

WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

November 14, 2018

Agenda Item #10

INFORMATION IN REGARD TO THE PROPOSED PROCESS AND PROCEDURES ORDINANCE

*Analysis from
United Neighborhoods of Los Angeles*

HOW TO TAKE PLANNING POWER AWAY FROM THE PEOPLE

City Hall has finally figured out how to cut you out of the planning process. They've finally found a way to make sure you don't have a voice in decisions about your community's future.

For years they've been working on re:code LA, a comprehensive revision of the City's zoning code. The first stage of that revision is now moving forward. It's called the Processes & Procedures Ordinance. If adopted, it will add a new chapter to the Los Angeles Municipal Code. Basically it's a power grab by the Department of City Planning (DCP). The best way to sum up what's happening here is to talk about how it would limit the authority of your elected officials....

LA's City Charter says that all legislative power of the City is vested in the City Council, except as otherwise provided in the Charter. That includes power over planning and zoning. But by adding this new chapter to the Municipal Code, Processes & Procedures seems intended to change that. Under "General Authority" the new language states....

"The City Council generally exercises all legislative authority associated with the Zoning Code, except where otherwise provided by the Charter, State law, or the Zoning Code."

In other words, the Zoning Code itself could limit the Council's power over zoning. And since the DCP is rewriting the zoning code, the idea seems to be to take planning power from elected officials and give it to unelected planning bureaucrats.

The addition of the words "State law" is also disturbing, since this could potentially limit the City's ability to challenge legislation from Sacramento, like maybe something along the lines of SB 827. And there are other problems. This ordinance restricts appeals, weakens safeguards for HPOZs, and allows the DCP to grant conditional use permits without public input.

The City Planning Commission has already approved Processes & Procedures. Next it goes to the Planning & Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee, and it seems to be on the fast track. Even though City Planning staff told members of the public they were open to revising the language, the ordinance was forwarded to PLUM with no changes.