Fwd: Public Comment Regarding Charter Reform Recommendations

Office of the City Clerk <cityclerk@lacity.org>
To: City Clerk Council and Public Services <clerk.cps@lacity.org>

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From: **'Graced' via Clerk - CityClerk** <cityclerk@lacity.org>
Date: Wed, Jun 17, 2026 at 11:34 PM
Subject: Public Comment Regarding Charter Reform Recommendations
To: CityClerk@lacity.org <CityClerk@lacity.org>, ReformLAcharter@lacity.org <ReformLAcharter@lacity.org>

Subject: Charter Reform Should Strengthen Responsiveness, Accountability, and Public Trust

Dear Members of the Los Angeles City Council,

Thank you for your work reviewing the recommendations of the Charter Reform Commission.

Over the past several years, I have attended City Council meetings, participated in public comment, submitted concerns to elected officials, and followed the Charter Reform process closely. I appreciate the Commission's effort to examine how Los Angeles can improve representation, accountability, and public trust.

As you consider which recommendations to place before voters, I respectfully offer the following thoughts.

FIRST: STRENGTHEN THE CITY CONTROLLER'S INDEPENDENCE

Los Angeles residents deserve an independent watchdog with the authority and resources necessary to identify fraud, waste, abuse, inefficiency, and financial risk.

The Controller's Office serves a critical role in protecting taxpayer dollars and providing transparency regarding how public funds are spent. I support strengthening the Controller's independence through sufficient staffing, auditing authority, legal support, and budgetary protections.

I am also concerned that several recommendations requested by the City Controller were not fully incorporated into the final package.

From my perspective, and from the perspective of many residents who support strong financial oversight, these recommendations were not extraordinary requests. They were foundational tools necessary for any independent watchdog to perform the job effectively.

If the City expects the Controller to identify fraud, waste, abuse, inefficiency, and financial risk, then the office must have the authority, staffing, resources, legal support, and independence necessary to carry out those responsibilities.

Los Angeles cannot expect accountability without providing the tools required to achieve it.

An independent budget, clear audit authority, legal support, protections for the Fraud, Waste, and Abuse function, and sufficient resources are not luxuries. They are basic components of effective oversight.

Oversight without resources is a promise without a plan.

SECOND: ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HOMELESSNESS SPENDING

The need for strong oversight is particularly important when evaluating homelessness spending.

Over the past several years, Los Angeles residents have watched billions of dollars directed toward homelessness programs while many continue to experience visible encampments, public health concerns, blocked sidewalks, public safety concerns, and ongoing questions regarding measurable outcomes.

Media reports, audits, investigations, and public discussions have raised legitimate questions regarding vacant units, delayed housing conversions, underutilized properties, cost overruns, and program effectiveness.

While city officials have reported reductions in homelessness in certain categories, residents continue to ask an important question:

If billions of dollars have been spent, what measurable results have taxpayers received?

This is not a partisan question. It is an accountability question.

Residents deserve clear and transparent reporting regarding outcomes, performance, program effectiveness, and return on public investment. When projects experience delays, vacancies, cost overruns, or fail to achieve intended results, residents deserve to know why and what corrective actions are being taken.

The City has a responsibility not only to spend public dollars but to demonstrate that those dollars are producing measurable results.

THIRD: ALLOW VOTERS TO DECIDE RANKED-CHOICE VOTING

I support allowing voters the opportunity to decide whether ranked-choice voting should become part of Los Angeles elections.

Many residents feel frustrated by repeatedly choosing between a limited number of candidates who have already emerged from established political structures. Ranked-

choice voting may provide voters with greater flexibility and encourage broader participation without requiring voters to abandon their preferred candidate out of fear of wasting their vote.

Whether residents ultimately support or reject ranked-choice voting, they deserve the opportunity to evaluate the proposal for themselves.

FOURTH: IMPROVE RESPONSIVENESS BEFORE OR ALONGSIDE COUNCIL EXPANSION

I understand the argument that smaller districts may allow residents greater access to their representatives. However, I believe responsiveness must be addressed before or alongside any expansion of the City Council.

My concern is not simply the number of council districts.

My concern is whether residents are being heard.

Whether a resident contacts Council District 10 or any other Council District, there should be a clear and transparent pathway for communication, follow-up, and accountability.

Residents should not have to wonder whether their concerns were received, reviewed, assigned, or acted upon.

In my own experience, a representative approached me during a City Council meeting, collected my contact information, and provided information for a Council District office regarding concerns I had raised affecting tenant safety and quality of life.

As a resident, I appreciated the outreach. However, despite subsequent efforts to communicate, I did not receive meaningful follow-up regarding the concerns that were raised.

My purpose in sharing this experience is not to criticize any individual office. Rather, it highlights a broader concern.

Los Angeles residents deserve more than acknowledgment. They deserve accountability, communication, responsiveness, and ultimately legislation that reflects legitimate concerns affecting safety, quality of life, housing stability, public health, and community well-being.

As Los Angeles considers charter reform, I encourage the City Council to explore systems that improve constituent responsiveness across all Council Districts, including:

• Confirmation that a concern has been received;

• A method for tracking constituent requests;

• Clear communication regarding next steps;

• Follow-up regarding outcomes or actions taken;

• Greater transparency regarding how resident concerns are evaluated and addressed.

Representation is not simply access.

Representation requires responsiveness.

FIFTH: REIMAGINE HOW LOS ANGELES MEASURES SAFETY

As the City considers police reform recommendations, I encourage policymakers to broaden the conversation beyond staffing levels, surveillance technology, and enforcement strategies.

How do we measure safety?

Residents want safe neighborhoods. However, safety is not measured solely by the number of officers, cameras, or enforcement tools deployed throughout a community.

Safety is also reflected in whether residents can walk down clean sidewalks, whether parks are accessible, whether housing is stable, whether public spaces are maintained, whether mental health crises receive appropriate responses, and whether residents feel connected to and supported by their communities.

Los Angeles invests substantial public resources in public safety. As with every area of government spending, residents deserve transparency, accountability, and measurable outcomes regarding how those investments improve daily life.

Residents should also have confidence that public funds are managed carefully and that financial errors, inefficiencies, or misallocations are addressed promptly and transparently when they occur.

As the City evaluates police reform, I encourage consideration of a broader public safety model that includes prevention, community-based services, mental health response, housing stability, neighborhood quality-of-life improvements, and other approaches that complement traditional law enforcement.

A truly safe city is not defined solely by enforcement.

It is defined by the conditions that allow people and communities to thrive.

FINAL THOUGHT

At its core, this discussion is about the relationship between government and the people it serves.

Government is not an abstract institution.

It exists to improve the lives of the people funding it and living under its decisions.

Residents do not fund government for the sake of government. They fund government because they want safer neighborhoods, cleaner streets, functioning infrastructure, housing stability, responsive services, public health protections, and a better quality of life.

When residents participate in public comment, contact elected officials, attend meetings, or engage in civic life, they are providing valuable information about the challenges they experience every day and the solutions they believe would improve their communities.

For that reason, responsiveness is not merely a matter of customer service. It is a matter of democratic accountability.

Residents deserve to be heard because they are the people funding the system, living with the consequences of policy decisions, and experiencing firsthand whether government programs are succeeding or falling short.

When residents are heard, government becomes better informed.

When government becomes better informed, public resources can be deployed more effectively.

And when public resources are deployed more effectively, public trust grows.

The goal of charter reform should not only be to change the structure of government.

It should be to improve the experience residents have when engaging with their government and in their city while living.

The question is not only whether residents have a voice.

The question is whether City Hall listens.

Respectfully,

Shantel Daniels
Los Angeles Resident