

Motion: Support for the Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates, Their White Paper Recommendations, Preservation of NC & CERT Funding, and Other Budget Considerations – Council File 25-0600 - Position: Against Unless Amended

The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council supports the work of the Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates and endorses its 2025 White Paper recommendations to the City of Los Angeles. These recommendations aim to improve departmental functions, ensure a more effective use of taxpayer dollars, and enhance the efficient delivery of services across all communities.

The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council (SONC) is deeply concerned about the City's impending structural budget deficit, projected to exceed \$900 million, and the significant impact this shortfall could have on city operations and services. SONC is disturbed that layoffs are being proposed, but salary cuts for the highest-paid personnel are not under consideration.

We urge the City to adopt a comprehensive and coherent plan to address the structural deficit and balance the FY 2025 – 2026 budget. This plan should include strategies to live within the City's financial means and transition from a one-year budget cycle to a more sustainable, multi-year budgeting process that ensures long-term fiscal health and service stability.

Neighborhood Council (NC) budgets have been reduced over the years while inflation has made operational costs increasingly burdensome. While NCs continue to provide valuable

representation, community engagement, support to charitable organizations, and other benefits to stakeholders as volunteer boards; NCs have not contributed to the liabilities and miscalculated revenue projections that have put the city in a fiscally precarious position, and should not be expected to shoulder the burden of rectifying the city's financial status. We ask that NC budgets remain at \$32,000 per year.

An important matter in the city budget is whether the fire department will have funds and manpower to continue the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. This is an essential program which trains volunteer individuals to serve communities, neighborhoods and support first responders during emergencies and catastrophic events. The city under funds emergency management, CERT budget is pennies on the dollar with a return on investment which far exceeds the cost. The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council once again voices its support to fund and keep this valuable program.