

# Information is Power for Neighborhood Councils: Group Sues City to Get It

Fix The City Lawsuit

By Jim O'Sullivan



Recently the group Fix the City sued the City of LA for disregarding the Charter and General Plan requirements for Growth and Infrastructure reports. This is the second lawsuit in regards to these reports and I want to commend Lucille Sanders of the LaBrea Willoughby Coalition for filing first and getting the ball rolling. Her suit allowed us to take a slightly different approach which included Neighborhood Councils.

It is our contention that Neighborhood Councils which were created to bring government closer to the people can not adequately fulfill their Charter mandated roles without the information these reports are mandated to contain. These roles include (Section 908) holding public meetings prior to the City Council making a decision on a matter of local concern, (Section 909) presenting to the Mayor and Council an annual list of priorities for the City budget and (Section 910) monitoring the delivery of City services in their respective areas and have periodic meetings with responsible officials of City departments.

None of that is possible today since the City has chosen to disregard the quality of life of every stakeholder in Los Angeles by not completing a single report on Growth and Infrastructure for 10 years. These Annual Reports are required by law to provide information to the public, Planning Department, Mayor and City Council on economic, land use development, infrastructure, public facilities and Capital program data.

According to a statement from the Director of Planning in the last report created in 1998, the [information](#) was to be used as a tool in order to understand change in the City, analyze need, develop plans, monitor progress and inform public debate. Since these reports have not been done in 10 years one wonders what the City Council used to approve the new Housing Element and the 113,000 new housing units it will bring?

What information did they examine when implementing the Density bonuses for SB 1818?

Since these reports have not been done in 10 years what happens to Community Plans with monitoring requirements calling for moratoriums on development if growth outpaces infrastructure?

If these reports have not been done in 10 years what information was the Mavor looking

at when he announced that we are going to grow to the size of two Chicago's? That means a Los Angeles of more than six million people. How will that impact services such as Fire, police, sanitation, power and WATER?

Neighborhood Councils need this information in order to bring government closer to the stakeholders in their areas. They need this information in order to know what is going on their area, including capital investments so they can better give input into the budget process. Without specific information everything is guess work. And finally, how can anyone monitor the delivery of City services in their area without this information?

It is our hope that neighborhood councils will step up and demand that the City complete these reports. Without them there is no transparency at City Hall and the Mayor and City Council will continue with business as usual.

It is also a private wish that neighborhood councils step up and champion Laura Chick and her effort to audit the City Attorney's office. They might also weigh in on the failure of the LAPD when it comes to fingerprints and rape kits.

This is not a critique of the officers who serve us so well but it does speak to a problem with the Mayors budget priorities. Not one more salary increase should happen until we can assure every stakeholder that forensic units have been brought into the 21st Century. Rape victims deserve justice, not excuses and we need to know that fingerprints left at the scene of a crime will be available to convict criminals and exonerate the innocent. [Click here](#) to see Fix the City Lawsuit.

*(Jim O'Sullivan is the President of the Miracle Mile Residential Association. He served as the Chair of the Mid City WEST Community Council for three years.)* ■

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