LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL COALITION (LANCC) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHARTER REFORM

Submitted to the Los Angeles Charter Reform Commission

Better Government Committee

January 21, 2026

The LANCC Committee's Process

- The Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition (LANCC) Charter Reform Recommendation committee was created by a vote of LANCC at its regularly scheduled meeting on November 1
- During the committee's weekly public meetings, we came up with our own recommendations, including input from the public, that we wanted to see in the Charter. We reviewed 192 Charter Reform related CISs written since October 13, 2022. We considered the recommendations of the Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates.
- We voted on each of the ideas we culled from these sources. Votes went from agreement (yes or no) with no discussion to agreement (yes or no) requiring discussion for a full meeting.
- Every agreed upon item was written into a copy of the Charter
- The marked-up Charter that comes from this process was approved by LANCC January 3, 2026
- Charter numbers referenced in this presentation reflect the LANCC marked-up copy

Neighborhood Councils

- There is no serious discussion of Neighborhood Councils in the Charter. Article IX in the existing Charter, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, is about DONE, BONC, and establishing the NC system.
- If DONE happened to be removed, another support structure could be developed to support Neighborhood Councils. If the Neighborhood Councils happen to be removed, DONE would have no purpose. DONE is not the Neighborhood Councils and the Neighborhood Councils are not DONE.
- To address this, we moved DONE and BONC to Article V, Departments, and renamed Article IX Neighborhood Councils. During this exercise we added NC impacts into the Charter descriptions of the impacted bodies. In this writing, Neighborhood Councils are more directly woven into the fabric of the City.
- We removed language about forming the NC system
- Named ourselves Elected Advisors to the City Government

Neighborhood Councils (continued)

- Neighborhood Councils need codified authority to operate within their lane.
- Recognition of Neighborhood Councils by City Council is essential. We have the right to advise, but are sometimes not given the opportunity to do so.
- Neighborhood Councils shall have the right to speak, in person and telephonically, before all public meetings of the City
- Neighborhood Councils delivering a Community Impact Statement shall be in a separate queue from public comment and shall be given five minutes to speak
  - NCs shall have the right to speak whenever an item appears on an agenda, even in cases where that item has already been heard by a committee
  - Neighborhood Councils, regardless of the City's position, may deliver to any governmental agency a statement passed in a Brown Acted public meeting at which there is quorum. The City may create and require language to indicate the NC is speaking for itself and not the City.
- Neighborhood Councils shall be authorized to form Alliances
  - Neighborhood Councils may contribute funds or equivalent (including, but not limited to, websites, licenses, and meeting spaces) for the benefit of the Alliances.

Neighborhood Councils (Continued)

- Neighborhood Councils shall monitor the delivery of City services in their respective areas and the City at-large. City services shall include all departments defined in the Charter and created by ordinance, joint power commissions, and offices of elected officials.
- City Departments, Commissions, and Offices that issue permits, approvals, or regulatory decisions following a public hearing (including but not limited to the City Planning Department, Department of Cannabis Regulation, and any successor or related offices) and ministerial construction projects that bypass City Planning and go directly to the Department of Building and Safety shall give NCs a minimum of 30 calendar days to weigh in
  - The Department of City Planning shall ensure that all documents related to a case before the Department, including ministerial projects that bypass the Department of City Planning and go directly to the Department of Building and Safety are made public and posted to the online case file.
- Even if a board member's economic interest is foreseeable and material, they do not have a legal conflict of interest unless the decision's impact on his or her economic interest is different from the general public's impact
  - This comes from a finding of City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo

Neighborhood Councils (Continued)

- Updated definition of stakeholder to match the definition voted by City Council
- In the interest of efficiency, Neighborhood Councils may include consent calendars on their agendas. Items on consent calendars may include common agenda items including, but not limited to, approval of minutes and the Monthly Expenditure Report and may include agenda items voted by a committee.
  - Any member of the board shall have the ability, at the meeting, to request an agenda item on the consent calendar be removed from consent and heard on its own. The meeting chair shall remove the requested consent agenda item if requested. Removal shall not be a topic for discussion.
  - The public shall have the opportunity to make public comment on the items on the agenda items in the consent calendar.
- Capitalized Neighborhood Councils throughout
- See marked-up Charter sections 254, preamble to "GENERAL PROVISIONS RELATED TO DEPARTMENTS," Section 550, Article IX

Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE)

- Moved from Article IX to Article V
- DONE must become better at being the source of City information for the NCs. Different Neighborhood Empowerment Advocates have differing levels of knowledge resulting in the same question being answered differently depending on which NEA you talk to
  - We have asked, and we ask again, the Department to maintain a database of knowledge articles for the benefit of the Neighborhood Empowerment Advocates and the NCs
- We added a list of items DONE should not do
  - Substitute its judgment for that of elected NCs
  - Use its resources to request NCs advocate for any legislative position
  - Create policies that become de facto regulations

Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) (Continued)

- Added an employment requirement that the DONE General Manager have public policy experience
- Provided NCs the opportunity to submit questions to ask GM candidates during the employment interview
- See marked-up Charter Section 599

Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC)

- Moved from Article IX to Article V
- Increased the number of commissioners from seven to nine with the two additional commissioners being at-large and appointed by Neighborhood Councils
- At the same time as departments, Neighborhood Councils shall submit their budget request for the following year. The two at-large BONC commissioners shall be a single point-of-contact and shall organize the requests into a single request for the Mayor's consideration.
- Give BONC oversight responsibilities over DONE
- Make BONC an appeals body for NCs and/or board members seeking redress for actions by DONE and/or the City Clerk
- Members of BONC shall not be permitted to vote at Commission meetings if they have not completed their required training within 30 days of being seated and to be able to continue voting their required training must be current.
- See marked-up Charter Sections 311 and 599

Budget

- The Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates and LANCC support
  - Transparent labor negotiations where there is public outreach before, during, and after the negotiations so the public can understand the direction of the negotiations and provide public comment
  - The City Council shall not approve labor agreements that would create a current or future deficit
  - As part of budget planning, the CAO shall prepare a four-year budget outlook that reflects realistic anticipated raises for City Employees
  - Two-year budgets. This is also supported by the City Controller and the LA 2020 Commission. See report in Council File 14-1184.
  - Five-year capital infrastructure plan that is updated bi-annually.
  - The reserve fund shall be maintained at a minimum of 5% of the total budget (current City policy). The Reserve Fund shall only be drawn upon during a declared emergency and may not be used to balance the rest of the budget
- During budget challenges, the percentage of Neighborhood Councils budget reductions shall not be greater than that of the office of the Mayor. When the Mayor's office budget is restored after the budget challenge, the Neighborhood Councils budgets are similarly restored.
- See marked-up Charter Sections 219, 291, 312, 321

Office of Transparency and Accountability

- Recommended by the Los Angeles 2020 Commission. See report in Council File 14-1184. Consistently requested by the Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates.
- The Office of Transparency and Accountability would be an independent watchdog. The office serves as the people's financial guardian, reviewing contracts, scrutinizing expenditures and sounding the alarm when the numbers stop adding up. (Some language taken from OJ Oleka, CEO of the State Financial Officers Association. Article by OJ Oleka)
- The Office of Transparency and Accountability is a truth-telling body that operates independently of elected officials and provides unbiased facts to the public.
- See marked-up Charter section 295

City Council Activities

- Update to codify mandatory telephonic public comment. Working people cannot go downtown to get on a queue where they hope to get one minute to speak.
- City Council members shall actively vote yes, no, or abstain and they shall be visible to the public for the vote to count
- Each City Council member shall meet with each NC in its district no less than once a year
- Council members shall file a Form 51 when recusing from a vote
- Members of the City Council and all Commissioners shall not be permitted to vote at City Council and Committee or Commission meetings if they have not completed their required training within 30 days of being seated and to be able to continue voting their required training must be current.
- Limit the ability of the City Council to adopt ordinances impacting the Neighborhood Council Plan to administrative or ministerial actions. Anything else must go to the ballot for the public to decide. Specifically, the City Council may not, through ordinance, change Neighborhood Council composition and terms of board members.
- Each City Councilmember shall, on an annual basis at a minimum, meet with each Neighborhood Council located wholly or partially within the Councilmember's district if the Neighborhood Council desires the meeting
- See marked-up Charter Section 242, 250, 501, 907

Ethics Commission

- Increase the number of Commissioners from five to seven
  - One of the new Commissioners is appointed by the Neighborhood Councils and one is appointed by the Ethics Commission itself
  - City Council does not confirm the selections by the Ethics Commission and NCs
- The Ethics Commission shall have the ability to send items directly to the ballot when the City Council does not advance a recommendation or heavily amends a recommendation
- Increase the Ethics Commission budget to $9 million, adjusted year-by-year based on the change in the City's revenues
  - Allow the budget not to be increased in the case of a declared fiscal emergency
- Increased the time for adjudication of Ethics complaints from four years to five
- See marked-up sections 470, 700, 703, 711, 803

City Attorney

- Added Neighborhood Councils to the entities to which the City Attorney provides legal advice
- The City Attorney shall give advice or opinion in writing when requested by a Neighborhood Council President or Chair
- The City Attorney shall not limit public interactions for Neighborhood Councils more than it does for City Council
- See marked-up section 271

Ongoing Charter Reform

- We envision a more regular Charter Reform process. Don't wait 25 years or more to review the Charter. No less than every ten years, the City should review the Charter and determine whether or not we need an update.
- The Charter Reform Commissions may send recommendations to the ballot when the City Council does not advance a recommendation or heavily amends a recommendation
- See marked-up Charter Section 130.

Wrap Up

- Thank you for making the time to hear us out. We are greatly appreciative and are looking forward to seeing the Commission's final recommendations.
- If you have any question when you review these materials, feel free to email Kay Hartman, the committee chair, at kay.hartman@palmsnc.la