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DATE: February 13, 2004

TO: All City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Boards

FROM: Claudia Dunn, Assistant General Manager  
Department of Neighborhood Empowerment

SUBJECT: **FACILITIES INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. 04-002**  
**GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**  
**OFFICE SPACE**

The purpose of this Information Bulletin is to provide specific details of the on-site assessment referenced in Information Bulletin 04-001 with respect to the acquisition of Neighborhood Council office space.

### **On-Site Assessment Checklist**

Attached are three checklists designed for use by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) to ensure potential Neighborhood Council office spaces meet the City's minimum standards. These standards include issues such as compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), premises liability insurance, zoning, and asbestos removal.

Please refer to the attached *Draft Guidelines for Acquisition of Neighborhood Council Office Space* previously distributed to Neighborhood Council leaders and adopted by the City Council on December 2, 2003, for more details.

### **Checklist Instructions**

Since the DONE project coordinator is the first point of contact, the checklist is primarily designed for their use to assess the proposed office space and to gather preliminary data before submitting it to the DONE Office Space Program Administrator for final review.

Each checklist contains line item instructions in bold type as a quick reference tool. Please review the checklist to become familiar with the criteria.

The following progression of events should occur:

1. Once a Neighborhood Council identifies a potential office space, the assigned project coordinator will initiate the first on-site assessment by coordinating a visit with the building owner or owner's representative and the Neighborhood Council representative.
2. The project coordinator will determine and communicate with the Neighborhood Council representative to determine if the proposed space is to be donated, is located in a City-

owned/leased facility or to be leased privately. Using the applicable checklist, the project coordinator will gather all required data during the on-site assessment.

3. After the relevant information is recorded on the appropriate checklist, the project coordinator will contact the DONE program administrator to discuss the results of the initial assessment.
4. If the initial assessment yields positive results and there are no outstanding issues, a final site review and assessment will be arranged with the DONE program administrator, the project coordinator and the Neighborhood Council representative.
5. Once the final site assessment is complete and the office space is deemed appropriate, the process to formalize the acknowledgement of occupancy or Standard Neighborhood Council Lease Agreement will commence. *This process and timeline will vary depending upon the type of space arrangement.*

### **Space Arrangements**

Neighborhood Council office space arrangements will remain within the following parameters:

1. Privately-owned Facilities with Rental Costs
2. Privately-owned Facilities without Rental Costs (donated space)
3. City-owned or Leased Facilities

Some of the key components of the various space arrangements are described below.

#### Privately owned Facilities with Rent

Privately-owned facilities include: storefronts, strip mall, low, mid, and high rise buildings, warehouses, industrial buildings, executive office suites. A Neighborhood Council must have a governing board and must be eligible for funding to qualify for a private facility rental.

The maximum annual rent is limited to \$19,999. For Neighborhood Councils electing to enter into a private rental agreement, the City Attorney is developing a Standard Neighborhood Council Lease template to formalize the arrangement. This will significantly reduce the process time, which would typically be required for the approval of a private office space lease agreement under normal circumstances (based on existing City procedures). Until this Template is finalized, however, the current City process (utilizing General Services, etc.) for the acquisition of office space must be utilized for those Neighborhood Councils desiring to enter into a private lease agreement at this time. At such time as the Standard Neighborhood Council Lease Template is finalized by the Office of the City Attorney and DONE, the Neighborhood Councils will be immediately notified.

#### Privately owned Facilities without Rental Costs (donated space)

If a Neighborhood Council is offered a "no-cost" space in an office, warehouse or retail facility, guidelines and criteria have been developed to ensure there are no hidden costs. To qualify for this space arrangement, a Neighborhood Council must have a governing board and be eligible for funding.

There is no rental cost associated with a donated space in a privately-owned facility.

The Neighborhood Council should receive a written proposal addressing issues related to interior and exterior maintenance, custodial services, landscaping, utilities, and other relevant costs, if any. If there are no charges for these types of items, this constitutes a No Cost agreement. If the Neighborhood Council is separately charged for any of these items, the Neighborhood Council must specify the estimated cost to determine the true cost of the arrangement.

A Donated Space Letter Acknowledgement will formalize this space arrangement by acknowledging the donor's gift and outlining specific details of facility usage, including the facility checklist (referenced above) and a move-in conditions checklist.

#### City-owned or Leased Facilities

The most uncomplicated option for securing Neighborhood Council office space is by sharing vacant space that is currently under City ownership or lease. As required by the other space arrangements, the Neighborhood Council must have a governing board and be eligible for funding.

There is no cost associated with a space-sharing arrangement in a City owned/leased office space. A list of available City office/desk space is pending and will be distributed at such time as the City Departments and elected offices have been able to identify available space for use by Neighborhood Councils, if any.

A City Inter-Departmental Space Sharing Acknowledgement Letter will formalize conditions for space sharing between the City Department/elected offices and the Neighborhood Council.

Please be reminded that this process is a work in progress that will evolve as more experience is gained. Understanding and cooperation by the Neighborhood Councils is vital to a seamless process and the ultimate success of securing office space in a timely and efficient manner.

As always, we look forward to working with all Neighborhood Councils as we move forward with this process and, as always, extend our highest appreciation to all Neighborhood Council board members and stakeholders for their ongoing dedication to community empowerment.

Should any questions arise regarding the contents of this information bulletin, please contact Donya Plazo directly at (213) 473-5390, or electronically: [dplazo@mailbox.lacity.org](mailto:dplazo@mailbox.lacity.org).

CD:DP

Attachments