

Contact Information

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(17) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

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Directed To: City Council and Committees

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Item Number: 8

Summary: The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council calls on the Mayor and City Council to provide additional funds and personnel to the Emergency Management Department to upgrade and expand to be able to care for a world class city and, specifically, to work on neighborhood-specific plans for emergency preparedness. Given the recent hurricane and fires and the potential of a devastating earthquake not only cutting LA off from the rest of the state, but also fragmenting our neighborhoods when bridges and freeways collapse, trees block roads and the power, sewage and water systems are nonoperational, we need training, supplies, expertise and plans in place to ensure all stakeholders are cognizant of procedures and can be part of the solution no matter what happens.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA

HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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<http://www.highlandparknc.com>
Certified as NC #33 May 28, 2002

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Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

December 7, 2017

Mayor Eric Garcetti & the Public Safety Committee
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

cc: Budget & Finance Committee
Los Angeles City Council

Re: Neighborhood Preparedness in the Event of an Emergency -- CF 17-0991 et al

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council which represents over 60,000 Los Angeles stakeholders who reside, own property, or conduct business in our neighborhood requests the City Council to take comprehensive action to ensure all neighborhoods in Los Angeles are fully prepared to handle emergencies – whether natural disaster or social upheaval – including having adequate supplies, trained personnel and planning in place.

Unexpected things happen – this is true everywhere, but some cities have developed more resilience to crises of all sizes – from escalating homelessness to floods, to wildfires, riots and earthquakes.

Mayor Garcetti came to office with a promise to build up Los Angeles' resilience in the face of natural and manmade disasters. He directed our tax dollars into fortifying some of our infrastructure against earthquakes and for that we thank him.

HHPNC – Improve Neighborhood Preparedness in the Event of an Emergency

But there is much more to do, especially on the human front in the immediate aftermath of a major event. The face of the City's disaster management is the Los Angeles Emergency Management Department (EMD) which is underfunded to the point that, while it is making valiant efforts to proactively protect our City, it does not have sufficient capacity to safeguard stakeholders in the event of a major crisis.

Our existing resources pale in comparison to other American cities – we have 15 professional emergency managers for four million people; Washington, DC has 60 emergency managers for its 400 thousand residents.

The Los Angeles city budget for graffiti removal is greater than the EMD's entire budget. The Fire Department's office supply budget is greater than its general fund.

Current EMD operations and budgeting rely too heavily on grant funding which, with today's federal government's increasing myopia, leaves us all at risk. This, compounded with insufficient staffing, could cause the City to collapse under the impact of the next earthquake, terrorist attack, health crisis or riot. If the precipitating catastrophe is not immediately addressed, social stressors will further compromise the City's sustainability.

Furthermore, Los Angeles' EMD is dependent on an Information Technology Department that trails behind those of New York, DC, San Diego and San Francisco in regards to the current technology needed to successfully address a major crisis. Hardware and software are outdated, limiting effective communication and putting the City's first-line defenses at risk for cyberattack. A draconian procurement policy, a sclerotic bureaucracy, and the inevitable complications caused by the City's hydra-headed homelessness crisis have compounded these challenges.

The Special Olympics of 2015 created additional expenditures for the EMD. Efforts to meet the daunting requirements for the Summer Olympics in 2028 will need to be addressed immediately, not in 2027.

Following the devastation wrought by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, recent California wildfires, and earthquakes in Mexico City, Iran, Indonesia and Ecuador, the Mayor and City Council must take immediate action to ensure Los Angeles' infrastructure AND its residents are properly organized to face any eventuality.

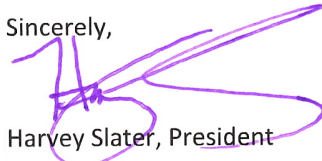
One way the City of Los Angeles can prepare itself and its residents for an emergency is through Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. Currently, the LAFD has four instructors for a population of almost four million. Even with the 14 CERT instructors the Department originally had, the ratio of instructors to stakeholders was not acceptable. We need an increased investment in educating our citizens as well as providing them with the tools at the local level to work with our EMD department to face any catastrophe.

The Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition (LANCC) recently voted to request that the City Council fund an additional four CERT instructors at an aggregate cost of \$480,000 per year to allow the scheduling of additional classes so that stakeholders across Los Angeles can be better prepared in the event of any disaster.

HHPNC – Improve Neighborhood Preparedness in the Event of an Emergency

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council therefore joins with other members of LANCC, and calls on the Mayor and City Council to fund a minimum of four additional CERT instructors, underwrite the modernization of the Emergency Management Department, proactively expand local preparedness, provide and maintain adequate supplies across all areas of the City, and ensure all stakeholders are cognizant of procedures and can be part of the solution no matter what happens.

Sincerely,



Harvey Slater, President
Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council