

To: Joel
From: Greg
Re: Neighborhood Councils
Wednesday - Hillside Federation Meeting

2-28-94

Attached is the draft of the Neighborhood Councils plan.

Talking about this whole issue is one of the items in my see me box.

Aside from a couple of details that need to be answered, we need to discuss a approach to implement the idea.

I don't think we should go into lots of detail with the Federation or with Plan L.A. if you decide to meet with them in March.

This is supposed to be a grassroots effort, not us dictating to them how it will work. The plan, as drafted, is loose enough that it allows the NCs themselves to evolve different roles for themselves.

Also, the key to the success of the plan may be acceptance from the Mayor's office. I've talked at length to Jadine about the plan. She likes it; wanted a couple of specific points addressed; and then she's willing to take it to the mayor.

And then there's the approach of designing something to be put on the ballot in April 1995.

Here's the points I'd make to the Federation:

- Rather than design something anew, we've been painstakingly learning from the experiences of other cities like Portland, St. Paul and San Antonio to name a few.
- We don't want to design with lots of specifics because that defeats the purpose of allowing the neighborhoods themselves from shaping their own future. The idea is to structure a starting point for the neighborhoods to form, grow, and define their own place in the system.
- We want to get feedback and ideas from groups like the Federation.
- The earthquake and fire showed the importance of well-organized neighborhoods.
- The amount of direct power that the NCs will have will depend upon what the NCs themselves recommend. Some may require ordinances. Some Charter amendments. But the suggestions should come from the NCs themselves, not a small group of people who sit around and design a detailed system now.
- Border disputes, and which of several potential groups is designated to represent a neighborhood, is still an unanswered question. Other cities designate someone in the Mayor's office to decide; and some have an independent Office of Neighborhoods. We'll have to decide how we're

going to handle it. Independence is key.

- What makes the NCs different is that they must represent all the factions of their community; they will get first priority cooperation from City Hall; and hopefully they will get some funding help from government (thru federal empowerment grants?). This will allow them to communicate effectively with City Hall and their neighbors. They will need fax machines, computers, and money to pay for newsletters.

Some of the people in the Federation, especially those who are all consumed with fighting land use projects, will want the NCs to have the ability to stop projects.

Again, whether or not the NCs will eventually get such power will depend upon what they -- the NCs throughout the city -- decide they want. And then the Council or the voters will have to grant them that permission. But those proposals should come from the NCs throughout the city.

And let's not forget that the NCs will, order to be effective, have to have representation from all those who live, work or own property in the area. That means that few will pay attention to them in their NC is dominated by just homeowners or business people.