



an insider look at city hall

# CITYWATCH

citywide edition

**January 9, 2006**  
**Volume 4 Issue 1**

**CityWatch Today**—Have you notices that 2006 looks a lot like 2005? Notice that the issues NCs are facing this new year have a lot of the same names as those from 2005 and 2004 and 1995?

How long has the City been promising a Planning vision, affordable housing, a future crafted from a focused leadership and coordinated and collaborating city departments and agencies?

Planning gets a lot of this issue's attention: a primer on planning for those of us still in land use study hall and the introduction of a new LA Planning Director ... who will have the burden of reorganizing and contemporizing the department, crafting a vision for the city and selling neighborhoods on the reality that along with affordable housing comes density. Yes, in our own back yards. Check out the profile on Gail Goldberg and the first in our series on Planning 101 ... in plain English ... by retired Zoning Administrator, Jon Perica.

That and more in this CityWatch. I hope you find it useful.  
--Editor

## Say What?

*"I'm not a believer in pushing density into communities that don't want it."*

--Gail Goldberg  
LA's new Planning Director



### Are NCs Losing Their Independence?

## Zine Suggests NC Boundaries Fit With City Council District Borders

By David Lowell

In a move that has Neighborhood Councils wondering if they're losing their Charter-inspired independence ... or gaining better relationships with their City Council representatives ... Councilmember Dennis Zine has put forward a motion that asks for the independent citizens redistricting commission to reduce the number of NCs whose boundaries are split between City Council districts.

His motion claims that "Unintended confusion about boundaries, duplicating efforts and other extra responsibilities are placed upon Neighborhood Councils that are divided between (City) Council Districts." Zine is asking for DONE to conduct a survey to determine how NCs feel about the idea. Then, he wants the survey results to be presented to the City Council so they can create a policy directing the redistricting commission to lower the number of NCs that share City Council districts.

At the moment, 35 Neighborhood Councils have their boundaries spread over at least two City Council districts. Twelve are spread over three districts.

How this "NC redistricting" would be accomplished is not clear in the motion and has a number of Neighborhood Councils concerned about having their borders rearranged after the Charter specifically permits them to make boundary determinations. They have trouble imagining City Councilmembers being willing to have their boarders sublimated to the choices they have made on determining neighborhoods.

See Page 11. "NC Boundaries"

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### Perspective

## NCs Need to Protect the System; or the Pothole Police Could Lose Their Voice

By Ken Draper

Discussion of the rapidly forming NC Congress has flushed an old debate to the surface once again: Should Neighborhood Councils be in the citywide issues business or should they stick to policing potholes?

Even though 45 to 50 NCs have participated in one or more of the various citywide issues over the past couple of years, there a few councils who these kinds of efforts beyond their scope or purpose. Some because they don't trust the leadership of the formation groups. Some because they simply see the business of NCs as local. The stuff of their own backyards.

See Page 9. "Perspective"

**GuestWords****The Neighborhood Council Congress:  
Is it the Beginning or the End?**

By David Coffin

I don't think anyone can argue that when Neighborhood Councils join together to oppose or support a particular issue, they are a force to be reckoned with. I'm reminded of that almost once a month when I get those LADWP MOU notifications as well as when I look at my water bill and imagine what it could be.



When Neighborhood Councils can come together and force entrenched interests to rethink their proposals, that is certainly a compelling argument in favor of having some kind of umbrella organizational structure so that NC's can quickly respond to events that are not in the interest of our communities.

On the other hand, Neighborhood Councils were created to achieve a balance to the distant centralized form of government we know as LA City Hall. The success or failure of a Neighborhood Council Congress will depend entirely on how it is structured.

Creating a citywide NC Congress, where there is a standing leadership setting the agendas, a leadership that's always ready to speak -for- Neighborhood Councils to the news media (looking for a story) and city leaders (looking for support) will result in failure because what will have been created is simply a poor man's city council. Back to where we started ... a centralized form of government.



For the most part, it takes a lot of hard work to put together a Neighborhood Council, run for a seat and be elected, hold meetings, write letters to city departments and city leaders. I doubt that many of the NC leaders would want to join any organization that would effectively reduce their own Neighborhood Council's influence. Journalists are a lazy lot (their words, not mine) and given that, where do you think they will go if they need to write a story about some citywide issue? The 80-plus Neighborhood Councils out there or a leader of an umbrella organization representing NCs? That's where the influence will be.

If the NC Congress is honest in its mission to empower Neighborhood Councils, it will develop an organizational structure that has no permanent recognizable leadership. A kind of "transitional leadership" organization. An organization whose leadership only lasts as long as the days leading up to the next meeting of the Congress. After each Congress, another leadership waiting in the queue takes over to create the agenda and plan the next meeting.

If I had a proposal, it would be to assign 10 Neighborhood Councils on a rotating basis with the responsibility of designating a representative of its organization to sit on the NC Congress board during the period of time leading up to and including the day of the citywide Congress meeting. After that, the next 10 Neighborhood Councils, waiting in the queue, would take their turn to appoint a representative.

I don't know how often the NC Congress plans to meet, but if it were twice annually you would have 20 NC's representing the NC Congress's leadership each year. If it were four times a year, you would have 40 NC's representing

**See Next Column****CITYWATCH**  
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**From previous column**

the NC Congress's leadership. Each time the Congress meets, you would have new faces to see, new points of view to be heard, and new excitement. Each event would have a distinctly different look. Much like the communities the Congress as a whole represents. (David Coffin is a member of the Westchester-Playa Del Rey Neighborhood Council.) ■

**Good for NCs?**

Advertisement

# New LA Planning Director: "Won't Push Density into Communities"

*Mayor Tabs San Diego's Gail Goldberg to Head LA Dept*

By David Lowell

The Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa will introduce his new Planning Director to LA in a few hours, at a press conference at City Hall. Ending a year-long sojourn, that trickled through two administrations, he has named **Gail Goldberg** to take the reigns of LA's Planning Department. Most would agree, a daunting assignment considering the Department's current lack of vision, numerous organizational problems and resistance to change.



Perhaps a positive indicator for Neighborhood Councils, Goldberg told the LA Times that she knows little about the lay of the land in Los Angeles but a great deal about working with communities. In the same Times report, the Mayor said he was impress with Goldberg's ability to explain urban planning to residents. A San Diego Planning Commissioner called her, "an excellent communicator ... on a grass-roots community level."

**Goldberg**

Goldberg, 62, has been the San Diego Planning Director since 2001 after working her way up the organizational chart from her 1988 start as a junior planner.

Goldberg told the Times that she is, "not a believer in pushing density into communities that don't want it." In an interview with the San Diego Union-Tribune, however, she also said, "if you don't have those high-density zones, you can pretty much guarantee you won't get low-income housing."

The new Planning Director grew up in San Bernadino, where her parents still live. She moved to San Diego in 1972, has two sons and graduated from UC San Diego in 1988 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in urban studies and planning. She was also the Planning Director and Chairwoman of the San Diego Chapter of the respected Urban Land Institute. ■

**Gail Goldberg: A Clippings Profile**

*"I have always bee interested in land use issues and how cities come together. And working with the public."* —Urban Land Institute Profile

*"Things won't happen without communications, and cities must therefore be willing to invest in public dialogue. Unfortunately, the process of initiating a dialogue is expensive and cities would rather push it on developers."* —California Policy Forum

*"If you're required at least to zone the land, you have some chance of creating affordable housing ... if you don't have those high-density zones, you can pretty much guarantee you won't get low-income housing..."*—San Diego Union-Tribune

*"I'm a big believer in giving neighborhoods great examples of what can be done ... I'm not a believer in pushing density into communities that don't want it."* —LA Times

**See: "Planning 101" ... 1<sup>st</sup> of new series ... Page 10**



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**Code Changes Spell Relief?**

**City Responds to Auto Repair Shop Complaints: But, Is It Enough?**

By Sara Epstein

Neighborhoods have complained for years about the visual, noise and noxious blight caused by auto repair shops. Their appearance and business inhibiting growth along commercial corridors, residential parking spaces usurped by unsightly wrecked cars, spray painting fumes wafting through the community. Now come Municipal Code changes, proposed by the City, in an effort to mitigate the uproar.

Because of the growing hullabaloo, generated by some Neighborhood Councils, and other community organizations, the City has adopted three Interim Control Ordinances, which prohibit automotive uses in certain parts of Los Angeles. However, while the ICO approach may stop new automotive uses, says City Planner Dick Platkin, the folks in the Planning Department are proposing a comprehensive **code change** "to address the concerns and mitigate the potential impact of **existing** and future" auto repair businesses on a **citywide** level.



Neighborhood Councils will have an opportunity to hear details of the proposed changes, voice their concerns and provide input at two important workshops on this pesky and heated issue later this month: January 18 and 25.

The proposed Code amendments deal with the reduction of visual, noise and odor impact on neighborhoods, structure and hours of operation limitations and restrictions on paint spray booths, auto-sound and auto-alarms shops. ■

**What you need to know:**

Workshops

Wednesday, January 18 (6 p.m.) Third Floor Conference Room Braude Constituent Center 6262 Van Nuys Blvd	Wednesday, January 25 (6 p.m.) Council District 10 Field Office 1819 S Western Ave
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Questions, Info, Copies of the Ordinance

Dick Platkin, City Planner  
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 818.374.5037

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**Code Changes  
Automotive Shops  
In Plain English**

*The Planning Department has released draft restrictions on new or expanded "automotive uses" (such as repair, body or paint shops) located within 500 feet of a residence.*

*The proposal includes "development restrictions" intended to reduce the visual, noise and odor impact of automotive uses, e.g., prohibiting repair bays from facing nearby residences, requiring masonry walls between auto uses and adjacent residences, requiring windows and landscaping along streets, and limiting amounts and types of on-site signage.*

*The proposal also includes "operating conditions" including limitations on the use of temporary structures and canopy tents, as well as the hours during which certain activities (such as deliveries and site cleaning) could take place.*

*Additional restrictions would apply to paint spray booths and auto-sound and auto-alarm shops. In the C and M zones, new or expanded uses that do not meet these requirements would require a conditional use permit (CUP). ■*

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■■■

## We've Got Mail

### Hollywood United NC: Some Board Members Outraged at Lack of Notice

The Hollywood United Neighborhood Council is very concerned about the lack of notification regarding the Gower project, just as Ms Reichenbach ("Garcetti good for NCs? A firm No", CityWatch Dec 15th, 2005), the author of the letter, purports to be.

Last night (12-28-05), our NC voted unanimously on a statement expressing our disappointment (outrage to some Board Members) at the lack of notification regarding this project and further stating our expectation that there will be no movement forward or any decisions made without the active participation of the Neighborhood Council and the full community in the decision-making process.

Ms. Reichenbach's statement fails to consider the Brown Act. This law calls for Open, Noticed public meetings and is mandatory for all Neighborhood Councils. This means that we must agendaize items in advance and deliberate in public before voting on any issue. It is not only the law, but important and democratic to involve the entire community in a well-thought-out, measured discussion that is fully informed and not just a knee-jerk reaction.

I have personally met with both the CRA and Councilmember Garcetti's representatives. I have had a brief conversation with the Councilmember and an ad hoc Committee has been formed and is working very hard on this issue. We have had two full Board meetings so far regarding the Gower/Hollywood CRA purchase and our dedicated Gower/CRA Committee will be meeting on January 9th, 6:30pm, at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood: 6074 Yucca. Ms. Reichenbach, as always, is welcome to attend the Committee meeting, as is any member of the Public.

Susan Polifronio, President  
Susan Swan, Vice-President  
Hollywood United Neighborhood Council

### LA's Most Serious \$\$ Problem: Unfunded Med & Pension Benefits

The most significant financial issue facing the city is the unfunded post retirement medical benefits and the unfunded pension plans.

Let's take DWP alone. We are talking about \$1.5-billion!!! And DWP does not even recognize this liability on its balance sheet. At the same time, in 2004, DWP transferred \$237-million a year to the city.

This is an absolute time bomb which is only going to get worse with time given the huge pay increase that the union negotiated with past mayor who was running for office.

Jack Humphreville, Alternate  
GWNC

...

### NCs Have to Write Own Legislation

*Unfortunately NC's can't be on top of every issue, all of the time. The Latham & Watkins people and other attorneys for the big developers, marketing companies like Viacom, and other corporate giants that deal with our city, are unfortunately writing much of the legislation that passes through City Council. Fighting these professionals in committee meetings is very ineffective because the deals have already been made*

*The only chance Neighborhood Councils have to strike back is by writing the legislation to begin with and then following it through the process with maximum exposure of who's trying to water it down and why. It's a big step for us to take but I'm convinced it's better than always being on the defensive.*

Tom Ponton, President  
Mar Vista NC

### Less Time on Elections; More Time for Community Issues

In Washington DC, Neighborhood Council elections are held as part of regular city elections; candidates appear on official ballots, the "procedures" are no different from elections for Mayor or City Council. While our "stakeholder" definition may make this solution impossible for LA, imagine how much more productive NCs could be at their "real" jobs—enabling communities to have a greater and more effective voice in the decisions affecting them—if they didn't have to spend so much time on elections, election procedures and bylaws. Imagine how much easier it might be to recruit candidates and board members if we could assure them they would get to spend almost all of their time on the issues facing their community, rather than on administrative tasks.

Jeff Jacobberger, Secretary  
Mid City WEST CC

*Opinions expressed on this page are not necessarily the views or opinions of CityWatch.*

## CITYWATCH DayPlanner

### City Council

January 10-Canceled  
Due to Ernani Bernardi funeral.  
January 11, 13 (10 a.m.)  
([www.lacity.org](http://www.lacity.org) for complete agendas)

### Education & Neighborhood

January 11 (2 p.m.)  
City Hall (Council Chamber)  
NC Council File Numbers,  
NC Review Commission  
Meeting will be televised.

### BONC

January 17  
Granada Hills South-Certification hearing

### LA Ethics Commission

- January 10 (9:30 a.m.)  
City Hall (Rm 1050)
- Settlement of Firefighters Union Local re: campaign violations
  - Settlement of violations matter with Jill Barad for City Council Committee

### PLUM

- January 10 (1 p.m.)  
City Hall (Rm 350)
- Chatsworth NC Equestrian Committee and Councilmember Smith to initiate Equine Keeping District
    - Rooftop Green Spaces ordinance
  - Prohibition of building permits in Balboa Highlands Neighborhood & Granada-Hills-Knollwood area.
  - Prohibition of permits for automotive biz for one year in CD 10

### Transportation

- January 11 (3 p.m.)  
City Hall (Rm 1050)
- Safety issues related to tunneling along the Wilshire Corridor
  - Easing/removing holiday construction moratorium for Downtown LA

### Los Angeles NC Congress

Working Group  
January 14 (10 a.m.)  
DWP (Portland Rm)  
Hope & First Streets (Parking free)

### Citywide Alliance of NCs

January 21 (9:30 a.m.)  
LACC  
(Info: [www.allncs.org](http://www.allncs.org))

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### Metro So Bay Governance Council

January 13 (9:30 a.m.)  
Carson Community Center (Rm 209)  
801 E Carson St

- Improving transit service



## CityWatch Future Assignments

### ◆ Have LA's Minority Voices Been Shortchanged by LA's NCs?

*Do NC boards reflect their multi-cultural stakeholders?*

### ◆ The Missing South LA NC Voices

*Has the Empowerment Congress ... once leaders in the NC movement ... lost its way without Ridley-Thomas?*

**Serious issues. Serious questions.  
Report in the next CityWatch**

**Next CityWatch: January 16 ...  
...ON A COMPUTER NEAR YOU!**

## DONE Names New Asst GM

**Department of Neighborhood Empowerment** General Manager, Greg Nelson, as named **Lisa Sarno** to replace outgoing Claudia Dunn as the department's new Assistant General Manager. "She's dynamite," said Nelson, even though she had other options, "she wanted to be with DONE."

Sarno was Mayor Villaraigosa's Chief of Staff when he was a councilman and was the "official Caretaker" of that office after Villaraigosa was elected Mayor. She also worked for Jackie Goldberg, when was and LA Councilmember and served as Field Director for Villaraigosa when he was a state Assemblyman. ▣

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**CITYWATCH: KNOW MORE**

**Planning 101**

**Neighborhood Councils Can Improve the Quality of Life in LA—Here’s How**

By Jon Perica

When the City Charter changed in 1999, Neighborhood Councils were created and given advisory authority over numerous local matters. The most important of those new authorities was the ability to comment on any new discretionary development plan presented to the City Planning Department. New development can have positive economic impacts on the tax base that support improved public services and the creation of new jobs. New development can also have adverse impacts on traffic, noise, and pollution if these impacts are not properly mitigated.

The Quality of Life in Los Angeles is made of many features from low density residential areas to the weather and environment. Of all the impacts that can worsen the Quality of Life, poorly built development projects have one of the biggest effects on a person’s home and local community. Fortunately, these land use impacts also are issues that all of the Neighborhood Councils can get involved with and change for the better if they have the resources to participate in a more informed manner. The saying that “knowledge is power” was never more appropriate than with the local City planning process. The City process is an open process but a complex process for most people (council members and commissioners included). Beginning to better understand this process is worth

**Back Story**

*Planning issues dominate many NC agendas. Yet, few NC members understand much about the how Planning Department or Land Use works.*

*This is the first of a series on this subject, by respected former Zoning Director, Jon Perica.*

the effort because “you can’t play the game if you don’t know the rules”.

Neighborhood Councils are about to start a process that will lead to a new agreement with the City Planning Department, called a Memorandum of Understanding. This document is like a “Bill of Rights and Responsibilities” between the Neighborhood Councils and the Planning Department which will give the Neighborhood Councils new training, staff support, technical information, budget review and evaluation authority with new applicants in a clearly defined manner. Neighborhood Councils would also have to agree to procedures and time lines so that their input is constructive within the legal time limits of the Planning Department. This MOU process will be following the successful first effort with the City Department of Water and Power in May 2005. Neighborhood Councils will work to refine the exact details of the Planning MOU in 2006 and each Neighborhood Council can individually choose to sign the agreement with the Planning Department when it is completed.

The new MOU with the Planning Department in 2006 is very significant because the Planning Department will have a new Director of Planning selected by the Mayor in the next few days. When that new person starts, she/he will have already done their background research on what is important about planning in Los Angeles and will know that having 85 or so Neighborhood Councils, each representing at least 20,000 in population, is a powerful stakeholder in the planning process that cannot be ignored.

**See Page 10. “Planning 101”**

**Two More Councils Join NC Congress**

Two more Neighborhood Councils have joined the LA NC Congress. The West Van Nuys-Lake Balboa and United Neighborhoods NCs ratified the Congress Charter and brought the LANCC member total to 26. At least seven Councils have agendized a vote on ratification. Organizers now project more than 30 NC ratifications by the first official meeting of the group on February 4.

**7-9-1-3-10-8-2-4-**

**CityWatch ...**

**... by the Numbers**

###’s

**LA Neighborhood Council Congress**

*(Councils that have ratified Proposed NC Congress Charter)*

**This Wk-26**

**Last Wk-24**

- Arroyo Seco
- Atwater Village
- Bel Air Beverly Crest
- Central San Pedro
- Coastal San Pedro
- Downtown Los Angeles
- Granada Hills North
- Grass Roots Venice
- Harbor Gateway South
- Historic Highland Park
- Hollywood United
- Mar Vista
- Mid City WEST
- Northwest San Pedro
- Pacoima
- Pico Union
- Reseda
- Silver Lake
- Tarzana
- United Neighborhoods
- Valley Village
- West Hills
- West Van Nuys/Lake Balboa
- Westside
- Winnetka
- Woodland Hills-Warner Center

## Perspective-From Page 1

With the success of the NC/DWP MOU or the combined efforts of councils and business interests putting the brakes on the Inclusionary Zoning ordinance there can be little doubt of the sizable influence of NCs when they combine to speak with one voice. More recently, the support of more than 40 Neighborhood Councils nudged the NC Council File Number proposal back on the E & N Committee agenda. Nonetheless, there are still NCs who don't consider that their charge.

Some of that viewpoint results from a difference of interpretation of what are local and what is citywide issues. There are those councils that have somehow determined that issues with the Sunshine Canyon landfill, LAX, campaign financing are not "local" issues. That the discomfort Granada Hills over the City dumping all of our garbage in their back yard is Granada Hills' battle to fight ... not, say, up to the folks in Van Nuys to resolve. Despite the fact that stakeholders in all of our neighborhoods benefit from LAX ... air travel for business and pleasure, etc ... there are some councils that see the LAX traffic congestion, noise and expansion as a problem for those NCs in the airport neighborhood.

### Myopic View

That's a myopic and short sighted view, at best. Affordable housing, homelessness, trash removal, water rates, transportation, education, emergency preparedness are serious issues that affect us all. As the now tired cliché goes, all politics are local. Believe it.

There can be little question that multiple voices speak louder and with more force than the voice of a single council. Some NCs have yet to figure out how to engage the support of other Neighborhood Councils for their "local" issues. Have yet to recognize the value of engaging another dozen voices to the resolution of their own "backyard" problems. It's a lesson worth learning.

"Local" NCs may find it hard to stay out of the citywide fray soon, however. As 2006 unfolds, NCs will face serious issues that could affect the future of all Neighborhood Councils, regardless of their take on citywide vs. local involvement. Within the next few weeks, a Review Commission will be formed to evaluate the LA Neighborhood Council system. Note, that's not individual NCs ... that's the NC system. The recommendations that commission makes could dramatically change the way NCs do business.

### If Congress Fails

Regardless of one's feelings about the emerging NC Congress ... more than 30 members by its first official gathering in February ... if it fails, that failure will alter dramatically the perception of the City and stakeholders of NC influence.

With the administration's blessing, NCs are being called upon to organize an emergency preparedness network ... to handle disaster response at the neighborhood level. If NCs prove unorganizable ... for lack of interest or ambition ... it will dramatically affect the City's perception of the value of Neighborhood Councils. These are but a few examples.

NCs may have to conclude soon that they are going to have to walk and chew gum at the same time. That is, look after their own backyards and participate in citywide issues both ... for their survival, if for no other reason.

Your Neighborhood Council is the result of the NC system. As that system goes, so goes your council. NCs may discover, sooner rather than later, the need to protect the system to protect their council. Without the LA System of Neighborhood Councils, even the voices of the pothole police could be reduced to a whisper. ■

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## Planning 101-From Page 8.

A wise new director will want to engage the Neighborhood Councils and establish a positive working relationship early on in the process and the MOU becomes the means to better define the working relationship of the Planning Department and Neighborhood Councils. The new director should welcome the new MOU because it will also help to correct some of the problems the previous Planning Director had in trying to properly manage the department. For over a decade, the previous director made no real efforts to engage the residents and stakeholders of Los Angeles, allowed staff moral to fall to the lowest level in 35 years and refused to be proactive in his role of leader of a department whose mission was to have a "vision" of the type of development that would improve the Quality of Life in the city. After all, if the Planning Department didn't have a vision for what type of city we want to live in, which department would?

### Chaos and Opportunity

The Chinese character for Ying and Yang is a circle with an "S" shape in the middle dividing the circle into a black and white half. The two sides mean both "chaos" and "opportunity" and that is exactly where the Neighborhood Councils are with planning and the Quality of Life right now. The MOU is the vehicle to bring the Planning Department out of the "chaos" it has had and provide the Neighborhood Councils with the "opportunity" to play a much stronger and more informed role to helping shape future growth for the City.

Playing a more active role in local growth issues is important because development projects will continue to come to the City of Los Angeles in the future. Los Angeles represents the growth center on the west coast and also for the country. 40% of all American imports come through the Port of Los Angeles/Long Beach. For 20 Latin American and Asian countries, their largest population outside of their capital is found in Los Angeles. Belmont High students speak 94 foreign languages. Los Angeles is also a major leader in high tech, advanced medical innovations, banking, and entertainment, all of which welcome new creative ideas and are tolerant to different cultures, people and lifestyles. All of these factors, along with growing foreign investment, mean that growth and development will continue. The real challenge then is how to make sure that the best quality of development with the least impact on our Quality of Life will occur.

### Term Limits Affect Priorities

City "term limits" reduce the priority that "long term planning issues" have for short term council members running for higher office at the start of their second and final term. There is a large "void" that the Neighborhood Councils can fill. When Neighborhood Councils are well organized on any issue, it is hard for any City Council member to ignore the input. Several City Council members have privately indicated that

*For information on the proposed NC/Planning Department MOU, visit: [www.mouoversight.org](http://www.mouoversight.org)*

they will not oppose any reasonable position put forth by a Neighborhood Council in their district. The key is for Neighborhood Councils to develop well reasoned positions on new developments proposed for their communities. Becoming more effective means knowing more about the operation of the City Planning Department and how new discretionary projects are processed and evaluated and also how the Neighborhood Councils can be most effective in having their voices heard by the Planning Department and by the various appeal commissions and the City Council. *(The preceding was excerpted from a presentation before a gathering of Neighborhood Council Leaders on Dec 3, 2005 by retired Zoning Administrator Jon Perica who acted on 2,500 development cases over a 20 year period with the LA City Planning Department).* ■

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## NC Boundaries-From Page 1.

Some see it as yet another effort, however unintentional, to reduce the independence of NCs. To some, the creation of citywide election procedures; the proposed citywide grievance procedures; restrictions on how their funding can be used in the community; the NC receipt of donations policy that, in effect, runs through DONE; the threat to revise the Charter and now a reinterpretation of their neighborhood boundaries ... leaves them, at the very least, with the perception that the City is taking every opportunity to tighten the reigns on what was originally to be a group of neighborhood voices, advisors and monitors.

### More Is Better

In addition, there are Neighborhood Councils who consider having their borders spread over two or three Council Districts to be an advantage. "Sometimes," according to one NC Vice President, "it gives you multiple support for a cause and sometimes if you have trouble getting one Councilmember's ear, you can turn to the other one."

DONE GM, Greg Nelson, says he has no plan yet for a survey of NCs, because the intent of the motion needs to be clarified. Sources say that Zine's motion is misunderstood. That he has no intention of changing NC boundaries but, rather, sees City Council redistricting working around existing NC borders.

### He Believes in Councils

As one Neighborhood Council voice said, "Since none of this could be done until after the 2010 census, maybe we should take heart. It would appear that, at least, Dennis Zine believes that Neighborhood Councils will be around in five years."

One thing seems certain, for anyone to respond to the motion, it needs to be clarified. (To read the Zine motion, visit [www.lacity.org](http://www.lacity.org) ... click on Council File Index and enter the file number 05-2671.)

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*How good is the Mayor's word?*

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*The best and worst case scenarios.*

### ◆ Is This the Best LA City Council Ever?

*Our panel and our readers have opinions*

### ◆ NC Boundaries the Same as Council Districts?

*Will NCs then report to their Councilpersons?*

### ◆ LA's 90,000 Homeless

*Does anyone, other than Jan Perry, care?*

### ◆ Who Will Recognize the LA NC Congress?

*It's one thing to declare the LANCC official.*

*It's another to be recognized and credible*

### ◆ Land Use 101 in Plain English

*Easy to understand series. A guide for NCs*

### ◆ Endless, Irritating, Patronizing Presentations: Is This What We Expect of City Council?

*Isn't there a better to pay respect and give recognition ... and get on with the City's Biz?*

### ◆ NCs Got Aced in the City's Street Furniture Plan-Too Late to Recover?

*Some NCs want to fight. Some don't care ... which is why there were left out in the first place.*

### ◆ Leave New Ethics Laws to the Ethical

*Should elected officials who've been fined for ethics violations recuse themselves from participation in new ethics legislation? See the view points ... and the list.*

### ◆ Volunteerism vs. Commitment

### ◆ NCs and Crime

**Next CityWatch: January 16 ...  
...ON A COMPUTER NEAR YOU!**