

**EAGLE ROCK  
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**

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**CITY OF  
LOS ANGELES  
CALIFORNIA**



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**LETTER RE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL SCOPE OF STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

May 12, 2020

Office of Councilmember Jose Huizar  
Los Angeles City Council  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmember Huizar,

It has recently been brought to the attention of the Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council (“ERNC”) that all Neighborhood Councils are being instructed to cease communication with all non-City of Los Angeles governmental agencies and departments. Neighborhood Councils have been instructed only to communicate with City governmental agencies. This action silences the Neighborhood Councils and their constituents on important issues, and prevents the open and transparent discussion of important governmental actions that affect our communities.

Neighborhood Councils are an amplifier for the voices in our community, providing a means by which individuals can have their concerns heard by our civic leaders. Like most communities in the City, we are affected by a diverse array of governmental actors, from City departments and agencies, to county and state agencies, and sometimes even federal agencies. Issues such as homelessness, sustainability, housing, land use, education, healthcare, and transportation frequently and necessarily cut across several levels of government. Neighborhood Councils would be greatly hobbled if they were not allowed to interact with all governmental agencies whose actions have considerable and direct consequences for our neighborhoods.

The impact of Neighborhood Councils in these sorts of intergovernmental issues can be seen throughout the City. During the Aliso Canyon crisis, the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council helped amplify its community's concerns to the California Public Utilities Commission, and other State regulatory bodies. In the development of the Los Angeles River, Atwater Neighborhood Council has been very active in bringing its community concerns to Federal and County representatives. Here in Eagle Rock, the ERNC has been active in voicing the concerns of the community regarding the Scholl Canyon development in the neighboring City of Glendale. We shared our concerns with Los Angeles City officials, and forwarded those concerns to Glendale City officials, something that we are told is now prohibited. In these and many other actions throughout the City, Neighborhood Councils have frequently amplified the concerns of their communities to government actors who had not fully considered the impact their actions had on the neighborhood.

As the City Charter states, the role of a Neighborhood Council is “[t]o promote more citizen participation in government and make government more responsive to local needs.” Los Angeles City Charter, § 900. Notably, Section 900 does not specify City or non-City “government.” Further, Section 900 states that “Neighborhood Councils ... **shall** have an advisory role of issues of concern to the neighborhood” (emphasis added). There is no statutory limitation in Section 900 that the “issues of concern to the neighborhood” are only those issues related to City governmental entities. The plain language of the statute does not exclude communications to or opinions about non-City entities or matters. On the contrary, the language is intentionally broad enough to enable Neighborhood Councils to weigh in and communicate with these entities on “issues of concern to the neighborhood,” whatever those may be. There is no doubt that Neighborhood Councils do not speak for the City and do not represent the position of the City. This is apparent in the name and the divided structure of the system. But Neighborhood Councils do, as was envisioned when the system was created, act as an important contributing voice of the community on government matters. Neighborhood Councils cannot make the government more responsive to the needs of their communities if they lack the ability to speak to the government.

We immediately call on Councilmember Huizar to support the valuable work of Neighborhood Councils by confirming with the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment and City Attorney's Office that, pursuant to the City Charter and other applicable laws and regulations:

1. Neighborhood Councils are not prohibited from communicating with non-City of Los Angeles governmental actors and entities regarding issues

- impacting their neighborhoods; and
2. Neighborhood Councils are not prohibited from discussing any issues of local concern.

**We request a written response to this inquiry on or before June 12, 2020.**

The ERNC approved this letter and its transmittal after a Brown Act noticed public meeting was held on May 12, 2020, with a quorum of 18 board members present and by a vote of 17 yes, 0 no, and 1 abstentions.

Thank you.

Respectfully,



Richard Loew  
Vice President, Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council

cc: Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti  
Office of the City Attorney Mike Feuer  
Raquel Beltran, General Manager, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment  
Arleta Neighborhood Council  
Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council  
Atwater Village Neighborhood Council  
Bel Air-Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council  
Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council  
CANNDU Neighborhood Council  
Canoga Park Neighborhood Council  
Central Alameda Neighborhood Council  
Central Hollywood Neighborhood Council  
Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council  
Chatsworth Neighborhood Council  
Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council  
Del Rey Neighborhood Council  
Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council  
East Hollywood Neighborhood Council  
Echo Park Neighborhood Council  
Elysian Valley Riverside Neighborhood Council  
Empowerment Congress Central Neighborhood Council  
Empowerment Congress North Neighborhood Council  
Empowerment Congress Southeast Neighborhood Council  
Empowerment Congress Southwest Neighborhood Council  
Empowerment Congress West Neighborhood Council  
Encino Neighborhood Council

Foothills Trails District Neighborhood Council  
Glassell Park Neighborhood Council  
Granada Hills North Neighborhood Council  
Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council  
Greater Cypress Park Neighborhood Council  
Greater Toluca Lake Neighborhood Council  
Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood Council  
Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council  
Harbor City Neighborhood Council  
Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council  
Harbor Gateway South Neighborhood Council  
Hermon Neighborhood Council  
Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council  
Historic Cultural North Neighborhood Council  
Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council  
Hollywood Hills West Neighborhood Council  
Hollywood Studio District Neighborhood Council  
Hollywood United Neighborhood Council  
LA-32 Neighborhood Council  
Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council  
Lincoln Heights Neighborhood Council  
Los Feliz Neighborhood Council  
MacArthur Park Neighborhood Council  
Mar Vista Neighborhood Council  
Mid City Neighborhood Council  
Mid-City West Neighborhood Council  
Mission Hills Neighborhood Council  
NoHo Neighborhood Council  
North Hills East Neighborhood Council  
North Hills West Neighborhood Council  
North Hollywood Northeast Neighborhood Council  
North Hollywood West Neighborhood Council  
North Westwood Neighborhood Council  
Northridge East Neighborhood Council  
Northridge South Neighborhood Council  
Northridge West Neighborhood Council  
Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council  
Olympic Park Neighborhood Council  
P.I.C.O. Neighborhood Council  
Pacoima Neighborhood Council  
Palms Neighborhood Council  
Panorama City Neighborhood Council  
Park Mesa Heights Neighborhood Council  
Pico Union Neighborhood Council  
Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council  
Rampart Village Neighborhood Council  
Reseda Neighborhood Council  
Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council  
Silver Lake Neighborhood Council  
South Central Neighborhood Council  
South Robertson Neighborhood Council  
Studio City Neighborhood Council  
Sun Valley Area Neighborhood Council  
Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council

Sylmar Neighborhood Council  
Tarzana Neighborhood Council  
United Neighborhoods Neighborhood Council  
Valley Village Neighborhood Council  
Van Nuys Neighborhood Council  
Venice Neighborhood Council  
Voices Neighborhood Council  
Watts Neighborhood Council  
West Adams Neighborhood Council  
Westchester/Playa Neighborhood Council  
West Hills Neighborhood Council  
West Los Angeles Neighborhood Council  
Westlake North Neighborhood Council  
Westlake South Neighborhood Council  
Westside Neighborhood Council  
Westwood Neighborhood Council  
Wilmington Neighborhood Council  
Wilshire Center-Koreatown Neighborhood Council  
Winnetka Neighborhood Council  
Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council  
Zapata-King Neighborhood Council