



August 16, 2013

Los Angeles City Clerk
 Council and Public Services Division
 200 N. Spring St., Room 395
 Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: Sharon Dickinson

(Sent via fax 1-213-978-1079, 1-213-978-1040)

RE: Community Impact Statement for City Council File 11-0923, the Mural Ordinance

On August 14, 2013 at a duly posted meeting whereby a quorum was recognized, the Woodland Hills–Warner Center Neighborhood Council adopted by a majority vote a CIS recommendation brought forth by its Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee.

The Woodland Hills–Warner Center Neighborhood Council (WHWCNC) respectfully submits the following Community Impact Statement for Council File 11-0923 regarding the pending Mural Ordinance:

The proposed mural ordinance would primarily apply to single-family residences in low-density zones within our neighborhood council boundaries, with a limited few controlled by specific plans. Much of our commercial and industrial communities within the WHWCNC are already regulated by specific plans.

While there are communities in Los Angeles where the community culture accepts and honors murals, we believe this is not the culture of Woodland Hills. Implementation of either of these mural formulas in residential areas in particular will cause much aggravation, anguish, and diminish neighborhood pride. We do however respect that other communities may desire murals and believe they should be allowed to have them in a manner they accept.

The WHWCNC believes that neither of the two options of the proposed Mural Ordinance from the City Attorney are acceptable. We therefore request the matter be referred back to the City Attorney with alternate instructions so the ordinance may be more harmonious with the individual neighborhood cultures.

The WHWCNC has determined that our City should take the approach used in the Sign Ordinance, which prohibits certain types of signs citywide unless they are permitted through the creation of a sign district, which contains constraints to adapt to the context of the area. We note that for the purposes of creating mural-related specific plans, it is often easier to determine what is allowed than to determine what to prohibit.

Rather than requiring communities to accept murals citywide in low-density zoning, which includes single-family residences, the WHWCNC supports the original Planning Department's recommendation that the ordinance not allow murals on residential zoned lots with less than five residential units.

The WHWCNC suggests that like the current Sign Ordinance, a new draft of a Mural Ordinance might allow neighborhoods to create mural districts, wherein murals are permitted through a the community-based process which sets the requirements of approval for their respective community. We recommend that the new draft ordinance from the Planning Department and the City attorney establish the appropriate process for establishing such districts.

This approach is infinitely preferable to the process of forcing communities to block murals because it puts less pressure on the limited resources of the Planning Department staff since more neighborhoods are likely to create specific plans to block murals than there are neighborhoods willing to have them.

Since our community has extensive experience working on specific plans, we know that creating a specific plan requires a lengthy process to gather community consensus and still meet legal requirements; 90-days is absolutely not enough time to institute such plans.

WOODLAND HILLS - WARNER CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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Requiring an opt-in process via specific plans or overlays in low density residential zones would allow the ordinance to go into effect sooner in the higher density zoned areas. Instead of rushing it through in 90 days, communities could be prudent and take a reasonable amount of time to craft a community-acceptable specific plan or overlay to permit murals in the low-density residential zones.

Very truly yours,

Woodland Hills Warner Center Neighborhood Council

Scott Silverstein, Chair

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- Joyce Fletcher, WHWCNC Secretary
- August Steurer, WHWCNC PLUM Chair