



City Council of the City of Los Angeles

Richard Alarcón

COUNCILMEMBER
SEVENTH DISTRICT

December 2, 1998

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LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
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The Los Angeles Elected Charter Reform Commission
1055 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1111
Los Angeles, California 90017

RE: Charter Reform Recommendations

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my appreciation for the countless hours you have devoted in your effort to reform our City's Charter for the purpose of increasing service and representation throughout our diverse city. I wish to also express my support for several issues you have discussed during your meetings and I am certain that the incorporation of these issues in the Charter will help the City meet the needs of its citizens.

First, I wish to express my support for increasing the number of City Council Districts from 15 to 21. This is an important change which will provide the City Council a means of reaching out to more people. Given the increasing population and diversity of our current districts, City government is increasingly challenged to provide service to our many constituents. Smaller districts will afford greater attention by the City Councilmember and 21 districts will not make local government unwieldy and cumbersome for the passage of legislation. Indeed, I would support as many as 35 City Council Districts as a means of increasing citizen accessibility to local government.

Second, I support the concept of empowered Neighborhood Councils. These councils would provide local input into issues of importance to the community. This is an important concept that will give the community a strong voice into decision by the City Council which will affect the community.

Third, I support the creation of Regional Planning Boards. These boards are needed to provide local control and representation over land use planning issues. Our City is vast, large and very diverse and the composition of our current Planning Commission of five members, does not represent all communities and creates gaps in the representation of planning issues. Additionally, I have witnessed community members spending inordinate amounts of time waiting to testify at Commission meetings due to the large number of cases on each agenda. For this reason, Regional Planning Boards is needed to address the accessibility issue and to increase participation by the community. You are considering recommending the formation of three regional boards, however I would support five boards to truly fill this gap in representation.

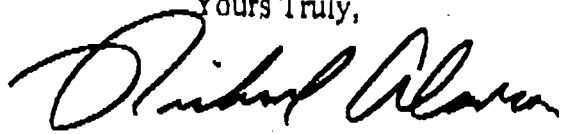
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Furthermore, I support giving the Mayor sole discretion to remove General Managers. While the vast majority of our City's General Managers are very talented and have served the City in an exemplary manner, there have been a few that have not performed to this same standard. Under our current system, these General Managers have been able to hold the City hostage, prompting the use of buy-outs with consultant contracts, which produce little or no real work, as a means of replacing General Managers. This method is not the best approach in efficiently running local government and for that reason I support holding General Managers accountable to one Mayor, who is in turn accountable to the voters. This arrangement will provide an incentive for General Managers to increase services to communities and increase government efficiency.

These changes, if incorporated into the new City Charter, will help restore the public's trust and confidence in the City's ability to provide services and address the needs and concerns of the community.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my thoughts on this important matter. Should you have any questions, please contact my Chief of Staff, Mr. Alvin Kusumoto, at (213) 473-7007.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Alarcón", written in a cursive style.

RICHARD ALARCÓN
Councilmember, Seventh District

RA:AK