



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 Members of the Los Angeles City Council,

I am writing to express my opposition to 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). As a concerned resident of the Los Angeles basin and founder of BLUE PHOENIX INTERNATIONAL (a non-profit entity), I believe it is crucial 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. Understanding the reasoning behind such a change and its potential impact on the community is essential. Without a thorough evaluation of these intentions, we risk making decisions that may not align with the best interests of 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 for 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, addressing these concerns effectively, BLUE PHOENIX INTERNATIONAL caringly 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 the Guatemala Square to support their growth and sustainability.
4. Enhance cleaning services in the Guatemala Square to maintain a clean and inviting environment for residents, business, 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.

BLUE PHOENIX INTERNATIONAL 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. I trust that you all City Council members will give this matter the attention it deserves. I look forward to working together to address these concerns and ensure that any decisions made reflect the best interests of our city, that will serve the well-being and prosperity of Los Angeles diverse community and projects a true reflection of our shared values and aspirations.

With the utmost respect and admiration.

Jean Meza
Jean Meza
Founder

My commitment to my Latino/Hispanic community is inspired by the men and women who have worked diligently before me to pave the road for those of us who have been inspired to follow. – Jean Meza



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