



10 Things Neighborhood Councils Can Do for Los Angeles— Version 4.0 (2009)

by Eric Garcetti

- 1. Organize for change.** Change begins with the strength of your network and the numbers of people that you have regularly involved in initiatives. The Obama campaign showed the ability of community organizing techniques to have a huge impact. Hold house parties, neighborhood coffees with representatives, and do regular door-to-door canvassing. Hold a “Neighborhood Organizing Camp” with stakeholders from the business, residential, faith, and labor communities in your neighborhood.
- 2. Embrace Web 2.0 and preserve public access to information.** Changes to state law have taken away municipal jurisdiction over cable networks, but we have new tools to reach even more Angelenos than ever. Build your own Neighborhood Council YouTube channel, help the city build a new YouTube-like network, and embrace Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and other social networking sites that help bring new people into your neighborhood council network and keep them feeling connected on a daily basis to your work!
- 3. Build a Neighborhood Green Team.** The city has programs to green Los Angeles, from free recycling for apartment buildings to free light bulbs from DWP. Recruit and develop a team of youth who can work after school or during the summer for your neighborhood, going door-to-door to help get businesses to go green with the city’s new green business initiative, and let tenants and homeowners know about free trees, recycling, and energy efficiency programs that can help them save money and beautify the neighborhood.
- 4. Make LA Safer by building a Watch 2.0 newsletter.** Watch 2.0 is a powerful tool to help connect neighborhoods to crucial public safety information to avoid and prevent criminal activity in their area. Building a newsletter also helps neighbors get to know one another, building a powerful network to keep crime away. Contact Jeff Berk (jberk@watch2.org) for more information.
- 5. Adopt a library.** In order to preserve the hours that libraries are open, the city mid-year budget cut some of the acquisition funds for new supplies. These supplies are critical for youth, seniors, and others who otherwise do not have access to the magazines, books, and newspapers that they depend on. Adopt a library and help provide some of the latest books and movies for your community. Visit the Friends of the Los Angeles Public Library homepage: <http://www.lapl.org/about/friends.html>.

6. **Clean up your neighborhood.** Bring UNTAG (Uniting Neighbors To Abolish Graffiti) to your neighborhood. This initiative has reduced graffiti by 78% CD13 and can work in your neighborhood, too. We recently expanded this program to go citywide, and all we are waiting for is you. Visit our toolkit at our UNTAG site at <http://www.untagla.com/toolkit.html> for more information.
7. **Help the homeless.** Los Angeles is the homeless capital of the country. One of the most powerful ways you can help address homelessness in Los Angeles is with the 2009 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count. 3000 volunteers are needed for three nights this month (January 27th, 28th, and 29th) in order to protect more than \$70 million from the federal government, to help target housing and services, and to raise awareness about homelessness. To volunteer, visit http://www.lahsa.org/hc09_volunteer_registration.asp.
8. **Partner on public works decisions.** This upcoming fiscal year (09-10), we will work in CD13 to share our public works plans (street and sidewalk improvements, lighting upgrades, etc.) with our neighborhood councils to give them direct input on decisions. Work with your City Councilmember to jointly plan a public works program to submit to departments for the coming year.
9. **Educate for change.** Bring the Government 101 curriculum to your community and teach your constituents how City Hall works. Start a Neighborhood Leadership Institute and bring some of the city wide curriculum we have developed (Planning 101, Planning 102, Planning 103, Housing 101, etc.) to your neck of the woods. These graduates will help your neighborhood have a more powerful voice throughout the city.
10. **Make policy.** Start making policy under the new Neighborhood Council Policy File Index system. This is truly the way that neighborhood councils will be able to directly add more than advisory input to the City Council and mayor.

For more information, contact Councilmember Garcetti at councilmember.garcetti@lacity.org or visit his website at www.cd13.com or call (323) 957-4500 to sign up for office hours.