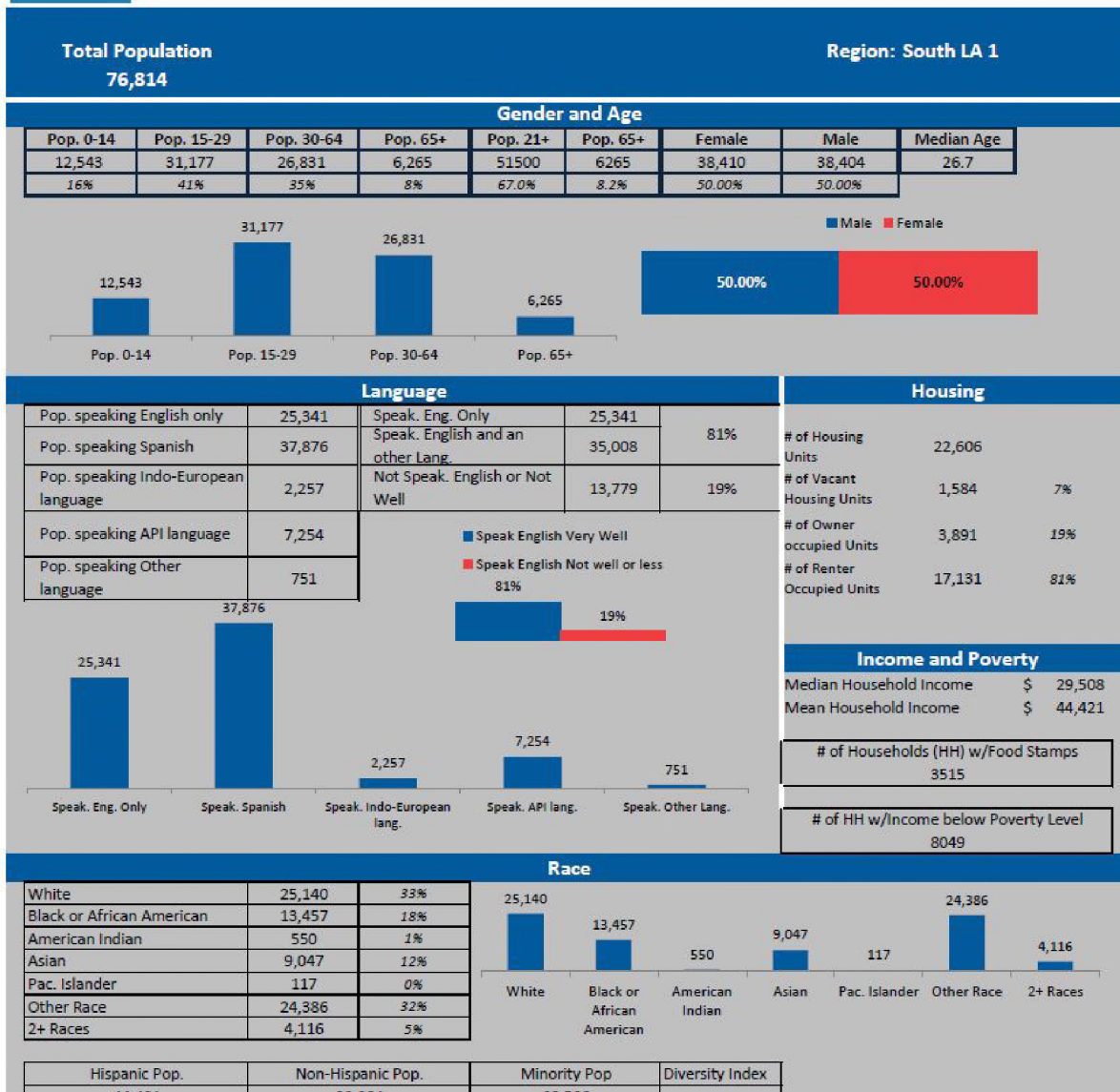
Source: American Data Survey (ACS) 2018 5-Year estimates

Population by age range





Empowerment Congress North



The Department is currently working on the development of additional tools to help neighborhood council leaders to have a better understanding of the composition of their community and the city services delivered.

In January 2019, the Department launched its Data Literacy Program. This program includes two components: 1) a series of Data 101 workshops named [Introduction to Community Data](#) - the first workshop took place in South LA - and 2) the creation and training of Data Liaisons (up to 3 per neighborhood councils). Once trained, Data Liaisons will be able to understand the organization of the City's Open Data portal and

use ArcGIS online (mapping tool) to make data-driven decisions for their engagement strategies. Future Data 101 workshops are scheduled for Monday, February 24, 2019 at 6:00 pm at El Nido Family Services in Pacoima and in March in MacArthur Park and in the west side and in April in the Hollywood and Harbor area.

SHARED SPACE FOR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS (in progress)

In response to Council's 2016 directive (Council File 16-0298) instructing the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, with the assistance of the General Services Department, to assist Neighborhood Councils with accessing shared space in City facilities, the Department is currently collaborating with the General Services Department to identify additional City properties that may be available as shared space for Neighborhood Councils.

REQUIRED PLANNING AND LAND USE (in progress)

The City Council instructed the Departments of City Planning and Neighborhood Empowerment to design and implement a mandatory planning and land use management training, to be required of both current and future Chairs and Vice Chairs of Neighborhood Council planning and land use committees.

Additionally, the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners adopted a resolution in February 2020 encouraging the Department of City Planning to develop a "Planning 101" training for all appointed and confirmed members of each Neighborhood Council's planning and land use committee. The Board of Neighborhood Commissioners Resolution includes the following language:

"The "Planning 101" Training, under development by the Department of City Planning, shall be required for all appointed and confirmed members of each Neighborhood Council's planning and land use committee, or an equivalent committee (land use committee). Any individual who does not complete the training shall not be eligible to vote on motions or recommendations on planning, zoning, or land use matters before the land use committee. Upon launch of Planning 101 Training, any land use committee member who wishes to continue serving on the land use committee must complete the training within 60 days of the launch.

Thereafter, any individual who intends to serve on a land use committee must complete the training within 60 days of appointment or confirmation.

An individual who fails to complete the training within the applicable 60-day period will be automatically ineligible to serve as a member of the land use committee.”

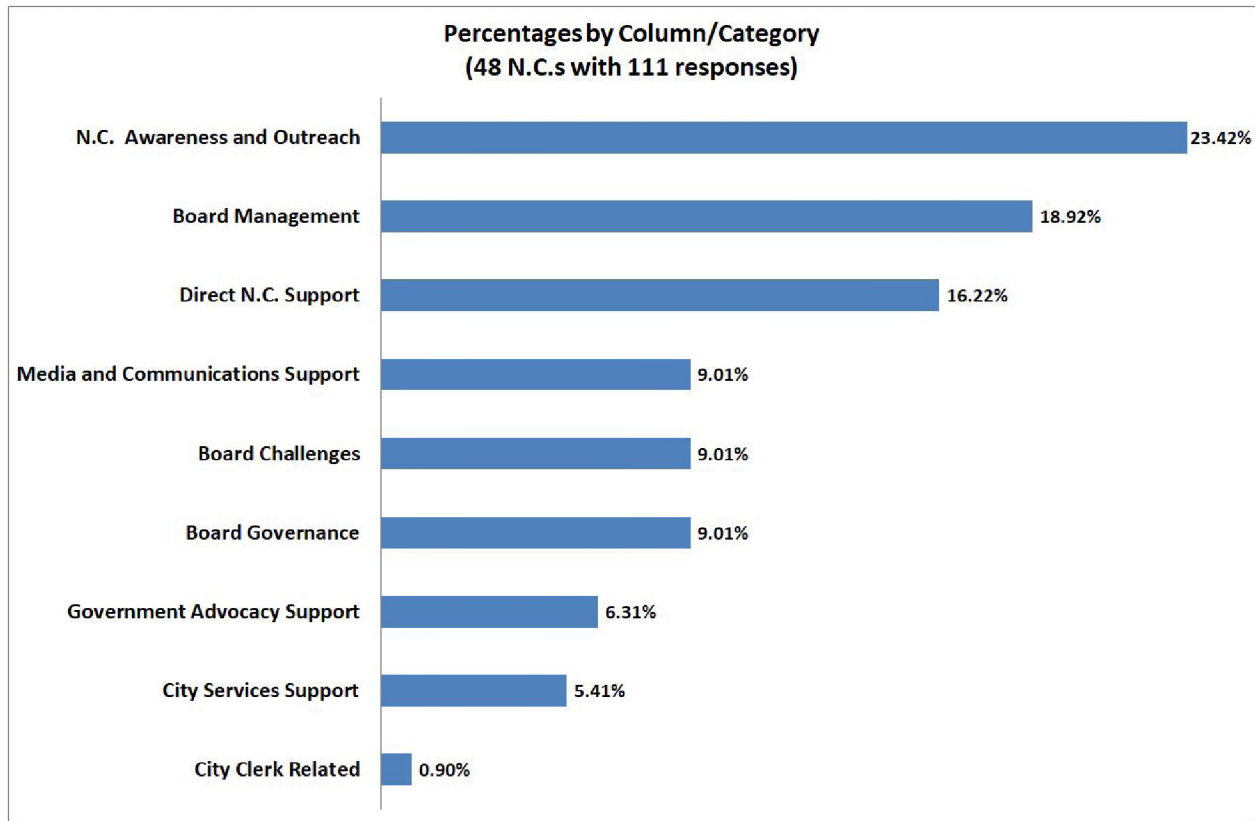
The Department has met with the Planning Department to discuss next steps in the development of a new training curriculum including a possible on-line training for Neighborhood Council Planning & Land Use Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs, board members, and committee members. The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment has implemented a new online training portal for Neighborhood Councils which may be able to accommodate any future trainings for Board members.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL SYSTEM BRANDING (long-term)

In response to Council instructions to more cohesively brand the Neighborhood Council System, the Department is taking action to minimize confusion of the various branding and logos. Our approach is to find economical and practical methods for bringing clarity on the Department's brand identity for the Neighborhood Councils and general public.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL LISTENING TOUR

In September 2019, the Department initiated a Listening Tour of Neighborhood Councils. To date, 72 Neighborhood Councils have been visited. The Department anticipates completing the tour by early April. The Councils were surveyed informally during the Tour. We have created a preliminary report that captures over 100 comments received from 48 Neighborhood Council visits completed during the tour. As a caution, the survey is qualitative data. Although it is a collection of comments received, it provides useful insight about the concerns and needs of the Neighborhood Councils. Most important, it demonstrates the commitment Neighborhood Council leaders have to their communities. The data consolidates over twenty comment categories into the broad categories shown in the following chart.



CONCLUSION

The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment is working to accomplish Council's instructions and appreciates the opportunity to provide the latest updates on the Department's progress. We are available at any time to answer questions. Thank you.