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June 29, 2026

The Honorable City Council
City of Los Angeles
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Honorable Members:

Rule 38 Comments, Charter Reform, CF 26-1100-S12

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the pending changes to the Charter, regarding the functions of the City Planning Department, that have been carried forward by the City Council. City Planning has remained engaged in this process since its inception, and acknowledges that the Charter amendments that have been finalized represent meaningful improvements to the City Planning process.

1. Effectuation

Many of the proposed Charter amendments will necessitate corresponding ordinances (i.e. amendments to the Municipal Code) in order to be implemented. It would be beneficial for the City Council to direct city staff to prepare the necessary ordinances and bring them through the legislative process ahead of the November 2026 ballot, so that the ordinance may go into effect concurrently with the Charter amendments, if approved. Alternatively, it may be beneficial for the ballot measure to articulate a delayed effectuation, allowing time for the preparation and adoption of ordinances and other implementing measures.

2. Neighborhood Appeals Commission

The recommended amendment to Charter Section 552 would consolidate the City's seven Area Planning Commissions into a single Neighborhood Appeals Commission. There are multiple places in the Charter that reference the Area Planning Commissions, and while most of those have been identified in the currently proposed ballot measure text, two provisions, Charter Sections 560 and 565 seem not to have been identified for amendment. City Planning recommends that the following amendments be added to the proposed ballot measure:

Sec. 560. Hearings and Investigations.

The City Planning Commission and ~~Area Planning Commissions~~ Neighborhood Appeals Commission may authorize the Director of Planning or his or her designee to conduct hearings on behalf of the commission. The Director of Planning shall make investigations relative to all matters provided for in Sections 555 and 558 as the City Planning Commission may direct and shall file reports with the City Planning Commission.

~~Sec. 565. Delegation of Legislative Authority to Area Planning Commissions.~~

~~The City Planning Commission may adopt rules and regulations, subject to approval by ordinance, identifying classes or categories of legislative actions for projects determined not to have citywide impact, and provide for action on these projects to be taken by an Area Planning Commission in lieu of the City Planning Commission.~~

3. Quasi-Judicial Review–Variances, Conditional Use, and Multiple Approvals

On June 17, 2026 the City Council moved forward a proposed revision to Charter Sections 561-564. Consistent with the Charter Commission’s recommendation, Charter Section 561 would be amended to acknowledge that the City Planning Department has the authority to act on quasi-judicial matters across multiple decision-makers within the Department. Currently Charter Section 561 only identifies Zoning Administration’s quasi-judicial authority. Charter Sections 562-564 pertain to processes and findings for Variances, Conditional Uses, and Multiple Approvals. The Charter Reform Commission recommended, and subsequently the City Council approved the removal of Section 562-564.

Critically, the removal of Charter Sections 562-564 were not carried forward by the City Attorney’s draft resolution within Section 5 of the proposed ballot measure. The removal of the sections, which are redundant to existing provisions of the Municipal Code should be included in any final text to be approved by the City Council

4. Quasi-Judicial Review–Authority

At the June 12, 2026 Rules Committee meeting, the committee approved a motion from Council District 8, identified as Recommendation No. 13 in the Committee’s report to further amend Charter Section 561 beyond the Charter Reform Commission’s initial recommendation. CD8’s motion “Request(s) the City Attorney to consult with the Department of City Planning to identify the details that can be moved into ordinance, including those pertaining to the Office of the Zoning Administrator, to create more flexibility for the Planning Department.” This motion was approved by the City Council on June 17, 2026.

City Planning has reviewed the existing Charter provisions, the amendments proposed by the Charter Reform Commission, and the provisions within Municipal Code that currently outline the decision-making authority of the Zoning Administrator. As directed by the City Council, City Planning has identified further amendments to the Charter Reform Commission’s initially recommended text (CRC10) Charter Section 561 provided below. Text provided below provides additional deletions (strike-through text) and additions (underline text), consistent with City Council direction, and is inclusive of the Charter Reform Commission’s initial amendments.

Sec. 561. Office of Zoning Administration-Quasi-judicial Review

The Department of City Planning shall be responsible for the independent review and approval, conditional approval, or denial of quasi-judicial applications. The duties of quasi-judicial review shall be performed by designated City Planning staff, which shall include, but is not be limited to, the Office of Zoning Administration, a Deputy Advisory Agency, and Hearing Officers, as authorized by ordinance, and who all of whom shall be appointed by the Director of Planning subject to the civil service provisions of the Charter. Subject to rules and regulations as may be prescribed by ordinance, the Department of City Planning shall investigate, hear, and determine all applications for quasi-judicial review, and shall have other powers and duties with respect to zoning and land use determinations as prescribed by ordinance.

~~There shall be a quasi-judicial agency known as the Office of Zoning Administration. The duties of this office shall be performed by one or more Zoning Administrators as authorized by the Council, who shall be appointed by the Director of Planning subject to the civil service provisions of the Charter. If more than one Zoning Administrator is authorized, a position of Chief Zoning Administrator shall be established, the appointment to which shall be made by the Director of Planning, and the others shall be Associate Zoning Administrators~~

~~Subject to rules and regulations as may be prescribed by ordinance, the Office of Zoning Administration shall investigate and determine all applications for variances from any of the regulations and requirements of the zoning ordinances, and shall have other powers and duties with respect to zoning and land use as prescribed by ordinance.~~

~~The Council may, shall by ordinance provide time limits within which the Department of City Planning Office of Zoning Administration must act for each type of case under its his or her jurisdiction. If no determination is made by a Zoning Administrator within the prescribed time, the applicant may request that the matter be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Board of Neighborhood Appeals Commission an Area Planning Commission or other board as prescribed by ordinance.~~

~~The Director of Planning Chief Zoning Administrator may interpret and adopt rules necessary to carry out the requirements prescribed by state law and by ordinance, which are not in conflict or inconsistent with those laws or ordinances. All rules and regulations shall be available for inspection in accordance with the requirements of the California Public Records Act.~~

Please contact Deputy Director Craig Weber at craig.weber@lacity.org or 213-978-1311 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



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Director of Planning