

Press Release
John Schwada, Communications Director
Neighborhood Integrity Initiative
john.schwada@gmail.com
[310 709-0056](tel:3107090056)

NEIGHBORHOOD BALLOT PLAN'S SUPPORTERS AIM FOR MARCH 2017 CITY ELECTION Reform Measure Will Fix the City's Broken Building Project Approval System

Tuesday, March 15, 2016 - Supporters of a Los Angeles ballot plan to put the brakes on big developments that create mind-numbing traffic and degrade our environment are now aiming to place their measure before voters during the March 7, 2017 election.

Supporters originally aimed to have the Neighborhood Integrity Initiative on the Nov. 8 election ballot.

But in recent weeks, it has become apparent the presidential election could turn into a media circus and that more than 20 statewide measures might be competing for voter and media attention in the same election, said Neighborhood Integrity Initiative Campaign Director Jill Stewart.

“Our initiative is too important to be buried at the tail-end of this November’s ballot — which is beginning to look like it will be historically long and confusing,” said Stewart. “The Neighborhood Integrity Initiative is a watershed movement that deserves the undivided attention of the city’s voters and its media.”

Local measures always appear at the end of ballots that contain national and state issues.

“The next election is March 7, and it will be exclusively focused on L.A. city issues and candidates,” Stewart added. On that ballot: the election for mayor, city controller, city attorney and eight Los Angeles City Council members. “Although we have lost some time, a March 7 election is a perfect fit for our measure,” said Stewart. “We want our measure to be a serious referendum on Los Angeles’ future.”

The Neighborhood Integrity Initiative evens the playing field at City Hall so residents have a greater opportunity to shape their communities. Now, the playing field is heavily tilted toward big developers, their lobbyists, their land-use attorneys, their campaign contributions and their gifts to elected officials' pet projects.

“City Hall's approval system for big development projects is hopelessly broken,” said Stewart. “The city's Wild West approach is to ignore an area's crumbling infrastructure, its gridlocked traffic or its special character to please profit-hungry developers. No modern city should be 'planned' this way. We intend to fix this.”

The measure achieves the following:

- Creates a two-year time-out on City Council votes to approve of the biggest and most overwhelming development projects;
- Require the City Council to regularly review its General Plan – including the community plans – in a process that provides far more accessibility to the public;
- Permanently ends the City Council's granting of General Plan amendments to special-interests;
- Permanently ends an EIR system in which developers judge the environmental impacts of their projects, including traffic increases, pollution loads and noise — a glaring conflict of interest.

How cluttered will the November ballot be? Very.

As of last week, two statewide measures had qualified, a third started gathering signatures, and 11 others in circulation had gathered at least 25 percent of their signatures. And the Secretary of State has cleared another 68 measures for circulation.

“It’s crucial that our measure not be overshadowed by the presidential election and by statewide measures on the death penalty, marijuana for recreational use, the minimum wage, banning plastic bags, and perhaps two dozen other topics,” said Stewart. “You name it, there’s a ballot measure for or against in November. Los Angeles deserves time to seriously focus on the important societal issues raised by our measure.”

To begin the new signature-gathering process, copies of the Neighborhood Integrity Initiative were filed Monday with the City Clerk. Signature gathering will begin in the spring.

Initiative supporters also opted to greatly simplify the measure, originally 23 pages long, shortening it to eight pages.

“In real substance, it is more than 90 percent of the original,” said Stewart. However, the measure contains key changes based on input from hundreds of L.A. residents during an outreach conducted by Stewart and her team.

The shortened measure includes these changes:

- Exempts 100 percent affordable housing projects from the two-year moratorium, allowing these projects to proceed even if they need height district or zone change;
- Requires City Hall to go to the people, holding its public reviews and updates of the General Plan and the 35 Community Plans, and the Harbor District Plan and Airport District Plan, solely at night and on weekends and within the effected communities.
- Removes several pages explaining L.A.'s existing parking rules and leaves in place only the paragraph that would be changed. That paragraph stops favored developers of small lot subdivisions, condo conversions and oversized projects from being able to vastly cut back their required parking.