

Draft letter:

Dear Mayor Garcetti and Planning Director Bertoni:

The city has since February been working on plans behind closed doors for the overall vision and dreams for Los Angeles, the **General Plan**, which is to be presented to the public and Neighborhood Councils later on.

Yet as you, Mayor Garcetti, said in response to Measure S and other criticisms of non-transparency and the broken planning system at City Hall, that L.A. residents must have "a sense of ownership over the development of our communities," and as City Councilman Jose Huizar, of the PLUM Committee has pledged, City Hall will now act to bring "accountability and transparency back into our General Plan and Community Plan processes."

We agree. That is why these closed meetings about our shared ideas and ideals for the **Los Angeles General Plan** must be fully transparent, more inclusive, and open to the public now.

It has come to our attention that some of those invited to the Work Group Meetings for Open Space, including one well-known and crucial environmental group, cannot regularly attend the four scheduled meetings because they are set for the convenience of city planners at 2 to 4 p.m. downtown.

Moreover, it has come to our attention that a developer consultant sits on the Work Group Meeting for the Open Space Element of the General Plan, and is being described by city officials as an "open space expert."

Moreover, the "chapters" now online at the city's OurLA2040.org website describing the Open Space Element and the Conservation Element are woefully inadequate and do not include crucial issues that should be innovative and forward-thinking new Elements. One glaring omission is an Urban Forest Element that pursues the need to recreate and save our fast-vanishing urban tree canopy which is crucial to fighting GHG and creating livable communities.

These are the many kinds of problems that fan the widespread distrust of the city planning system and the citywide debate over how to fix it -- these problems are created when the city reverts to closed door meetings and selective choosing of who the experts should be, as it has so far this year.

Second, and in the very same vein, the mayor's Planning Task Force and Transportation Infrastructure Steering Committee for the General Plan should also be open to the public now. Key strategies for planning, shaping and reshaping Los Angeles are unfolding in these closed meetings.

Best practices demand that you, Mayor Garcetti, adopt a ground-up process for your Task Force and your Steering Committee, open to the public just as the HHH Citizens and Administrative Advisory Committees and the H Work Group meetings were devised: open to the public from the very beginning and include independent experts and thinkers.

Attached is a motion our North Hills West Neighborhood Council has approved, urging the above actions.

Sincerely,

Draft Motion:

Whereas the City of Los Angeles has for months been working on a plan behind closed doors for the overall vision and dreams for Los Angeles, the **General Plan**, which is to be presented to the public and Neighborhood Councils sometime this fall,

And whereas Mayor Garcetti has said, residents must have "a sense of ownership over the development of our communities," and City Councilman Jose Huizar of the PLUM committee pledged to bring "accountability and transparency back into our General Plan and Community Plan processes."

And whereas Los Angeles is decades behind other Western U.S. cities in involving its citizens in a General Plan update process that starts from the ground up;

And whereas public money and public interest are major factors in the earliest decision-making on our General Plan Update process, strategies, and dreams;

And whereas it is widely agreed the public cannot fully participate in General Plan Updating meetings, hearings and debates that unfold during the day and downtown;

And whereas closed-door meetings on the fundamental debates and decisions about our dreams and goals for updating of the General Plan can only create more distrust and dismay over the city's broken planning system;

Therefore, the North Hills West Neighborhood Council requests that Planning Department Work Group meetings now underway about our shared ideas and ideals for the **Los Angeles General Plan** and its many Elements be made fully transparent, be conducted during evening and weekend hours when the public is more likely to be able to attend and provide input; be open to the public as of now; include representatives chosen by the Neighborhood Councils; include a representative chosen by the Measure S campaign; and expand from the four meetings, now nearly completed in closed-door meetings, to four additional meetings that follow the above prescription.

We further request, in the same vein, that the Mayor's Planning Task Force and Transportation Infrastructure Steering Committee for the General Plan be made fully transparent, be set at evening and weekend hours; be open to the public as of now; and expand its closed-door meetings to several additional meetings that follow the above prescription.