

BOUNDARIES

The two choices are:

1. Use the existing 15 CityCouncil districts.
2. Design boundaries which exclusively follow community and/or neighborhood boundaries. This would involve starting with known areas and modifying them in order to (a) make them roughly equal in population, and (b) more accurately reflect community and neighborhood boundaries. Examples:
 - a. Areas served by the 66 libraries.
 - b. 35 community planning districts.

Arguments for designing boundaries by council district:

1. Boundaries known and equal by population.
2. Many people identify with their council districts.
3. Residents only have to deal with one councilmember.
4. Easier for councilmember to serve the areas.

Arguments against:

1. Council districts divide many neighborhoods. Van Nuys is represented by five councilmembers.
2. Boundaries change at least every 10 years (next in 2001), thereby forcing people to change neighborhoods.
3. The focus should be on what's best for neighborhoods not the councilmembers.
4. More people identify with their neighborhoods than with their council district.
5. Areas may be too large to operate effectively.
6. "Empowerment" should include trusting residents to define their own boundaries.

SELECTION OF LEADERS/OFFICERS:

There are four choices by which the leaders of the neighborhood councils could be selected:

1. Formal election. Candidates qualify for city ballot like a candidate for City Council.
2. Appointment. Some combination of councilmembers, mayor, police captains, etc., appoint the leaders.
3. Self-selection. Residents of the community or neighborhood choose their own leaders in whichever way they wish.
4. Combination of #2 and #3.

Arguments for formal election:

1. Provides an orderly process.
2. Requires only serious candidates.

Arguments against:

1. Cost.
2. Process may discourage serious candidates who don't want to have to deal with the paperwork and the process, as we experienced with potential candidates to run for the elected charter commission seats.
3. "Community empowerment" argues against City Hall from trying to design one system of selection that fits every community.
4. Non-citizens cannot vote.

Arguments for appointment:

1. Have a better chance that the diversity of interests will be represented, and that quality people are selected.

Arguments against:

1. In order to effective, the community or neighborhood councils must be independent of City Hall. They must feel free to speak their minds.
2. Since nearly all existing community advisory groups have leaders appointed by City Hall, this would just maintain the status quo.

Arguments for self-selection:

1. "Community empowerment" should include the ability of the residents to choose their own leaders in their own way.
2. Councils whose leadership doesn't represent the diversity of interests in the community will have little or no credibility.
3. A protection that the community diversity will be represented could be achieved by a two-tier system in which the city funds a community or area council whose leaders are selected by the various neighborhood councils in the area.

Arguments against:

1. Too dangerous that the diversity of the community will not be represented, and that one interest group will dominate the leadership.
2. Need a consistent way for each council to choose its leaders.

NUMBER OF COUNCILS:

There is no magic number. If each council is to be provided with funding to hire staff, maintain an office, and be able to communicate effectively, the number of councils is going to directly affect the cost of the program.

The largest known neighborhood council in the nation, of those cities that provide direct support to their councils, is _____ in Portland.

Two-tier system

OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOODS: