

Communication from Public

Name: Thomas Irwin

Date Submitted: 09/14/2023 05:02 PM

Council File No: 22-1196

Comments for Public Posting: Dear honorable Council President and Committee Chair Krekorian and honorable Councilmembers Raman, Blumenfeld, Harris-Dawson, Hutt, Hernandez, and Park: My name is Thomas Irwin, and I am a member of the Los Angeles New Liberals. We are a coalition of pragmatic liberals dedicated to advancing a society of abundance anchored in human freedom and agency. Our chapter is also the Greater LA local for the Center for New Liberalism, a project of think tank New Democracy in Washington, D.C. First, I wish to commend you and the rest of your colleagues on the Los Angeles City Council for undertaking the considered and necessary work of exploring reforms to the structure, rules, policies, and operations of the council. While recent events have shown that reform is critical both for public confidence and for ongoing integrity and quality of governance, the City of Los Angeles has likely merited a reflection and implementation of governance reforms, up to and including changes to the structure of the Council, for many years. However, while this Committee has laudably taken up recommendations for enlarging the City Council and creating a fully independent redistricting commission, additional changes to the operations of the City Council, the City Charter, and City oversight and administrative bodies and agencies should be seriously considered, if not implemented. Given that several of the recent scandals and resignations have involved unethical and illegal exploitation of the City's and Council's considerable discretionary power over planning and land use, procedural, regulatory, and legal reforms should be implemented to remedy the ample opportunities for moral hazard embedded in these processes. I strongly urge this Committee to consider the reforms proposed by the report "The Dysfunctional Metropolis: Reforming Los Angeles's Land Use Planning and Entitlement" published by the California YIMBY Education Fund on June 27th, 2023. These reforms include the following: -Reform or eliminate the site plan review requirement for residential projects; and -Increase allowable density across the city in current and future community plan updates. -Standardize the entitlement process for common land use application types and introduce and enforce deadlines for all stages of review; -Devolve some of the Council's decision-making authority to the City Planning Commission

(CPC) or Director of Planning, when allowed by state law; and
-Propose a ballot measure to eliminate Section 245e of the City Charter to revoke the Council's ability to overrule the actions of the CPC and Area Planning Commissions (APCs). I strongly believe that these proposed reforms would greatly add to the growing body of proposals aimed at improving the transparency, accountability, and effectiveness of governance in the City of Los Angeles, and I ask that you consider them as you continue your important work. Respectfully yours, Thomas Irwin