

MOTION

RULES, ELECTIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The development and land use entitlement process in Los Angeles is complex, lengthy, expensive, and risky for applicants. This cumbersome and challenging process disincentivizes development and adds cost and time to delivering projects, concerning amid a deep housing shortage. Many land use decisions are appealable, which further exacerbates an already difficult system. Appeal processes and associated timelines and decisionmakers (i.e., "appellate bodies") can vary by the type of approval being sought by an applicant. When the City Council serves as the appellate body, it can generally delay a decision on an appeal in perpetuity, a power exploited by bad faith actors in the past.

Despite the problematic appeals system in Los Angeles, the City continues to subsidize non-applicant appeal fees at great public cost. The City Planning Department's most recent fee study (Council File: 09-0969-S4) shows that the City currently charges \$178 for non-applicant appeals but that the real cost of the work is \$22,894 and takes 104 hours of staff time per appeal. City Planning estimates it performs 148 non-applicant appeals per year, translating to the City subsidizing \$3,361,968 and spending 15,392 staff hours (641 days) per year.

Beyond City Planning's caseload, appeals also frequently take up time in City Council, City Planning Commission (CPC) and Area Planning Commission (APC) meetings. More importantly, appeals of land-use decisions from the CPC, APC, and Zoning Administrators are directed to the City Council, where it can override such decisions without any explanation. This authority opens the door to political interference in individual land-use cases, discarding public interest and delaying real progress for our city towards housing and other projects.

The Charter Reform Commission made a recommendation to amend Section 552 to replace Area Planning Commissions with a five-member Board of Neighborhood Appeals Commission that considers appeals of quasi-judicial determinations made by the Department of City Planning. The Commission's proposed language for Section 552 will create more transparency in land use decision making and reduce needless and counterproductive steps where possible, while still allowing for a strong public engagement process and the ability for critical projects to move forward in the midst of a housing and homelessness crisis.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Attorney be requested to prepare the documents necessary to place on the November 2026 General Election a measure that would further amend Charter Section 552 to a) stipulate that the Board of Neighborhood Appeals is the sole appeal body within the City, and will handle appeals of all quasi-judicial matters for first and final consideration regardless of the original decision-maker; and b) increase the board to seven members to represent the seven regions of the City. This body shall be appointed by the Mayor and membership should ensure socioeconomic, demographic, geographic, and professional diversity to achieve equitable representation.

PRESENTED BY: Nithya Raman
NITHYA RAMAN
Councilmember, 4th District

SECONDED BY: [Signature]

ORIGINAL

MAY 01 2026
[Signature]