

# Panelists: Boroughs are next step for L.A.

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Marvin Braude Constituent Services Center in Van Nuys, was the only scheduled public event commemorating the anniversary of the secession vote.

VAN NUYS — Declaring that San Fernando Valley neighborhoods gained only marginal influence at Los Angeles City Hall since last year's secession vote, several panelists at a forum Tuesday said dividing Los Angeles into mostly self-governing boroughs is the logical next step.

Los Angeles is simply too large and too beset by traffic congestion to be governed from downtown, the panelists said at a forum commemorating the one-year anniversary of the unsuccessful vote to divorce the Valley and Hollywood from Los Angeles.

"These days you can fly from Los Angeles to Denver in two hours," said David Fleming, a Valley attorney and civic leader who donated heavily to the secession campaign. "That's less time than it takes folks in Chatsworth or San Pedro to drive to City Hall downtown, where the real seat of power in Los Angeles resides."

Under a borough system, Los Angeles' municipal boundaries would remain intact, but local services such as libraries and street repairs would be decided by locally elected borough councils.

Several panelists at Tuesday's forum said the budding network of about 100 neighborhood councils in Los Angeles is a good first step toward local representation, but is not enough.

The neighborhood councils each receive \$50,000 a year from the city government, but have only advisory powers.

Bill Powers, president of the United Chambers of Commerce of the San Fernando Valley, said neighborhood councils don't receive enough money to function effectively. Boroughs, he said, would be a truer form of local government.

"There would be adequate representation," Powers said. "There would be accountability."

Tuesday's forum, attended by approximately 200 people at the