

Panel urges neighborhood offices

By Patrick McGreevy, Daily News  
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In the first concrete step toward establishing neighborhood councils in Los Angeles, a City Council panel recommended Wednesday that the city allocate \$1.8 million to set up a Department of Neighborhoods to oversee creation of the advisory boards.

The Government Efficiency Committee voted 2-1, with Valley Councilwoman Laura Chick opposing the plan, to ask the full City Council to provide funding for the Department of Neighborhoods in the new budget.

The committee plan would establish two layers of advisory councils with up to 150 neighborhood councils sending representatives to as many as 43 community councils.

"It's an expression that we mean business about giving neighborhoods the respect and involvement they deserve," said Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas. "Frankly, we have to put our money where our mouth is."

The budget request recommended by the council committee would provide money for 34 staff positions in the new Department of Neighborhoods. The annual cost of the new department would be \$3 million, but council members do not expect it to be fully operational until midway through the budget year.

The new office would assist residents in getting services from city departments and provide staff to help areas organize their neighborhood councils.

Chick said she supports a Department of Neighborhoods but with a more modest initial staffing of 15. And she wanted to find other revenue sources, according to Joyce Sloss, an assistant city administrative officer.