

LOS ANGELES

Planning role urged for public

By Dan Laidman
Staff Writer

A City Council panel called Wednesday for Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa to appoint a planning director who will work closely with neighborhood councils while tackling the city's daunting traffic problems.

The council weighed in while voting to send the mayor a summary of public feedback on the future of the Department of Planning and the agency's next leader.

Councilman Ed Reyes, a former city planner who chairs the Planning and Land Use Management Committee, said the new planning director should ensure that neighborhood councils have "a very real role in how a project is developed."

Councilman Bill Rosendahl echoed the sentiment while noting that Villaraigosa is also looking for a new head of the city Department of Transportation.

The city should "join them at the hip," he said about heads of the two departments, to ensure that traffic concerns are at the forefront of growth and development decisions.

San Fernando Valley residents offered feedback on the Planning Department's future at a July meeting in Sylmar.

Speakers voiced frustration with traffic congestion, appealed for the preservation of open space and called for neighborhood councils to have a stronger voice in planning decisions.

Dan Laidman, (213) 978-0390
dan.laidman@dailynews.com