

## Power to the people

Congratulations to the West Hills Neighborhood Council!

It's been 2 1/2 years since Los Angeles voters approved charter reform, the crown jewel of which was supposed to be neighborhood councils. The politicians promised that L.A. communities would have some influence, albeit purely advisory, in the policies and budget decisions affecting their neighborhoods.

Neighborhood councils, we were told, would provide the local control and government responsiveness that would make secession unnecessary.

But progress on setting up the councils has been maddeningly slow.

Before Tuesday, there were only three certified neighborhood councils in all of Los Angeles, none of them in the San Fernando Valley.

Not any more.

By winning the Los Angeles Board of Neighborhood Commissioners' approval Tuesday, the West Hills panel has become the fourth in the city and the first in the Valley. Its success is a testament to the dedication of the community's concerned residents.

The council has a tremendous opportunity to do good, both for its constituents and for all of the city. As trailblazers, its members can set the standard for how neighborhood councils will work to defend and promote the interests of their communities.

We wish them well, and we hope the next 100 or so neighborhood councils are created a lot more quickly.

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