

Encino Neighborhood Council
[CF 20-0963](#): Proposed Community Impact Statement

Summary: The Encino Neighborhood Council (ENC) has concerns regarding the NC election process and related outreach, which include but are not limited to issues of reasonableness of expenditures for promotion of the election. It is essential that this be addressed in planning for 2023 elections.

The Arts, Parks, Health, Education, and Neighborhoods (APHEN) Committee considered on October 20, 2021, City Clerk, and January 11, 2022, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) reports relative to the Neighborhood Council 2021 Election Outreach update and related matters. After providing an opportunity for public comment, the APHEN Chair noted and filed the reports. This matter awaits consideration by the Budget and Finance Committee.

On January 20, 2021 our adjacent Reseda Neighborhood Council filed a Community Impact Statement ([CIS](#)) noting “a number of serious concerns regarding the spending patterns and failures of oversight by DONE on the 2021 Neighborhood Council election and their impact on candidate recruitment and voter engagement.” That CIS requests additional information regarding certain transactions and further asks that the matter be addressed by the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC) at their next meeting, and further, that it be reconsidered by the APHEN Committee.

The Encino Neighborhood Council (ENC) endorses Reseda’s request for additional information and that its findings be reviewed and addressed. Everyone should be confident that our tax money is being properly spent. The NCs are held to this high standard, as should DONE.

The ENC’s concerns regarding the election process extend beyond vetting what was expended for the 2021 election cycle. On the positive side, it appears that the effort to engage candidates to run for the election was effective. The very negative side concerns the number of votes returned and the difficulty in engaging and registering voters. It appears that for the ENC election, approximately 160 ballots were returned. A reasonable estimate of the number of registered voters in Encino is about 27,000. This means that the turnout is well under 1%. If you assume all the candidates voted, this is appalling. It points to a missed opportunity to engage the community and promote the role of the NCs in local governance.

The most common reported impediment to registering people to vote in the election was the substantiation requirements. Nobody wants copies of their driver’s license and

other documentation floating around, and having the city ask for this information was generally not appreciated. There is a solution to this problem - allow registered voters to obtain a ballot simply by indicating they are a registered voter. That the voter is registered at an address within a NC boundary may be verified using the Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters' records. This would result in easy 'check-box' registration for the vast majority of people eligible to vote in any given NC election.

Article IX of the Los Angeles City Charter states in §900 that the **Purpose of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment is:** "To promote more citizen participation in government and make government more responsive to local needs, a citywide system of neighborhood councils, and a Department of Neighborhood Empowerment is created. Neighborhood councils shall include representatives of the many diverse interests in communities and shall have an advisory role on issues of concern to the neighborhood." It should be further noted that the NC system was created pursuant to attempted secession of underserved areas of the City. The fact that fewer than 1% of constituents are voting citywide in the NC elections points to a real concern over whether the NC System as a whole is fulfilling its purpose. Without consistent support, including outreach from DONE and other city Departments, the effectiveness of the Neighborhood Council system will be eroded to irrelevancy. These concerns must be incorporated into plans and budgeting for the 2023 NC elections as well as day-to-day operations.