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Logan Rees
Jo Ann Rivas
Frankie Smith
Russell Wolff

October 14, 2021

TO: Members of the Los Angeles City Council Redistricting Commission

FROM: NoHo Neighborhood Council

SUBJECT: City of Los Angeles Draft Plan K 2.5

The NoHo Neighborhood Council opposes Map K 2.5 as drafted.

NoHo is a community of renters (according to data on EmpowerLA, 74% of the units in NoHo NC's service area are renter occupied) and we face particular challenges around housing instability because of this. K 2.5 ignores this fact and shoehorns our NC into an alliance with other NCs such as Foothill Trails (23% renter occupied) and Bel Air-Beverly Crest (16% owner occupied). It raises the question of whether a councilmember will be able to adequately and properly represent any of their constituents with such wildly varying interests. NoHo deserves to be connected to communities of interest, not sandwiched between districts of homeowners whose interests do not align with ours.

NoHo Neighborhood Council also recognizes what appears to be a deliberate attempt to divide the largely Armenian communities within Council District 2 into different council districts. These communities are represented by the City's first Armenian-American ever elected to public office, Councilmember Paul Krekorian. Splitting them up would dilute the collective political power of this minority group and ultimately, silence their voices at City Hall.

Further, we recognize our neighbors in the Reseda Neighborhood Council and their concerns about disenfranchisement. NoHo will get to vote in 2024; in contrast, large swaths of Reseda have been shifted from an even numbered district into an odd numbered district; with the change to move municipal elections to coincide with federal elections and now the shift to a new Councilmember whose term will not expire until 2024, this means large swaths of their constituents will go for seven full years with no opportunity to vote for a new councilmember. This is not only fatally flawed but also undemocratic at its core. Reseda and the entire city deserve better than this.

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Next, NoHo NC agrees with the concerns of many stakeholders and neighbors who have lifted their voices to ask whether this map was designed to specifically attack Nithya Raman and invalidate the outcome of the 2020 election. It is no secret that Ms. Raman's ascent to the council was surprising and has shaken many people at City Hall. The carving up of her power base and decision to shunt her either a) into an East Valley district that is mostly new and unfamiliar to her or b) into a West Valley district that is wholly outside her electoral base is rank politics at its worst. Once again, we view this as deeply undemocratic. We all see what the Commission is choosing to do, so let's call it what it is: the Commission has chosen to protect other incumbents while steamrolling the most progressive voice on the council. This kind of partisan gerrymandering has no place in Los Angeles or in the state of California.

Moreover, we raise broad concerns about process. Many commissioners have appeared to be confused about the content of certain motions. Ex parte communications over hot mics have been documented by Twitter users. To address the procedural concerns, we support Commissioner Goldberg's call for a special meeting to address the deficiencies of Map K 2.5 before it is submitted to the City Council.

In total, the map as drawn will disempower NoHo by potentially forcing us to create new relationships with a councilmember who has been explicitly cut off by the commission from her electoral base, pushing us into a new district that does not reflect the shared interests of our community, and dividing the significant Armenian American community of the San Fernando Valley. The map will disenfranchise our neighbors by breaking up existing electoral coalitions in CD4 and by forcing current residents in CD3 to wait three more years before they can vote in a Municipal Election.

NoHo NC is under no illusions that our statement matters to the commission or to the Councilmembers who appointed them. We expect that K 2.5 will become the new City Council map, but we will not stand idly by while the City Council and their appointees disempower us and our neighbors, and we will remember who stood in favor of this Faustian map that preserves existing power bases for Councilmembers while gutting representation for our community.