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NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS
EMPOWER LA
Department of
NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT

20th FLOOR, CITY HALL
200 NORTH SPRING STREET LOS
ANGELES, CA 90012

TELEPHONE (213) 978-1551
TOLL-FREE 3-1-1
FAX: (213) 978-1751
E-MAIL: EmpowerLA@lacity.org

VANESSA SERRANO
INTERIM GENERAL MANAGER

ERICK MUÑOZ
COMMISSION EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

www.EmpowerLA.org

January 23, 2024

Honorable Councilmember Bob Blumenfield, Chair and Members of the Budget and Finance Committee
Office of the City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Chair Blumenfield,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (“Board”), which met on January 23rd and approved this letter in support of a budget increase for the 99 neighborhood councils.

Neighborhood Councils are on-the-ground every day creating a bridge between the City of Los Angeles and local communities, playing an integral role in communicating and implementing the services the City provides. Neighborhood Councils work to ensure that funds and resources are being distributed equitably amongst the City’s most vulnerable population. This includes:

- Support for the unhoused
- Providing translation services so that residents can access City services and public meetings;
- Providing Neighborhood Purpose Grants to local nonprofits on the front line of supporting our most vulnerable residents;
- Creating or working with mutual aid networks that match volunteers with people in need for services;
- Improving parks and recreation services, identifying fixes to streets and roadways, supporting the City’s transportation efforts, finding housing for homeless neighbors, and much, much more.

Despite all this, Neighborhood Councils and the Department received disproportionate budget cuts during the pandemic relative to other departments and, despite state and federal funding, the Neighborhood Councils have not realized the restoration of their budgets.

Therefore, we ask that you restore neighborhood council annual budgets to a minimum of \$50,000 in the Office of the City Clerk’s budget. This is necessary as Neighborhood Councils pay individually for technology licenses to meet virtually, they often pay for physical meeting spaces since the return to in-person meetings, and they bear the cost for outreach for upcoming election activities.

In addition to restoring individual neighborhood council budgets, we ask that you approve the budget request from the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment to ensure the success of our neighborhood councils. The resources requested in their budget are those necessary to provide quality direct neighborhood council support services to the Neighborhood Council System.

We believe that these are reasonable and prudent requests that are necessary over the long-term as neighborhood council leaders are strategic partners dedicated to maximize the quality of life for residents throughout the City of Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

Ray Regalado
President

cc: Karen Bass, City of Los Angeles Mayor
Eunisses Hernandez, First District Councilmember
Paul Krekorian, Second District Councilmember
Nithya Raman, Fourth District Councilmember
Katy Yaroslavsky, Fifth District Councilmember
Imelda Padilla, Sixth District Councilmember
Monica Rodriguez, Seventh District Councilmember
Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Eighth District Councilmember
Curren D. Price, Jr., Ninth District Councilmember
Heather Hutt, Tenth District Councilmember
Traci Park, Eleventh District Councilmember
John S. Lee, Twelfth District Councilmember
Hugo Soto-Martinez, Thirteenth District Councilmember
Kevin de Leon, Fourteenth District Councilmember
Tim McOsker, Fifteenth District Councilmember