

Your Community Impact Statement has been successfully submitted to City Council and Committees.

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at NCsupport@lacity.org.

This is an automated response, please do not reply to this email.

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: NoHo Neighborhood Council

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(12) Nay(1) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 11/09/2022

Type of NC Board Action: For if Amended

Impact Information

Date: 12/01/2022

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 22-1232

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: On 11/9/22, the NoHo Neighborhood Council voted 12-1-0 to support the recommended changes to the charter if amended. Please see the attached for further details.

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PASSED 12-1-0 on 11/9/22

Council File: [Council File 22-1232](#)

CC: Ethics Commission [Charter Sec 700 Ethics Reforms](#)

Title: Charter Reform / Ethics Commission / Powers and Responsibilities / Ballot Measure

Position: SUPPORT IF AMENDED

On 11/9/22, the NoHo Neighborhood Council voted 12-1-0 to support the recommended changes to the charter if amended.

Our city's ethics commission was a model for the nation when it was created over three decades ago, and an update is long overdue. We urge the city to do the work necessary to finalize a proposal for a future ballot. However, rushing this work and waiving it out of committee is patently unacceptable as an answer to the ever-evolving scandal at City Hall. This work cannot be done as an election stunt or for good press. It deserves a full and fair hearing in committee with robust discussion.

The Ethics Commissions recommendations would largely reflect input received on how to empower the body to enforce the law, meaningfully change policy, and would change power dynamics at city hall. However, they fail to equally enhance the independence of the commission. This could give rise to elected officials strong arming commissioners and meddling with the enforcement actions and policy proposals they carry out.

We recommend the following specific amendments:

- **Independent Appointment:** The city of LA will not have a truly independent ethics commission until it ends the involvement of elected officials in the appointment process. The incumbent commissioners should be responsible for accepting and vetting applications through a public process like the Oakland and Long Beach Ethics Commissions.
- **Eligibility Requirements:** The commission proposes adding restrictions excluding any bidder, contractor, developer, or someone with a direct financial interest in work of the city from service on the commission. These restrictions are warranted but incomplete. We also recommend excluding anyone who is a recent candidate for the city of LA, former elected officials in the city of LA, and anyone who has donated or raised above a certain threshold for local candidates.
- **Raise the vote threshold for removal of a commissioner:** The commission recommends increasing the number of elected officials who may initiate removal and reducing the threshold to a majority vote. We recommend requiring a 2/3rds vote for all removal proceedings of ethics commissioners.
- **Increased maximum penalty:** The commission recommends increasing the maximum administrative penalty to \$10k per violation. We recommend adopting Chicago's max penalty of \$20k per violation model.
- **Raise minimum budget:** The commission recommends their budget be set at \$4.5 million and tied to CPI. While this would protect against retaliation or defunding during a financial crunch, this essentially freezes the status quo into the charter. \$4.5 million is a few hundred thousand above the commission's current budget. The recommendations include new expenditures, like outside counsel, which will require more money. If the Council is expanded, ethics will require more money. A minimum budget in the range of \$7-10 million would give the commission the resources needed to fulfill its broad sweeping mandate.

These reforms would ensure the commission is sufficiently independent enough to be entrusted with the expanded power offered.

Thank you for your consideration of this topic,

The NoHo Neighborhood Council