



ASOCIACION DE MIGRANTES GUATEMALTECOS, L.A.

The Honorable Eunisses Hernandez
The Honorable Heather Hutt
The Honorable John Lee

City of Los Angeles Councilmember
200 N. Spring Street,
Los Angeles, CA 90012

March 23rd, 2024

Re: Council File No. 22-1094 - "Guatemala Square"

Dear Councilmembers Hernandez, Hutt, and Lee:

On behalf of the **Asociacion de Migrantes Guatemaltecos LA (AMGLA)**, we write to oppose the current proposal regarding the renaming of a specific area within the City of Los Angeles to be called "Guatemalan Square" (project outlined in Council File No 22-1094); which has been poorly thought out by the proponent. We respectfully request, the City of Los Angeles to thoroughly evaluate the intentions behind this proposal and ensure that all stakeholders are fully aware of its implications before proceeding.

First and foremost, there is a concerning lack of clarity regarding the intentions behind the proposed renaming. It is essential to understand the reasoning behind such a change and its potential impact on the community. Without a thorough evaluation of these intentions, we risk making decisions that may not align with the best interests of Guatemalans in our diverse city, its current business owners, employees, and residents.

Furthermore, it is troubling to note the apparent lack of confirmation regarding whether all signatories were fully aware of what they were signing and understood the implications of their actions. Renaming a significant area of our city is a decision that should not be taken lightly, especially considering the linguistic diversity within our community. It is crucial to ensure that all individuals involved have a comprehensive understanding of the matter at hand. Particularly, since the majority of the residents that occupied such areas of interest their first language is not English or Spanish but at least one of the 22 different Mayan languages spoken.

In light of these concerns, I respectfully request that the City Council postpone any further action on this matter and allow additional time to gather input from the community. This would provide an opportunity for residents, business owners, and organizations representing the Guatemalan community to offer suggestions and concerns, ensuring that the decision-making process is inclusive and representative of the diverse perspectives within our city.

Furthermore, to address these concerns effectively, AMGLA respectfully recommends the following actions:

1. Form a Community Working Group comprising community members, organizations representing the Guatemalan community, and the Council General of Guatemala, at a minimum. This group will provide valuable input and guidance throughout the planning process.
2. Expand the boundaries of the Guatemala Square project to include the Guatemala night market on 6th Street between Westlake Ave and Union Drive. The exact boundaries of the expansion to 3rd Street should be determined collaboratively by the community group.
3. Allocate resources for small businesses within Guatemala Square to support their growth and sustainability.
4. Enhance cleaning services in Guatemala Square to maintain a clean and inviting environment for residents, businesses, employees, and visitors.
5. Incorporate well-planned arts and cultural installations into the Guatemala Square, including murals, monuments, and other features that celebrate Guatemalan heritage and identity.
6. Improve lighting in the area to enhance safety and visibility, particularly during evening hours.

If the City of Los Angeles approves the project as currently proposed by the proponent, it may fail to adequately represent the moral, cultural, and historical values of the Guatemalan community. I believe that by incorporating the recommendations outlined above and allowing for meaningful community engagement, the Guatemala Square project can become a model for inclusive urban development that celebrates and honors the diversity of our city.

AMGLA is committed to collaborating with your council office, the city, and other stakeholders to ensure the success of this project. Together, we can create a vibrant and welcoming space that

reflects the aspirations and contributions of all Guatemalans in Los Angeles and serves as a model for inclusive urban development nationwide.

In conclusion, I urge the City Council to prioritize transparency, accountability, and community engagement in all matters related to the renaming of our city's areas. By taking the time to thoroughly evaluate intentions, confirm understanding among stakeholders, and solicit input from the community, we can make informed decisions that truly reflect the best interests of our city and its residents.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration of our concerns. We trust that you all City Council members will give this matter the attention it deserves. We look forward to working together to address these concerns and ensure that any decisions made reflect the best interests of our city, which will serve the well-being and prosperity of Los Angeles diverse community and project a true reflection of our shared values and aspirations.

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of all Guatemalans in Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rene Amiel", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Rene Amiel, President