

## Communication from Public

**Name:** LIONEL MARES

**Date Submitted:** 05/07/2026 10:53 PM

**Council File No:** 26-0489

**Comments for Public Posting:** Los Angeles continues to face serious service gaps — from public safety to sanitation to infrastructure — and a major driver is the city’s outdated, slow, and overly rigid hiring system. This isn’t a new problem; it’s been documented repeatedly by internal audits, external reviews, and the lived experience of departments struggling to fill essential roles. That’s why it’s so concerning that the final report doesn’t meaningfully address the city’s personnel and hiring process at all. We can’t expect better outcomes without modernizing the systems that staff the work. Ignoring the structural issues behind chronic vacancies only guarantees more of the same: delayed services, operational strain, and missed opportunities to serve Angelenos effectively. If we want a more responsive, resilient city, reforming the hiring and personnel framework has to be part of the conversation. For Reference: No Fix for LA’s Broken Hiring System in Charter Reform Plan by Mona Field

# No Fix for LA's Broken Hiring System in Charter Reform Plan

MONA FIELD / MAY 04 2026



Comments

IN MY VIEW - My first caveat in writing this comment is to say that this is my individual and personal view and this in no way reflects the Charter Commission or any other organization with which I am affiliated.

I sat on the charter reform commission, appointed by then council president Paul Krekorian, and spent a very hectic eight months developing numerous proposals to improve the functioning of the city.

Folks are encouraged to go to the website and see the final report, 301 pages, including over 60 proposals for the city.

The commission's work is now in the hands of the City Council Rules committee, which is holding meetings in order to send to the full council items that they think should appear on our November ballot.

Despite ample evidence that LA's hiring process is an antiquated disaster, leading to gaps in services that the city should provide all of us, nothing in the final report deals with LA's hiring and personnel process.

You might ask why this huge omission? Well, the fingers are pointing.

The personnel department, led by General manager Malaika Billups, offered a number of proposals to the commission, but due to labor laws, the department decided they needed to "meet and confer" with all the unions. Even though that is true, I believe the commission should have moved forward with recommendations, and let meet and confer follow.

Meanwhile, there was one initial presentation from the coalition of city unions, in which the speaker, upon my question, made clear that the unions want no changes except to have more people work in the personnel department.

They are apparently very happy with all the protections given them in the Charter, and sadly, the leadership of those city unions appear not to care about the extraordinary difficulties in the hiring and promotion process which were amply documented for the commission through public comment.

At least one union leader I spoke with privately claims that the unions offered to meet and confer and the personnel department said they were not ready.

There is ample finger-pointing to go around.

Whose fault is it really that the commission never made any sensible suggestions to the council regarding our inefficient hiring process in which people can spend a full year waiting to see if they have become a city employee? (This being a process in which antiquated testing mechanisms dominate, and applicants go through a byzantine process to even be considered for employment.)

Meanwhile, our parks deteriorate, our streets are unpaved, and that does not even mention the understaffing in the police department.

If there were enough public pressure, which seems unlikely, perhaps the Council on its own could create some ballot language to deal with this terrible situation.

Unfortunately, we will probably be stuck with no reform or improvement in our city hiring process until another charter reform commission is created, probably in 2035.

Let's just hope that the City Council puts some of the other sensible suggestions on the ballot for city voters in November.

*(**Mona Field** served as a member of the Charter reform commission. She has a long background in local government and politics, having served on the board of trustees of the Los Angeles community college District, taught California politics for many years at Glendale community college, and authored Bestselling college textbook, California Government and Politics Today, 15th ed.)*