



# MOTION to include an NC member on the LA2020 Commission

**Agenda Item:** GB041813-14

**Date:** April 18, 2013

**Proposed By:** Terrence Gomes

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## Full Proposal

The LA2020 Commission is an Ad Hoc Committee proposed by Council President Herb Wesson to investigate the City's financial issues. The twelve member commission is comprised of a group as very "downtown-centric" with "too many lawyers" and people who (both) "rely on the City's Purse" and "provide the bulk of Candidate campaign donations." We demand that a member of the Neighborhood Council be on the committee to represent the stakeholders of Los Angeles.

## Proposed Motion

Whereas the City of Los Angeles is facing a financial crisis as a result of a continuing Structural Deficit, a projected \$1.1 billion budget deficit over the next four years, unfunded pension liabilities of \$11.5 billion, and a deferred maintenance requirement of over \$10 billion;

Whereas LA 2020 (is an Ad Hoc Commission, created by City Council, CF #xx-xxxx, and) was established as an independent commission to "review how the City of Los Angeles can help grow the economy and jobs, attract business investment and industry, and create fiscal stability for the City...";

Whereas the twelve appointed members (and one alternate) do not represent a cross section of the City;

Whereas the charter authorized 95 Neighborhood Councils to represent a vast cross section of the City, its many communities, and its voters; (replace with following Charter-specific language (red).

Whereas the Charter, in order to "...promote more citizen participation in government..." (Article IX, Section #900), "...created a citywide system of NCs" (Article IX, Section #900) whose members (stakeholders) are (at a minimum) "...everyone who lives, works or owns property in the area ..." (Article IX, Section #906a(2)) ... and that these NCs must "...reflect the diverse interests within the area (Article IX, Section #906a(3). These NCs are intended to serve all areas of the City and they "...present to the Mayor and Council a... list of priorities for the City budget..." (Article IX, Section #909).

Whereas the Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates have been advising the Mayor on budget priorities for the last seven years and have developed a thorough working knowledge of the City's budget and financial needs;

Whereas the Neighborhood Councils are an excellent vehicle to communicate with the citizens of Los Angeles;

Therefore, the South Robertson Neighborhoods Council demands that a representative of the Neighborhood Councils be appointed as a full member to the independent LA 2020 commission.

**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
President

**Brian Kite**  
Vice-President

**Terrence Gomes**  
Treasurer

**Beth Ryan**  
Secretary

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# Motion to Support Proposition C on May 21, 2013 City Ballot

**Agenda Item:** GB052013-4  
**Date:** 20 May 2013  
**Proposed By:** Barry E. Levine

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## Full Proposal

This resolution states the citizens of Los Angeles call upon our elected officials to support a constitutional amendment to declare corporations shall not have the rights of natural persons and that money is not free speech and, therefore, can be regulated in campaigns

The actual resolution on the ballot reads: "Shall the Voters adopt a resolution that there should be limits on political campaign spending and that corporations should not have the constitutional rights of human beings and instruct Los Angeles elected officials and area legislative representatives to promote that policy through amendments to the United States Constitution".

LANCC has voted to support the passage of Prop C as well as all the candidates on the ballot. There are close to 100 other groups supporting the passage of this resolution and there is no formal opposition.

## Proposed Motion

- I. The South Robertson Neighborhoods Council supports the passage of Proposition C on the May 21, 2013 ballot.

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## Considerations

**Committee review:**  
*None*

Votes For:

Against:

**Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget:** \$  
*Item not to come from Education Committee budget.*

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### Arguments for:

### Arguments against:

This will move the issue into a more prominent place in the minds of the US citizenry and elected officials

It brings us closer to restoring our democratic republic.

**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
President

**Brian Kite**  
Vice-President

**Terrence Gomes**  
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# Motion to provide feedback on the Century City Center planning processes

**Agenda Item:** GB052013-5  
**Date:** 20 May 2013  
**Proposed By:** Land Use Committee

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**NOTE:** the complete Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Century City Center project may be downloaded at <http://planning.lacity.org/eir/CenturyCityCenter/DEIR/>

A copy is also available for inspection at the Robertson Public Library.

## Full Proposal

The Century City Center project is a proposed 730,000+ sq. ft. development at the corner of Avenue of the Stars and Constellation Ave. At 37 stories, it would include a mix of office space and street-level retail.

Using the formula in the Century City North Specific Plan, a project of that size would be projected to generate 4,603 daily trips, a net increase of 687 peak hour trips in the morning and 604 in the evening (its Cumulative Auto Trip Generation Potential, or "CATGP"). Complicating the situation: the developer previously transferred some of the property's allotted trips to other sites it owns, specifically the Sun America and MGM Towers. Under the Specific Plan, that would mean that the Century City Center project would only have enough trips left to support a 290,000 sq. ft. office development.

The developer is proposing an Alternative Trip Generation Factor (ATGF), arguing in essence that based on traffic studies of existing buildings, the high-rise, low-density nature of the development would generate fewer car trips than the 30-year-old Specific Plan thinks it would. The argument is summarized in the attached LA Department of Transportation (LADOT) report.

And in fact Section 6 of the Specific Plan provides a process for making that argument: applicants submit a traffic study to the LADOT, who makes a report to the local Area Planning Commission, who in turn holds a public hearing on the subject before making a decision. This insures that the community has a chance to weigh in on the relative merits of using an ATGF.

The report issued by the LADOT, however, bypassed the Area Planning Commission. To date, the Century City Center developers and the City of Los Angeles have not followed the Section 6 process, preferring instead to go straight to the full City Planning Commission.

## Proposed Motion

- I. That the South Robertson Neighborhoods Council strongly believes it is in the best interests of the community that the Century City Center project's proposed Alternative Trip Generation Factor be reviewed by the West Los Angeles Area Planning Commission at a public hearing (per Section 6 of the Century City North Specific Plan) before the project is allowed to continue.

**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
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Treasurer

**Beth Ryan**  
Secretary

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- II. That SORO NC send a letter to that effect to the City of Los Angeles Planning Department, Planning Commission, and appropriate City Council offices.

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## Considerations

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**Committee review:** Votes For: Against: 0  
*(highly recommended)*

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**Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget:** \$  
*(applies to funding motions only)*

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**Arguments for:**

Given the potential impact to traffic in our neighborhood, a local, public process is essential

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**Arguments against:**

Because the project filed for multiple approvals, the City Municipal Code dictates that it be heard by one consolidated body: the City Planning Commission

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The process should follow the guidelines set forth in the Specific Plan

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The Municipal Code trumps the Specific Plan



# Century City North Specific Plan: Alternative Calculations of Trip Generation Factor

## Section 6.

### ALTERNATIVE CALCULATIONS OF TRIP GENERATION FACTORS

If the developer of a Project, the Director of Planning or any other interested person disputes any of the Trip generation factors enumerated in the definition of CATGP in Section 2 of this Ordinance, as applied to a particular Project during the second phase of development, such person may submit a proposed alternative Trip generation factor for the Project, along with a traffic generation study prepared by a registered traffic engineer, for review by the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (Department of Transportation). The Department of Transportation shall review the study, report its findings to the Area Planning Commission within 30 days. The Area Planning Commission shall schedule a public hearing thereon, give notice thereof as prescribed in Sections 11.5.7 F and J of the Municipal Code, and within 45 days after such hearing approve, disapprove or conditionally approve the proposed alternative Trip generation factor as the Trip generation factor for the Project. The Commission shall notify the developer, the Director of Planning and the person submitting the alternative factor of its determination by letter, with copies thereof to the record owners of all property located within 300 feet of the exterior boundaries of the property involved, each property owner association, and each federation of such associations, representing the owners of property located within 300 feet of the Specific Plan Area and requesting the Commission to give them such notice, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Building and Safety, the Council member of the District and the City Clerk of any municipality adjoining the Specific Plan Area.



**From:** Jane Usher [<mailto:jane.usher@lacity.org>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 16, 2013 2:27 PM  
**To:** [beverlywoodha@sbcglobal.net](mailto:beverlywoodha@sbcglobal.net)  
**Cc:** Shawn Bayliss; Richard Llewellyn; Terri Tippit

**Subject:** Re: Century City Project (Public Hearing)

Dear Scott --

Planning advises that this applicant simultaneously applied for multiple approvals and that the City Planning Commission (CPC) is the initial decision-making authority on one or more of them.

In accordance with LAMC 12. 36 (excerpted below), this makes the CPC the initial decision-maker on all of the simultaneously pending requests. Your matter will have a public hearing, but before the CPC and not the APC.

Please let me know if you have additional questions.

Jane



**SEC. 12.36. PROJECTS REQUIRING MULTIPLE APPROVALS. (CHARTER § 564).**

(Title and Section Amended by Ord. No. 182,106, Eff. 5/20/12.)

A. **Definitions.** The following definitions shall apply to this Section:

**Legislative Approval.** Any approval that requires an action by the City Council, such as those as set forth in Sections [11.5.6](#), [11.5.7](#) G., [12.20.3](#) F., and [12.32](#) of this Code.

**Quasi-judicial Approval.** Any approval for which the initial decision becomes final unless appealed, such as those as set forth in Sections [11.5.7](#)C. - F., H., [12.20.2](#), [12.20.2.1](#), [12.20.3](#) I. - L., [12.21](#) A.2., [12.21](#) G.3., [12.22](#) A.25., [12.24](#), [12.24.1](#), [12.26](#) K., [12.27](#), [12.28](#), [12.30](#) H., [12.30](#) J., [12.32](#) H., [13.08](#) E., [14.00](#) B., [16.05](#), [16.50](#), and [Article 8](#) of this Code.

**Subdivision Approval.** Any approval under the Division of Land Regulations set forth in [Article 7](#) of this Code.

B. **Filing Requirement.** If an applicant files for a project that requires multiple Legislative and/or Quasi-judicial Approvals, then the procedures set forth in this section shall govern. Applicants shall file applications at the same time for all approvals reasonably related and necessary to complete the project. The procedures and time limits set forth in this Section shall only apply to multiple applications filed concurrently, except that, prior to a public hearing, the Director may require an applicant to amend an application for a project requiring multiple approvals to ensure that all relevant approvals are reviewed concurrently.

C. **Decision-makers.** Notwithstanding any provision of this Code to the contrary, the following shall apply for projects requiring multiple approvals.

1. **City Planning Commission.** If a project requires any approval or recommendation separately decided by an Area Planning Commission, the Zoning Administrator, and/or the Director, as the initial decision-maker, and also requires any approval or recommendation by the City Planning Commission as the initial decision-maker, then the City Planning Commission shall have initial decision-making authority for all of the approvals and/or recommendations.

(a) Procedures. If all of the applications are for Quasi-judicial Approvals, then the procedures for consideration and appeal of all the applications shall be those set forth in Section [12.24](#) D. through Q. of this Code. However, if any Legislative Approval is included, then the procedures for consideration and appeal of all the applications shall be those set forth in Section [12.32](#) B. through D. of this Code.

(b) Appellate Body. The City Council shall decide all appeals of the City Planning Commission's decisions or recommendations as the initial decision-maker on projects requiring multiple approvals.

--

**Jane Ellison Usher**  
Special Assistant City Attorney  
800 City Hall East  
200 N. Main Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012



# Motion to support a variance at 1514 Bedford Ave 5-Unit Project Small Lot Development

**Agenda Item:** GB052013-6

**Date:** 20 May 2013

**Proposed By:** Land Use

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## Full Proposal

See attached letter and supporting materials.

## Proposed Motion

To send the attached letter supporting the proposed project at 1514 Bedford to the LA City Zoning Administrator.

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## Considerations

**Committee review:**  
*(highly recommended)*

Votes For:

Against:

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**Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget:** \$  
*(applies to funding motions only)*

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**Arguments for:**

**Arguments against:**

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**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
President

**Brian Kite**  
Vice-President

**Terrence Gomes**  
Treasurer

**Beth Ryan**  
Secretary

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May 20, 2013

Danny Cerezo&Paul Lin  
The 4 Corners Group, LLC  
21700 Copley Dr, Suite 130  
Diamond Bar, CA 91765

Dear Mr. Cerezo and Mr. Lin:

The South Robertson Neighborhood Council at its May 20th meeting voted to support your five-unit Small Lot Subdivision plan located at:

1514 Bedford St  
Los Angeles, CA 90034

The council felt that your due diligence in this matter, which included multiple mailings to nearby property owners and tenants, walk through of the neighborhood personally inviting stakeholders to attend our sub-committee meetings, and your various appearances before our Land Use Sub-Committee, was sufficient due diligence to warrant our support.

As was highlighted by members of the council at the meeting, we feel that this kind of small development is precisely what our neighborhood needs in this time of its recent resurgence. *However, in order to best serve the neighbors around you, we will require you post a clear and legible sign at all times during construction with a telephone number where someone can be reached 24 hours in case there are any questions or concerns.*

Based upon your successful track record, and specifically with your four unit small lot subdivision located within SORO at Preuss Rd, we are confident that you will once again develop a great addition to the community.

Thank you,

South Robertson Neighborhood Council

**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
President

**Brian Kite**  
Vice-President

**Terrence Gomes**  
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**Beth Ryan**  
Secretary

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w www.the4CornersGroup.com

Apr 30, 2013

To: SORO Neighborhood Council

From: 4Corners Group, LLC

**SUBJ: Project Synopsis for May 7, 2013 Land Use & Economic Development Meeting**

The 4Corners Group is in the process of seeking development entitlements for a new 5 unit Small Lot Subdivision to be located at 1514 Bedford St, Los Angeles, CA 90034. We would like to present our concept to the Land Use committee and the community members at the upcoming May 7th meeting. To that end, we would like to give you a short summary of the project program.

Project Summary:

# of Homes:	5 Homes, Each will be 2 Br + Den, 2.5 Bath
Approx SF of each:	1,400 SF (not including garage)
Parking:	2 cars per unit in attached garage
# of Stories:	Each home will be 3 stories

The units will be laid out in a linear fashion, one right next to the other, from the front of the property to the back (see attached Site Plan).

Outreach:

On Dec 3, 2012 we reached out to all neighbors in a 500 ft radius via mailed letters, both in English and Spanish (see attached). In total, we sent out over 100 notifications. We let

them know what our intentions were and asked if they could please attend the upcoming Land Use Meeting. To date, we have received 3 phone calls and 3 emails inquiring about the project. They were all positive and were mostly curious about schedule and project type. We hope that they're able to attend Tuesday's meeting.

This will be our second project within the SORO neighborhood and we look forward to working with you all to make it a success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Cerezo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Danny Cerezo

Vice President

The 4 Corners Group, LLC



# Motion to support a height variance at 1500 S Beverly Drive

**Agenda Item:** GB052013-7

**Date:** 20 May 2013

**Proposed By:** Land Use

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## Full Proposal

See attached letter and supporting materials.

## Proposed Motion

To send the attached letter supporting the proposed project at 1500 S. Beverly Dr. to the LA City Zoning Administrator.

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## Considerations

**Committee review:**  
*(highly recommended)*

Votes For:

Against:

**Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget:** \$  
*(applies to funding motions only)*

**Arguments for:**

**Arguments against:**

**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
President

**Brian Kite**  
Vice-President

**Terrence Gomes**  
Treasurer

**Beth Ryan**  
Secretary

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May 20, 2013

City of Los Angeles Planning Department  
Attn: Zoning Administrator  
Office of Zoning Administration  
City Hall, Room 763  
Los Angeles, CA. 90012

Re: Support for # DIR-2013-616-DB  
Imanoel Davodpour  
1929 S Selby Ave #401 Los Angeles, CA 90025

Dear Zoning Administrator,

At our regularly held meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup>, the South Robertson Neighborhood Council voted yes\_\_\_ no\_\_\_ abstain\_\_\_ in support of the applicant Imanoel Davodpour request a Bonus Density 8 unit condominium project, with 7 market and one very low income unit and its requested menu incentives, as well as a variance to allow a 10% (4'-6") height increase for the elevator shaft.

In addition, we request that the applicant post Qty. (2) 5'x4' signs on the property during the process and construction with a description of the application and the changes requested. It will also have a 24 hour contact phone number for stakeholders to call if they have questions or concerns. The sign will be on display for the term of the project

In deciding to support this project, the Board considered the history of the site, the impact on the surrounding neighborhood and its low income component. In the Board's view, the information presented by the applicant and his representative provides adequate justification for granting the requested approvals, subject to any additional conditions recommended by the Planning Department and City Council office. The South Robertson Neighborhood Council supports this project that will serve the South Robertson community's stakeholders.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
President

**Brian Kite**  
Vice-President

**Terrence Gomes**  
Treasurer

**Beth Ryan**  
Secretary

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# Motion to support an alcoholic beverage conditional use permit for the Mark for Events at 9300 W. Pico Blvd.

**Agenda Item:** GB052013-8

**Date:** 20 May 2013

**Proposed By:** Land Use

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## Full Proposal

See attached letter and supporting materials.

## Proposed Motion

To send the attached letter supporting the proposed conditional use permit at 9300 W. Pico Blvd. to the LA City Zoning Administrator.

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## Considerations

**Committee review:**  
*(highly recommended)*

Votes For:

Against:

**Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget:** \$  
*(applies to funding motions only)*

**Arguments for:**

**Arguments against:**

**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
President

**Brian Kite**  
Vice-President

**Terrence Gomes**  
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May 20, 2013

City of Los Angeles Planning Department  
Attn: Zoning Administrator  
Office of Zoning Administration  
City Hall, Room 763  
Los Angeles, CA. 90012

Re: Support for Case # ZA 2013-759(CUB)  
The Mark for Events  
9300 W Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90035

Dear Zoning Administrator,

At our regularly held meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup>, the South Robertson Neighborhood Council voted yes\_\_\_ no\_\_\_ abstain\_\_\_ in support of the applicant The Mark for Events' request for a Conditional Use Permit to allow a Type-47 Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control license so as to permit the sale and service of a full-line of alcoholic beverages for the banquet hall/event facility at 9300 W Pico Blvd with hours of operation from 11am to 2am daily.

In addition, we request that the applicant post a 5'x4' sign on the property during the process with a description of the application and the changes requested. It will also have a contact phone number for stakeholders to call if they have questions. The sign will be on display for a minimum of 30 days.

In deciding to support this project, the Board considered the history of the site, applicant Marvin Markowitz' historic role in the community, the facility's impact on the surrounding neighborhood and its ability to host community-serving events. In the Board's view, the information presented by the applicant and his representative provides adequate justification for granting the requested approvals, subject to any additional conditions recommended by the LAPD and City Council office. The South Robertson Neighborhood Council supports this banquet hall/event facility that will serve the South Robertson community's residents, employees and visitors.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
President

**Brian Kite**  
Vice-President

**Terrence Gomes**  
Treasurer

**Beth Ryan**  
Secretary

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# Motion to approve SORO NC communication guidelines

**Agenda Item:** GB052013-9  
**Date:** 20 May 2013  
**Proposed By:** Marj Safinia

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## Full Proposal

With decentralized channels like the website, social media, email, etc. becoming the primary means for the NC to reach stakeholders, the communication guidelines proposed by the Outreach committee can help the NC maintain an appropriate and consistent voice.

The guidelines provide advice on tone, content, best practices, and appropriate channels for different content types.

In addition, the guidelines propose a group of approved editors (and optional editor-in-chief) who will review most NC communications before they're made available to the public. It also includes a process for appealing an editor's decision, if necessary.

## Proposed Motion

To adopt the attached SORO NC Communications Guidelines as part of the NC's standing rules.

**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
President

**Brian Kite**  
Vice-President

**Terrence Gomes**  
Treasurer

**Beth Ryan**  
Secretary

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## Considerations

**Committee review:** Votes For: Unan. Against: 0  
*(highly recommended)*

**Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget:** \$  
*(applies to funding motions only)*

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### Arguments for:

Helps us have a consistent voice and prevent inappropriate posts

Anyone can write content, which helps distribute the responsibility more equitably. And having more than one editor removes the burden from a single person (which is the current situation).

### Arguments against:

There is no guarantee that editors will be objective.

A boardmember's content may be changed into something that the author didn't intend.

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# Draft SORO NC Communications & Brand Guidelines

20 May 2013

SORO is a collection of neighborhoods bound together by shared interests and concerns. But the larger area itself has been known over the years by a number of names: Pico-Robertson, Palms (in some areas), Beverlywood (in others). The SORO name is relatively recent.

Building a coherent and recognizable identity out of all the different neighborhoods has been a challenge, but an important one: neighborhoods decay when no one cares. We feel that it's far easier to feel pride in a place when it has an identity, when residents can say, "I'm from SORO"—and other people know what they mean.

That shared identity also helps build the business community. The SOROCard is a great example of how being part of a place can benefit, attract and retain businesses.

As a practical matter, identity can be built over time by disciplined, visible, consistent communications and branding. This guide should help.

## Communications

### Why have communications guidelines?

It's natural that as Board members we sometimes disagree. Having guidelines about NC communications is not intended to stifle open discussion. As elected Board members, we have the right (and indeed, obligation) to express our individual opinions.

Yet when we speak as a *Council*, the representative body for our neighborhood, it's important that we project an open, trustworthy and unified voice to the public.

Bear in mind, too, that in some cases we're bound by restrictions on what we can say by the Brown Act and City guidelines.

### Tone

The tone should be friendly, forthright, balanced, and welcoming. We should avoid jargon whenever possible, and define "insider" terms and acronyms if we do use them. Remember that the goal is to encourage community participation, so we should use every opportunity to invite people to get involved.

SORO NC has an editor who may edit your copy before it goes live. It's nothing personal; we're just trying to be as clear and consistent as possible. See more at "Who can post," below.

### Avoiding bias

In accordance with our bylaws, we should never take a position on an issue without express Board action and approval. We can highlight issues—say, a pending, controversial City Council action—but should not take sides until/unless the Board as a whole does.

### Candidates for office

As a Council, we are explicitly prohibited from endorsing any candidate for office at any time. All candidates must be given fair and equal access: if we offer time to one, we must do so for all.

As a citizen, you may of course endorse any candidate you wish. You may also identify yourself as SORO Board member in your endorsement, but you may not suggest that the Board as a whole does so.

### **Ballot measures, legislation, and lobbying**

The Neighborhood Councils exist to provide advice to the City's decision-makers. We can—and should—weigh in on the issues that confront our community.

But we must be fair when we do so. That means treating both sides of an issue equally, providing neutral, objective, factual information to the public, and using public meetings to gather input from our stakeholders.

If the Board does take a position on an issue, we should direct that opinion solely to the City. We are not chartered to lobby state or federal entities.

Nor may we use public funds to publicly advocate for that position, other than to note that we've voted. That means no flyers, yard signs, banners on our website, emails, etc. that urge people to vote one way or another.

Again, as a private citizen, you can advocate for your personal position as long as you're not using NC funds.

The Los Angeles City Attorney has issued guidelines on how the Board should deal with candidates, ballot measures, and pending legislation. You can read more [here](#) and [here](#).

## **Dos and don'ts**

### **Do be accurate**

Always make sure that the information we put out to the public is as factual and accurate as possible. If the situation or facts change, update the information and explain why.

### **Do be transparent**

The goal should be building trust. We should always try to make government as understandable to the public as possible. If we make a mistake, we should own up to it as quickly as possible.

### **Do know the rules**

Understand how the various systems work (website, social media, press releases, etc.) BEFORE using them. You never want to be in the position of accidentally posting something intended for other audiences.

Also take the time to understand the best way to use each of our communication channels (see below).

### **Do keep personal views separate**

As an individual citizen and Board member, you have the right to express your opinion. When you communicate on behalf of SORO NC, however, your public responsibility is to be fair to both sides or, if the Board has taken action, to accurately communicate the decisions of the Board as a whole.

### **Do be respectful and inclusive**

Treat the public with respect, even if you disagree. Always look for opportunities to encourage people to participate or offer suggestions for improvement.

### **Do proofread**

Sadly, nothing undermines respect for an organization faster than sloppy grammar and typos. Double- and triple-check your writing before making it public. Enlisting someone else to check it is always a good idea.

### **Don't engage in online back-and-forth with stakeholders or other Board members**

Not only is this often a serious violation of the Brown Act (e.g. serial communication), we don't want to ever come off as defensive or argumentative.

### **Don't steal images**

This is a legal and ethical issue. Always make sure you have the right to use an image beforehand. Doing a Google image search does not grant you permission to use anything you find.

### **Don't stifle opposing voices**

Dissent is a fundamental right in a democracy. Even if the public responds in a way that is unreasonable or highly critical of the Board or its actions, we should allow the comment to stand. However, spam, offensive comments, or personal slurs may be removed at the editor's discretion.

## **Communication channels**

### **Website**

Our website has a number of areas that can be updated regularly, most notably the homepage blog, the press release section, and the event calendar.

Posting to the blog is moderated, which means that an editor checks and in some cases edits the articles before they go live. Each article should be assigned appropriate tags (tags are nothing more than keywords that help categorize the article). Tags will also cause the article to be emailed automatically to people who have subscribed to that topic. Because these are automatic emails, don't over-tag articles.

The website (and its search ranking) benefits from frequent posting.

### **Social Media**

Currently, we post regularly to Facebook and Twitter. Both are excellent channels for community news, and have the advantage of being easily shared. They also are able to handle a larger number and variety of posts than the website or email. Since there is no moderation, only committee chairs and authorized editors may post on these channels.

Generally speaking, you want to link back to the SORO NC website whenever possible in your posts.

One complicating factor with Facebook: people can comment on posts. This is a good thing, but we have to be careful **never** to engage in debate or be anything but factual and respectful if we do respond. In some circumstances, posting in public could also be considered serial communication between Board members. It's best to use a light touch.

We include a feed of recent Facebook posts on our website. We also can pull in tweets from Twitter if they include a specific hashtag.

Twitter hashtags are similar in concept to website tags (one difference: they are always preceded by the # pound symbol). All our hashtags begin with "#soro" for consistency and to build community identity. Each of the major committees has its own hashtag that we use to pull our tweets into the site:

- Education: #soroschools
- Green Team: #sorogreen
- Outreach: #soropride
- Land Use: #soroplans

- Transportation: #soromoves
- Public Safety: #sorosafety
- Economic Development: #sorobiz

We can also create new hashtags for special events: #sorovotes, #sorofest, etc. Consistent use is key.

### Press Releases

Once the NC has taken an official position on an issue or wishes to announce an NC event, it may issue a press release. Press and other interested parties can subscribe to a list to be automatically emailed when one is published on the site. (You can also subscribe to SORO NC press releases via RSS reader.)

The approval process for press releases is the same as for other posts to the website.

Press releases are a great way to publicize NC actions and increase the visibility of the NC. They are created on the site like any other page and follow a set format:

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

##### **Eye-catching headline**

*LOS ANGELES, California (date)* - First sentence that summarizes the action and says why this is noteworthy ("...the first Neighborhood Council in the City of Los Angeles to support...").

Rest of the content: provides detail and context. Should include attributed quotations from the Board and other parties. All terms and abbreviations should be defined. Ends with the following paragraph:

##### **About SORO NC**

The South Robertson Neighborhoods Council (SORO NC) is chartered and funded by the City of Los Angeles to promote citizen participation in government at a grassroots level. SORO NC gives area stakeholders a voice in the issues, decisions and programs that affect their lives; provides a direct line of communication to the City to help address their unique needs; and builds a stronger community, one step at a time.

##### **Contact:**

Official contact name, title (should be the person who can speak most knowledgeably about the issue)

Their email address

Their phone number

**###**

Press releases always end with three spaced pound symbols. **Proof carefully before posting.**

### Outbound Email

Email is a highly sensitive channel. Unwanted email (spam) has caused many people to be cautious about giving out their email address, and if we abuse our email list, SORO NC could start being blackballed as a spammer itself. If enough people mark our emails as spam or start complaining about us, **all** of the soronc.org email addresses could be blocked. For that reason, we have to be careful how and when we use it.



We use a service called MailChimp to manage our email list. While it's a bit more of a hassle to use MailChimp, they have robust reporting on how many people open our email and how many people click links; branded SORO email templates to help keep our profile high; and protections in place (things like unsubscribe links, limits on importing names, etc.) to help minimize the risk that our email gets marked as spam. We **never** use a personal soronc.org account to email large groups of people. Ever.

We also should never add an email address to our list unless the person has given us explicit permission to do so (aka "opted in"). Permission can be the person filling in our subscription form online or on paper, checking a box to be added to our list, or any other specific request. Just because a person attends a meeting or generally provides an email address does not constitute permission—they have to ask to be on our list. While it can be tempting to dump every email address we find into the list, if someone doesn't want to receive our email it will do far more harm than good.

One safe way to solicit email subscriptions (say, from someone who has provided an email address for another purpose) is to send a single, one-time email that thanks them for their participation, explains our email options, and provides a link to sign up. At that point, the person can decide for themselves whether or not to join the list.

### **Segmented and Automatic Email**

We also have the ability to send email to particular segments of the list. An email on zoning changes, for example, might be boring to most people, but highly compelling to people who've marked Land Use as an interest when they signed up for email updates.

Our site can work with MailChimp to **automatically** email updates on a topic to interested people through the use of tags. If I assign the "Transportation" tag to a post on the site, it will get emailed at the end of the day to everyone who subscribed to that interest category. Again, if we overuse this, it will become less effective, so we're carefully testing this capability.

### **Best practices**

A good email is short, easy to read, has a clear and intriguing subject line, and above all is **interesting**.

Email gets marked as spam when people don't find it valuable. Most email programs also scan the text for words and phrases that spammers use often (overwrought and ambiguous subject lines like "URGENT! ATTENTION NEEDED!", use of one big graphic rather than text, overuse of exclamation points, etc.). Interestingly, we've found that attaching files (like agendas) to email causes a dramatic increase in unsubscribes, which is why we now always link out to files. Bottom line, if it feels like spam, it will be regarded as spam.

The other component of keeping our email list healthy is to keep a handle on the number of emails we send to the list. Generally speaking, we shouldn't send more than four a month to the full list. For that reason, only the Board's editors will be allowed to send to the full list. If you have an item you'd like to be included in the next email, you can send it to [editor@soronc.org](mailto:editor@soronc.org).

## **Who can post?**

Any Board member may write an item for one of our communication channels (refer to the "What should be posted where?" chart below for guidance on where it should go).

Any Board member can post directly to the website once they've completed City ethics training and NC training on how to use the site. Each post, email, press release, etc. will be reviewed and (potentially) edited for style, length and content by a site editor. You'll have a chance to see the edited post before it goes live.

If you have an item you'd like included in a press release, social media post, or email, you can send it to [editor@soronc.org](mailto:editor@soronc.org). You should write your item to conform to the NC standard, although again the editor may need to make changes before it goes live.

Site editors are chosen by the Board. They are responsible for ensuring that posts follow the SORO editorial guidelines, including tone, grammar and spelling. They also ensure that posts conform to City Attorney guidelines for fairness. The Board may also opt to appoint an Editor-In-Chief, who is responsible for recruiting writers, coordinating editors and proposing editorial guidelines. As with all NC positions, editors serve at the pleasure of the Board and may be removed by simple majority vote of the Board.

Editors are also available to provide advice, although ultimately you are responsible for writing your own items. Note that posts may also be rejected if they don't conform to the NC's communication guidelines, if they violate City rules, or if they require extensive rewrites.

If you disagree with an editorial decision, first talk to the editor and Editor-In-Chief. Most issues can be resolved there, but if not, you may appeal to the full Board by preparing a motion. Provided the motion is received in time, the Board will consider the arguments at the next scheduled meeting. The Board's editorial decision is final.

Officers and committee chairs may also directly post updates without prior editorial review in social media channels, provided they adhere to NC guidelines.

## What should be posted where?



Always

Sometimes (if it is compelling, of general NC interest, and has an NC angle)

	NC News & Issues	NC Committee Updates	NC Actions & Positions	NC Programs	Safety & Emergency	Community News & Events	City News & Events	Local Businesses Openings	Community Volunteer Opportunities
Site Blog	Always			Always	Sometimes		Sometimes		
Site Press Releases			Always	Sometimes					
Site Calendar	Always			Always		Sometimes			
Email General List	Always	Sometimes		Always	Always	Sometimes	Sometimes		
Email Special Lists *	Sometimes			Sometimes	Always	Sometimes			
Email Auto - Generated **	Sometimes	Always	Always	Sometimes					
FaceBook	Always	Always	Sometimes	Always	Always	Always	Always	Sometimes	Always
Twitter	Always	Always	Sometimes	Always	Always	Always	Always	Sometimes	Always

\* Such as neighborhoods@soronc.org

\*\* Generally, tagging content on soronc.org will trigger an email.



# Motion to approve fiscal year 2013-14 SORO NC budget

**Agenda Item:** GB052013-10  
**Date:** 20 May 2013  
**Proposed By:** Terrence Gomes

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## Full Proposal

The individual NC allocation for FY 2013-14 will be \$37,000. Unlike last year, however, we will not be able to encumber funds for our election, effectively reducing our budget by \$3,200.

At the May 13 Finance Committee meeting, attendees unanimously approved the attached draft budget. The attendees also agreed to continue discussions in the individual committees about how to best support a single, unifying "big idea": the revitalization of South Robertson. If it proves feasible, the Board may opt to revise this budget at a future meeting.

In the meantime, this proposed budget allocates funds for an open Community Grant process. Local non-profits and schools will be able to competitively apply for grants out of the \$5000 pool. The application process would be open for a set time period in the Fall and all grants would be awarded at the same time. Assuming there is not change to the Budget, we will be re-convening a small task force in July to draft guidelines and the application process for the award.

Note that our official budget for DONE breaks down our expenditures within five categories: 100 Operations, 200 Outreach, 300 Community Improvement, 400 Neighborhood Purpose Grants, and 500 Elections.

## Proposed Motion

- I. To approve the attached FY 2013-14 budget for submission to DONE

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## Considerations

**Committee review:**  
*(highly recommended)*

Votes For: 9

Against: 0

**Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget:** \$  
*(applies to funding motions only)*

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### Arguments for:

The Grant Fund allows us to be more responsive and better manage our reduced allocation by having applicants submit at the same time. We still have the ability to fund projects we've prioritized. In an emergency, we can also reallocate funds if the Board chooses.

### Arguments against:

The Grant Fund may mean that some worthy projects do not get funded.

**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
President

**Brian Kite**  
Vice-President

**Terrence Gomes**  
Treasurer

**Beth Ryan**  
Secretary

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## Proposed FY 13-14 SORO NC Budget: \$37,000

### 100 Operations

EDU	Board Retreat	\$400
	Board Training	\$200
	Orientation Binders	\$200
	Transportation Training	\$1500
FAC	NC Phone (Vonage)	\$480
	eFax	\$175
	Storage	\$2520
MIS	Meeting Food	\$1200
	General Operations	\$825
OFF	Toner, Paper, etc.	\$800
	Business Cards	\$750
POS	PO Box	\$150
	Postage	\$100
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$9,300.00</b>

### 200 Outreach

ADV	Printing for events/programs	\$800
	General Outreach	\$2500
EVE	Town Hall	\$500
	Meet The Board Events	\$800
	Business Outreach	\$800
WEB	Site Enhancements	\$2000
	Site Hosting	\$100
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$7,500.00</b>

### 300 Community Improvement

CIP	Hamilton Garden	\$500
	Green Team Project	\$100
	CPR Training	\$1000
	Neighborhood Watch Signs	\$300
	Education Project	\$400
	Transportation Study	\$3000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$5,300.00</b>

### 400 Neighborhood Purpose Grants

GRT	SoRo Festival	\$4500
	Movies In The Park	\$1000
	Green Grant	\$900
	Community Grant Program	\$5000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$11,400.00</b>

### 500 Elections

ELE	Election Outreach & Events	\$3500
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$3,500.00</b>



# Motion to provide feedback on proposed NC funding processes

**Agenda Item:** GB052013-11

**Date:** 20 May 2013

**Proposed By:** Doug Fitzsimmons

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## Full Proposal

Recently, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) published its proposed funding process for the next fiscal year. It seeks to make changes that would make it easier and faster for a smaller administrative staff to manage the financial needs of the 95 Neighborhood Councils.

Most of the changes are welcome: largely eliminating the Demand Warrant process for expenses under \$2500, creating individual checking accounts for each NC, streamlining the paperwork.

However, some of the changes are problematic, and would hinder (if not make impossible) many financial decisions made by NCs.

## Proposed Motion

To approve the following communication to DONE and BONC (the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners):

### I. Debit Cards

A switch to debit cards from purchase cards should not be a problem, so long as the debit card is accepted by VISA/MasterCard networks.

The expectation that most expenses would be made via electronic check is frankly, irreconcilably at odds and out of sync with the actual working of NCs.

A daily limit of \$200 on the NC's debit card would preclude the use of many vendors who only accept credit cards, including most online vendors (who are often the cheapest option). This would absolutely cripple the operation of NCs. We strongly feel the card limit should be the same as for the checking account: \$2500, with all ATM use and cash advances prohibited. Debit transactions over \$2500 should be possible with DONE approval.

Further, each NC should be able to specify the holder of the debit card—a blanket assignment to the second signatory would not be appropriate for all NCs.

### II. Available Funds

The system of releasing funds into an NC's account as motions are passed is only workable as long as:

1. There is an online system for NCs to submit a Board resolution for each financial motion as soon as it's passed;
2. The funds are released into the NC's account within 24 hours of submitting the resolution—without fail;
3. Similarly, monthly reconciliations are processed by DONE within 48 hours of submission;
4. Budgeted operational expenses are released in full at the beginning of the fiscal year, so that automatic payments for on-going expenses have sufficient funds available.

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Any other system has a high likelihood of triggering overdrafts.

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## Considerations

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**Committee review:**  
*(highly recommended)*

Votes For:

Against:

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**Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget:**     \$  
*(applies to funding motions only)*

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**Arguments for:**

**Arguments against:**

The proposed changes would cripple NCs.

A distributed financial system that requires minimal oversight must, by definition, be restrictive.



# Motion to amend the SORO NC bylaws: stakeholder definition, vacancies, elections

**Agenda Item:** GB052013-12  
**Date:** 20 May 2013  
**Proposed By:** Doug Fitzsimmons

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## Full Proposal

In the lead up to our last election, a number of issues arose concerning stakeholder definitions, seat eligibility descriptions, and filling vacancies.

**Item I:** Our stakeholder definition is derived from the baseline set by the City Council in 2007. Unfortunately, it does not include specific mention of organization or school involvement—so stakeholders in those categories fall into the factual basis category by default. Since our bylaws only permit factual basis stakeholders to vote for At Large seats, this means that Org and School reps technically cannot be elected by the constituencies they represent. The change seeks to fix that.

**Item II:** The Org and School seat definitions in the body of the bylaws are not quite in sync with those in the bylaws' Attachment B. This adds to the definitions that are out of sync.

**Item III:** Our bylaws are somewhat vague on the blackout period for appointments around election time.

**Item IV:** At the time this was originally adopted, the City Clerk ran NC elections. But DONE ran them in 2012, and in 2014, it will be a combination of DONE and the City Clerk. The language change covers those situations.

**Item V:** This would be a standing rule change, rather than a bylaws amendment. The standing rules specify that all meeting attachments be available to Boardmembers (and the public) 72 hours in advance of the meeting. When it was passed, the Board amended the description—but not the motion itself—to say that they should “at a minimum” be emailed to the Board. It’s not part of the rule officially, it causes confusion, and frankly, the Bylaws committee feels that emailing huge attachments is unworkable, especially since the files are available online for download.

Note that changes to the bylaws require a two-thirds vote of Board members present at the meeting. Standing rules changes require a simple majority.

## Proposed Motion

To amend the SORO NC bylaws as described below in items I-IV and to amend the standing rules in item V. **Bold** indicates added language; ~~strikeouts~~ removal of language:

### I. *Article IV: Stakeholder*

“Stakeholders” shall be defined as those who live, work, own property, **participate in an organized group of stakeholders or attend school** in the neighborhood, and also to those who declare a stake in the neighborhood and affirm the factual basis for it.

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**II. Article V: Governing Board, Section 1: Composition**

- 4. **School Stakeholder Board Member (2) – Open to Stakeholders who attend or work at Schools with the NC boundaries.**
  - a. School Seat 1 is elected by Stakeholder vote and is open to Stakeholders eighteen (18) years of age or older **who work at a school or represent an official school booster organization with the NC boundaries.**

*Attachment B: Governing Board Structure, Organization Rep definition:*

Stakeholder who is at least 18 years of age at the time of the election who officially represents organized groups of stakeholders, **including (but not limited to) non-profit, faith-based, or service organizations** within the Council boundaries.

**III. Article V: Governing Board, Section 6: Vacancies**

- 6. In no event shall a vacant **elected** seat be filled where a general election is scheduled to occur within sixty (60) days **before** the date that a written application is presented to the Board.

**IV. Article X: Elections, Section 6: Other Election Related Language**

In the event that the City Clerk **or other entity designated by the City** is unable to conduct a duly-scheduled election, per Article III, Section 2 of the Plan, the Neighborhood Council may adopt an alternate selection process.

**V. Standing rule on minimum time requirement for Board notification**

~~The motion description was amended by Board vote to note that "at a minimum, this should be done by email."~~

**Considerations**

**Committee review:** Votes For: 3 Against: 0  
*(highly recommended)*

**Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget:** \$  
*(applies to funding motions only)*

**Arguments for:**

- Cleans up language in advance of the 2014 election
- We should try to appoint people as soon as possible to empty seats after an election in order to ensure stakeholders are represented.
- Huge attachments can't be emailed.

**Arguments against:**

- First argument against the motion. Try to be fair.
- Appointing people to seats at the same time we're seating elected representatives undermines the election process and could be used as a way to avoid having to campaign
- Boardmembers should be notified.



# Motion to allocate \$200 to help fund the 2013 NC budget advocates

**Agenda Item:** GB052013-13

**Date:** May 20, 2013

**Proposed By:** Doug Fitzsimmons

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## Full Proposal

One of the primary purposes of the NC system—per the City Charter—is to provide feedback and guidance to the Mayor on the development of the City budget.

The NC budget advocates conduct extensive interviews with City departments, conduct a City-wide survey, and issue a comprehensive report each year. This year, they are soliciting financial support from the NCs to support their mission.

## Proposed Motion

- I. To allocate \$200 towards funding the 2013 Neighborhood Council budget advocate program.

**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
President

**Brian Kite**  
Vice-President

**Terrence Gomes**  
Treasurer

**Beth Ryan**  
Secretary

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## Considerations

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<b>Committee review:</b> <i>(highly recommended)</i>	Votes For: 4	Against: 0
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<b>Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget:</b> <i>(applies to funding motions only)</i>	\$0
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### Arguments for:

The budget advocates perform a Charter-mandated service to the City.

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### Arguments against:

We could use the money to pay our bills for the next fiscal year

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