

Communication from Public

Name: Sheida Ashley

Date Submitted: 04/30/2026 09:46 PM

Council File No: 26-0489

Comments for Public Posting: Charter Reform Recommendations / November 3, 2026 General Election / Charter Reform Commission Dear Rules Committee, My name is Dr. Sheida Ashley. I have been a practicing psychologist for over 30 years, and throughout my career I have heard countless stories from Angelenos who have been harmed by the City of Los Angeles—yet lacked the recourse or financial means to seek justice. In January of this year, I participated in Public Democracy LA’s Mini-Assembly to help draft a proposed Preamble and Bill of Rights for our City Charter. It was an extraordinary day—bringing together residents from across Los Angeles, representing diverse communities and perspectives. For the first time in a long time, I felt hopeful. I believed we were contributing to meaningful change. Following that, I continued to invest significant time working with a dedicated group of participants to refine these recommendations. Together, we developed a comprehensive Bill of Rights designed to empower Angelenos with real mechanisms for advocacy and accountability. I had the honor of presenting our Preamble to the Charter Reform Commission. However, I must express my deep disappointment with what followed. Our Bill of Rights included a critical recommendation: the creation of an independent ombudsman—an office that would hold City departments accountable and provide accessible mediation for residents, offering a practical alternative to costly and burdensome litigation. Despite widespread public support and repeated comments urging its adoption, the Commission refused to meaningfully consider this recommendation. This was not a democratic outcome. Moreover, the Commission altered the language of our carefully crafted Preamble and completely disregarded the substance of our Bill of Rights—particularly our call for an ombudsman or public advocate. For those of us who participated in good faith, this experience was not only disheartening—it was deeply troubling. When community-driven efforts are invited, only to be dismissed or reshaped without transparency or respect for their intent, it undermines public trust in the entire process. Angelenos deserve more than symbolic participation. They deserve real representation, real accountability, and real avenues for justice. Thank you, Sheida Ashley, Ph.D

Recommendation 4: Preamble: *“We, the People, affirm that the City of Los Angeles exists to serve its residents. Our government shall place the public good above private interests, uphold transparency and integrity in all its actions, and ensure that public officials and law enforcement are accountable to the will of the people. Every resident shall be treated with dignity and afforded safe, retaliation-free avenues to raise concerns, seek review, and hold the City accountable. Through shared responsibility and active democratic participation, we commit to building a City that grows fairer, stronger, and more accountable for generations to come.”*

Rationale for recommendation

This recommendation affirms that effective government requires more than formal authority or bureaucratic structure; it requires clear obligations grounded in shared civic values. The proposed Preamble establishes those obligations by articulating principles of accountability, transparency, dignity, and public service that should guide all City actions. For too long, Los Angeles residents have borne the consequences of a system in which accountability is discretionary, transparency is uneven, and avenues for remedying harm are unclear or inaccessible. The result has been a deep erosion of public trust and respect for government.

The establishment of enforceable obligations based on shared values to limit systemic abuses of discretion would reduce the City’s exposure to liability and litigation. It also would draw a new generation of public servants who would be more mindful of their obligations to the people.

Key considerations

Key benefits of this recommendation include restoring public trust through meaningful government accountability, reducing City debt, easing the financial burden on both the City and its residents, and fostering economic and business growth with positive downstream effects. Additional operational benefits include increased government efficiency, stronger environmental protections, and lower public health and healthcare costs. By establishing enforceable standards rooted in shared values, the City could reduce its exposure to costly litigation and long-term liability, easing financial pressures on both municipal budgets and residents. Clearer accountability structures could contribute to economic and business growth by fostering a more predictable and trustworthy civic environment.

Key challenges include the risk of unintended consequences such as workforce impacts, the financial costs of investigations, hearings, and legal proceedings related to government misconduct, the complexity of implementation and compliance, and the substantial time and coordination required to conduct thorough investigations and adjudication processes. Implementing meaningful accountability mechanisms may carry financial and administrative costs, including expenses related to investigations, hearings, and compliance processes. There is also a risk of unintended workforce impacts if new standards are applied inconsistently or without adequate guidance and support. Accountability systems can be complex and time-intensive to design and administer, requiring sustained coordination across City departments to ensure fairness, due process, and effectiveness. These considerations highlight the importance of

thoughtful implementation to ensure that the Preamble's principles are translated into practical, equitable, and sustainable governance practices.

Additional considerations/questions from participants

- The city could establish a Justice Ombudsman to bring injustice to the councils' attention.
- What does accountability look like? How will that be measured?
- How can we execute this recommendation?

The execution of the preamble relies on the Bill of Rights in Recommendation #5, which calls for an independent Ombudsman Office to hold the City accountable. Currently, the City Charter provides no meaningful mechanism to protect individuals or communities from harm caused by the City or its agents. Under sovereign immunity, residents bear the full burden of seeking justice, often requiring costly legal action against a well-resourced City defended by the City Attorney. Most Angelenos cannot realistically pursue these remedies, creating a system that favors a privileged few and allows misconduct or negligence to go unchecked.

We respectfully request that the Charter Reform Commission establish an independent Ombudsman to investigate City misconduct, address systemic corruption or inefficiency, and provide residents with a fair avenue for accountability. Unlike the City Attorney, who represents the City itself, the Ombudsman would act as an impartial advocate for the public. This mechanism could resolve violations through investigation and mediation, elevate systemic issues to the City Council, reduce the financial and social costs of litigation, and restore public trust in City governance.

Recommendation 5: Bill of Rights: Right to Transparent, Accountable, and Participatory Government. (Score: 27)

- (a) The City shall administer its laws, programs, and services in a transparent, fair, timely, and accountable manner.
- (b) Residents and communities shall have meaningful and equitable opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them, including but not limited to public hearings, advisory boards, and digital engagement platforms.
- (c) The City shall maintain an independent Office of the Ombudsman, reporting publicly, to receive complaints, conduct impartial reviews of administrative actions, and promote accountability and transparency in City government.
- (d) No person shall be retaliated against for seeking information, filing a complaint, or cooperating with an Ombudsman investigation.

Rationale for recommendation

This recommendation is essential because effective self-government requires enforceable obligations, not just good intentions. By mandating that the City administer its laws, programs, and services transparently,

fairly, and accountably, residents are assured that government works for the public and not for hidden interests. By guaranteeing meaningful and equitable opportunities for community participation, including public hearings, advisory boards, and digital engagement, residents can make informed decisions, shape policies that affect their lives, and hold elected officials and City contractors accountable. By establishing an independent Office of the Ombudsman with public reporting, the City provides a clear pathway to remedy administrative misconduct, mismanagement, and corruption. And by protecting individuals from retaliation for seeking information, filing complaints, or cooperating with the Ombudsman, the Charter ensures that all residents can safely engage with government oversight. Together, these provisions promote fiscal responsibility, strengthen coordination with oversight authorities such as the City Controller, enhance transparency in decision-making and votes, and create a more equitable and just environment—laying the foundation for a City government that truly works, and works for all.

Key considerations

This recommendation delivers significant social, financial, and governance benefits by strengthening transparency, participation, and independent oversight to ensure City decisions and spending reflect community needs and values rather than narrow interests. It builds public trust, increases civic engagement, supports more equitable and responsive decision-making, and reduces waste and litigation through early accountability and clear pathways to resolve concerns. Implementation will require startup and ongoing administrative investments and may surface political friction or resistance as longstanding practices are subject to greater public scrutiny; however, these challenges are manageable and outweighed by long-term gains. By establishing a clearly defined, citywide Ombudsman with independent authority to receive complaints, compel cooperation and access to records, conduct impartial investigations, issue public findings and recommendations, and refer matters for enforcement or corrective action, this recommendation advances a government that is more accountable, fiscally responsible, trusted, and effective in serving the people of Los Angeles.

Additional considerations/questions from participants

While this recommendation addresses a significant accountability gap in the City Charter, we also identified related design questions for consideration. We discussed whether complementary democratic mechanisms, such as participatory budgeting, civic assemblies, and regularly scheduled town halls at neighborhood, district, and citywide levels, should be incorporated to ensure that accountable government is informed by ongoing, equitable community input rather than episodic, complaint-driven processes alone. We emphasized the importance of examining how an independent Ombudsman could meaningfully empower the public in a legal context where doctrines such as sovereign immunity limit residents' ability to seek remedies directly against government entities. In this setting, the Ombudsman would serve as a critical nonjudicial pathway for review and correction, provided the office has clear authority and a realistic scope. We raised questions about safeguards, including how the Ombudsman's independence would be protected, how politicization or misuse would be prevented, and how enforcement would function given that the City Attorney represents the City rather than the public. We also cautioned that expanded oversight and participation could increase administrative complexity and costs, underscoring the need for precise Charter language that balances accessibility, independence, and effectiveness to create a fair, credible, and equitable accountability mechanism the Charter currently lacks.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 04/30/2026 11:30 AM

Council File No: 26-0489

Comments for Public Posting: Council Members, My name is Jon Papp and I've been a supporter of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for the last 8 years. My wife and I recently purchased a home in Del Rey and became constituents of CD11. I am writing you today to urge you to implement RCV for Los Angeles. By now I am certain you have already heard about how RCV works and its many potential benefits from other commenters. Let me just add what I think is the most important benefit of implementing RCV - consensus candidates. When we have consensus candidates, elected by a majority of voters, who's campaigns are not impacted by the "spoiler effect" - then we are better able to pass consensus policies. Under RCV, elected officials can focus on passing policies a majority of their constituents want instead of worrying about how a policy may hurt their position with voters from a specific party. Voters can be more focused on issues they care about, ranking candidates based on the issues they make a priority. When a new party takes power, policies passed with the support of a majority of constituents are more likely to be protected instead of yo-yoing policy positions between administrations. This is just as true at the local level as it is at the state and federal level. I believe RCV can help us move towards a system where coalitions can more easily pass those reforms the majority agrees on. I also believe seeing results like that can help re-engage the voting public with our democracy. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to serving the Del Rey community however I can!

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 04/30/2026 12:08 PM

Council File No: 26-0489

Comments for Public Posting: We urge the commission & LA City Council to Expand the number of City Council Districts from 15 to 25 Allow the Chief of Police to remove officers with repeated histories of harm Ensure LAPD honors ordinances passed through normal City Council processes; and Ensure LAPD protects the first amendment rights of free press and protest in its work Split the current functions of the elected City Attorney's office into an elected City Prosecutor who prosecutes criminal cases, City Attorney appointed by the Mayor who is the legal advisor and counsel for City departments, plus an Office of Legislative Counsel, to handle the drafting of legislation Update the Charter with a preamble as a statement of values, including affirming "the importance of compassion, fairness, due process, and support for all residents, regardless of immigration status" Adopt a Capital Investment Program (CIP) on a five year cycle effective immediately Instituting a Director of Public Works to ensure accountability for the outcomes of CIP processes Shift the City from operating within an annual budget cycle to a two-year budget cycle, with provisions to ensure public comment at various points in the process Instituting a Periodic Charter Review once-a-decade to provide opportunities to address governance issues in an orderly, unrushed manner and without the need for a scandal to jumpstart the process Provide the council and mayor the flexibility to adopt new public financing systems (e.g. democracy vouchers, full public funding, a hybrid system) via ordinance Enabling the suspension of any elected and appointed official facing felony criminal proceedings, or criminal misdemeanor proceedings related to a violation of official duties Enable the suspension of any elected and appointed official facing felony criminal proceedings, or criminal misdemeanor proceedings related to a violation of official duties

Communication from Public

Name: Marcy Anzardo

Date Submitted: 04/30/2026 05:08 PM

Council File No: 26-0489

Comments for Public Posting: Please allow and move forward with rank choice voting. Evidence shows that RCV enhances American democracy and better represents the people. Additionally, the research provides evidence that RCV is an improvement over plurality voting with clear benefits in terms of representation, campaign quality, mobilization, and turnout. RCV encourages greater consensus building as well as more civil political campaigns. Please permit residents of Los Angeles to participate more fully in our democracy by creating rank choice voting. Thank you for your time.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 04/30/2026 01:34 PM

Council File No: 26-0489

Comments for Public Posting: Los Angeles City Attorneys Association - Opposition to Bifurcation



Los Angeles
CITY ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION

April 30, 2026

To: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

Re: LACAA Opposition to Proposed Charter Amendment to Bifurcate the City Attorney's Office

The Los Angeles City Attorneys Association ("LACAA") strongly opposes the Charter Reform Committee's recommendation to bifurcate the City Attorney's Office into a prosecutorial agency led by an elected City Prosecutor and a second office led by an appointed City Attorney. We urge this esteemed Committee to reject the proposal; at minimum, we ask this Committee to table the bifurcation proposal to allow stakeholders sufficient time to address the concerns raised by the Charter Reform Commission. Bifurcating the City Attorney's Office is a drastic, dramatic change that will forever alter how our Office functions and serves the diverse needs of the City. LACAA believes bifurcation is unwarranted, and we deserve the opportunity to pursue changes through discussion and negotiations before City Council asks the voters to irreparably rupture the Office that many of our members have faithfully served for decades.

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A bifurcation proposal cannot be placed on the ballot until the meet and confer process is complete. Bifurcation will alter the working environment, organizational structure, and career paths of every attorney and support staff member employed by the Office. Dividing the office (and potentially adding authority for the Ethics Commission to hire its own attorneys) could result in the reclassification of attorney and support staff positions, alter transfer rights between branches, and impact overtime eligibility and premium pay opportunities. Based on the vast array of issues to negotiate and our collective bargaining rights under the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act, we do not see how the meet and confer process could be completed for LACAA and any other affected bargaining units in time to place this proposal on the November 2026 ballot.

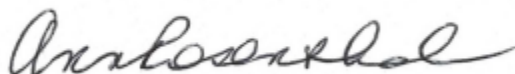
Bifurcation does not address the problem that it purports to solve. The staff report prepared for the Commission recommends bifurcation because it “insulates an appointed city attorney from politics.” Nothing could be further from the truth. A City Attorney who is appointed by and reports to the Mayor is not shielded from the Mayor’s politics. This structure creates a dangerous choice: act independently and risk summary dismissal, or compromise professional integrity in order to keep the position. An appointed City Attorney would never be a truly independent legal advisor to the City. Without the shield of voter accountability and co-equal status as an elected office, a competent City Attorney could be removed for reasons unrelated to the quality of her work, while staff attorneys would be susceptible to political pressure to provide advice to protect the City Attorney’s position.

A City Attorney that can be removed on a whim will create instability and uncertainty for attorneys and their clients. We know that every four or eight years, the City Attorney’s Office can undergo major changes in operational priorities, organizational structure, and executive leadership. An appointed City Attorney who can be removed at the whim of elected officials at any time introduces institutional uncertainty that will forever impair the stability of the Office and the confidence our clients have in the work we perform.

Bifurcation is using a bazooka as a flyswatter. The issues and concerns expressed in the staff report appear to be based on the current City Attorney’s divergence from City Council’s stated objectives and her perceived indifference toward the conflict this creates. None of the Commission’s reports explain how bifurcation effectively addresses those concerns, particularly since this perceived conflict is not created by the City Attorney’s dual role in advising the City on one hand and prosecuting criminal cases on the other.

LACAA is already engaging with Council committees to address the actual challenges facing the City Attorney’s Office. Pursuing bifurcation will stop that process before it can succeed. Rather than breaking the Office in two, LACAA recommends further discussion to tackle these issues..

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ann Rosenthal".

Ann Rosenthal, President

Communication from Public

Name: Joel Ball

Date Submitted: 04/30/2026 09:14 AM

Council File No: 26-0489

Comments for Public Posting: I support the increase property tax allocation for the Department of Recreation and Parks. We need better maintenance of our parks. Having lived in other major American cities, Los Angeles residents are radically underserved by the current number and quality of the status quo.

Communication from Public

Name: San Fernando Valley Audubon Society
Date Submitted: 04/30/2026 09:26 AM
Council File No: 26-0489
Comments for Public Posting: San Fernando Valley Audubon Society strongly supports the request from the City Charter Committee to amend Los Angeles City Charter §593 to double the minimum budget allocation to RAP from .0325% to .065% of assessed values of city property. Please see our following written comment. We urge the Mayor and the entire City Council to back this proposal and get it on the November ballot.



San Fernando Valley Audubon Society

Incorporated as California Audubon Society in 1913

P.O. Box 7769 • Van Nuys • CA • 91409-7769

www.sfvaudubon.org • 747-237-3720

For the conservation of wildlife, natural resources, and nature education.

April 30, 2026

Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring Street, Room 350
Los Angeles, CA, 90012

Re: Council File 26-0489

Request to Amend Charter Section 593 to Increase Charter-Required Minimum Budget Allocation for the Department of Recreation and Parks

Honorable Chair and Members of the City Council:

The California Audubon Society dba San Fernando Valley Audubon Society (SFVAS) represents conservation and bird advocates throughout most of the entire portion of the City of Los Angeles north of Mulholland Drive - including City of Los Angeles Parks in the Sepulveda Basin, Hansen Dam, Omelveny Park and countless smaller venues. These parks comprise islands of habitat for wildlife (including endangered species) in our urban area, and also provide outdoor classrooms and respite from urban heat and other stressors for millions of residents.

As was obvious from the recently-completed City of Los Angeles Parks Needs Assessment, our parks are starving and on the verge of collapse. Maintenance is lagging, enforcement of park, conservation and environmental rules is inadequate, and we lag far behind peer cities in park investment in general.

The Los Angeles City Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) is one of only two city departments—the other being the Library Department—for which the City of Los Angeles Charter explicitly provides financial support. Specifically, RAP receives .0325% of the assessed value of property within city limits - a formula which has been in place since 1937. The hollowing out of RAP began during the “2009 Great Recession” when the City began charging both RAP and the Libraries for their “indirect costs”. The loss of funding for Libraries had immediate consequences of library closures, and the lost funding was quickly replaced by Measure L in 2011.

Unfortunately, the negative consequences for city parks from loss of funding were not so obvious or sudden. Rather, they quietly metastasized. Well over a billion dollars has been diverted from RAP’s charter-mandated funding since 2009. This has resulted in staffing shortages, a demoralized and understaffed Park Ranger force, billions of dollars in deferred maintenance, and decades of environmental degradation. Wildlife regulations are rarely

enforced resulting in unfortunate and horrifying situations. The Los Angeles Fire Department has been forced to step in to assist RAP with land maintenance to avoid dangerous wildfires, in addition to putting out hundreds of fires in the parks. Funding has been unavailable for proactive management of resources, resulting in further deterioration.

Accordingly, the SFVAS strongly supports the request from the City Charter Committee to amend Los Angeles City Charter §593 to double the minimum budget allocation to RAP from .0325% to .065% of assessed values of city property. We urge the Mayor and the entire City council to back this proposal and get it on the November ballot.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia Bates". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Patricia" and the last name "Bates" clearly distinguishable.

Patricia Bates, PhD
Pat.Bates@sfvaudubon.org
Conservation Committee Co-Chairperson

Communication from Public

Name: Sherri Bell

Date Submitted: 04/30/2026 12:14 PM

Council File No: 26-0489

Comments for Public Posting: Item # 26-0489 Good afternoon, Council Members. My name is Sherri Bell and I'm a long time member of the Los Angeles Black Worker Center. We have done the work. We developed recommendations to modernize hiring, expand access to good union jobs, build real career pathways, and ensure accountability across the city workforce. These recommendations were unanimously advanced by the Charter Reform Commission. And now, they are stalled. Not because they are controversial. Not because they are incomplete. But because we cannot get through meet-and-confer. Justice delayed is justice denied. And our conditions are already hard enough we are in a humanitarian crisis for Black Angelenos and Californians when it comes to unemployment. In Los Angeles County, Black workers face unemployment rates higher than our share of the population. Yet too often, it feels like we are being asked to beg for basic human decency. Let's be clear moving these recommendations forward is not a silver bullet to end racism. This is just a start to create equitable conditions for all Angelenos. If this process does not move, these reforms will quietly die and the same barriers will remain. We are asking you to prevent that outcome. Direct the EERC to instruct unions to meet and confer so this work can move forward. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 04/30/2026 12:17 PM

Council File No: 26-0489

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing in opposition to the City Attorney proposal. There are a lot of conflict of interest concerns in this proposal. Nithya Raman, one of the proponents of the proposal, is now running for Mayor and would be in the position to appoint the City Attorney if this measure is adopted. LA Forward, another proponent of this measure, has chosen to endorse a candidate in the City Attorney's race who is on its Board. This candidate, Marissa Roy, has chosen not to comment on this proposal when asked multiple times during forums. The proponents of this proposal do not have foresight in mind, and have focused on increasing the Mayor's powers because it could benefit them. It can seem beneficial to consolidate power under one Mayor when that Mayor is on your side, but this consolidation of power can also work against the people if we have a Mayor like Rick Caruso. In a City with a legacy of corruption, including Mayoral appointments, we should focus on increasing representation, and fairness, rather than consolidating power and reducing the public's ability to choose their own representatives.

Communication from Public

Name: Carter Moon

Date Submitted: 04/30/2026 12:18 PM

Council File No: 26-0489

Comments for Public Posting: Councilmembers, As you are well aware, trust in the LA city council is at an all time low. The Fed Tapes scandal exposed deep institutional rot and corruption within your body and so far you have failed to meaningfully address the harms that were caused by the cynical redistricting efforts that punished Councilmember Raman and disenfranchised thousands of the people who originally voted her into office. LA city council is mired in corruption and the perception when I talk to Angelenos across this city is that the majority of the people currently sitting on this council primarily serve corporate interests and the police union, not the every day people who make up this city. The charter reform process has been far from perfect, but it was initiated out of this existential need to restore some semblance of faith that the city council can actually be a democratic body capable of representing the will of Angelenos. I support the following reforms that are most urgently needed to address systemic inequalities and gaps in functional governance within our city. 1) The expansion of the city council to at minimum 25 seats. I frankly believe we should be pushing for 30 or more seats, but if 25 is the compromise for now I can accept that. It is impossible for any councilmember to address the needs of all of their constituents, I see it acutely in my own district, CD11, where the needs of renters are sidelined for the desires of wealthy homeowners. 2) All reforms possible to meaningfully bring the out of control, corrupt, and deadly LAPD into greater accountability to the city. This includes allowing the chief to fire officers who've repeatedly committed harm, protecting the press from LAPD aggression, and clarifying LAPD's duty to honor ordinances passed by the council. 3) We need the city to shift to a two year budgeting cycle with built-in engagement and public comment from every council district to ensure all Angelenos are included at every step of the process. 4) Especially as our infrastructure needs to be updated to meet the urgency climate crisis, it's essential that we adopt a five year Capital Infrastructure Plan. This should work alongside adopting a Director of Public Works to ensure accountability for the outcomes of CIP processes. 5) The City Attorney needs to be split into two distinct offices, a City Prosecutor focused on criminal cases and a City Attorney who is appointed by the mayor to be the

legal advisor and counsel for City departments. 6) The city charter should automatically come up for review once a decade. The city is watching how you behave in this reform process, your future prospects in elected office are directly tied to how you handle this vital restoration of public trust and expansion of democracy for your constituents. Don't screw this up.

Communication from Public

Name: Shona Ganguly

Date Submitted: 04/30/2026 01:16 PM

Council File No: 26-0489

Comments for Public Posting: As a resident of the City of Los Angeles in the Shadow Hills neighborhood and parks advocate, I strongly support consistent charter funding for parks for the future of our city and region. I urge the committee and council to approve the recommendation to increase the charter-required minimum funding for Department of Recreation and Parks from .0325% to .065%. I support a 4-year phase-in.