

2021 NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL ELECTION HANDBOOK

DRAFT

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DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

The Neighborhood Council (NC) Board Member Elections will be held in the spring of 2021. This handbook provides voters, candidates, and NC participants with important information about the election process, including the candidate filing and Vote-By-Mail (VBM) operations.

For 2021, the Office of the City Clerk (City Clerk) will be overseeing election operations, while the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (EmpowerLA) will collaborate with individual NCs to conduct election outreach. Both the City Clerk and EmpowerLA look forward to the 2021 NC Elections and will be working closely with each NC to ensure that all NC elections are a success.

Due to public health and safety concerns as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the City Clerk is implementing an all VBM voting model for all NCs in 2021. This handbook will serve as the primary source of NC Election policies and procedures.

For more information about NC elections, please visit the City Clerk's Election Division website at clerk.lacity.org/elections or call our office at (213) 978-0444 or toll free at (888) 873-1000.

For more information about individual NCs or NC outreach, please visit EmpowerLA's website at empowerla.org or call at (213) 978-1551.

Office of the City Clerk

Election Division
C. Erwin Piper Technical Center
555 Ramirez Street, Space 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Email: clerk.electionsnclacity.org

Department of Neighborhood Empowerment

Main Office
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Main Street, 20th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Email: NCSupport@lacity.org

1. WHO IS INVOLVED IN NC ELECTIONS

1.1 The Office of the City Clerk (City Clerk)

The City Clerk will serve as the primary Election Administrator for the 2021 NC Elections.

In accordance with Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 20.36, the City Clerk is authorized to conduct NC Elections and is authorized to promulgate any election procedure, rule, regulation, or issue any directive or moratorium necessary for that portion of the elections it administers, including the promulgation of any procedures, rules, regulations, directives, or moratoria for the resolution of any election challenge.

Any election procedures, rules or regulations promulgated by the City Clerk are hereby applied to all NC Bylaws by reference and are to be applied to the NC's Bylaws. While our office is committed to adhering to all election language stipulated in the bylaws, City Clerk election rules and regulations shall take precedence over any inconsistent language in the NC's Bylaws.

1.2 City Clerk Election Administrators (EAs)

City Clerk staff will serve as Election Administrators (EAs) for the 2021 NC Elections. Throughout the election year, EAs will be responsible for the following tasks:

1. Serving as the primary liaison between NCs, the City Clerk, EmpowerLA, and stakeholders;
2. Conducting all NC elections in accordance with citywide rules outlined in this handbook and other procedures established by the City Clerk, NC Bylaws, and any governing City or State regulations (e.g., California Public Records Act);
3. Reviewing and understanding NC Bylaws, as they relate to the conduct of elections;
4. Drafting voting models and sample ballots based on voter eligibility requirements in each NC's Bylaws;
5. Processing Election Worksheets and other election documents issued by the City Clerk;
6. Assisting the City Clerk's Public Services Section with the NC candidate filing process, including processing candidate filing challenges; and
7. Providing Vote-By-Mail (VBM) information to NCs.

Overall, an EA is expected to work closely and communicate with their assigned NCs, either through an Election Committee or through a representative designated by the NC.

1.3 Additional City Clerk Duties

Additional City Clerk staff will be responsible for the following administrative operations:

1. Updating the City Clerk's website and providing systems maintenance;
2. Processing and certifying NC candidate applications;
3. Designing, testing, and tallying ballots;
4. Processing VBM applications and mailing and receiving NC ballots;
5. Placing and retrieving ballot boxes from drop-off locations on Election Day;
6. Convening Independent Grievance Panels to process post-election challenges, when necessary;
7. Certifying and posting election results; and
8. Processing public records requests.

1.4 Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (EmpowerLA)

EmpowerLA is the City Department responsible for promoting civic engagement and supporting NCs in their mission to make municipal government more responsive to local needs. EmpowerLA's NC Advocates help to connect NCs and City government by holding workshops and training on public engagement for both NCs and City staff. NC Advocates also provide NCs with support in organizing and running meetings and coach Board Members on how to work with the City to advocate for their communities.

During this NC election cycle, EmpowerLA will be responsible for coordinating election outreach and candidate recruitment with each NC.

1.5 Neighborhood Councils (NCs)

NCs are volunteer(s), unpaid elected officials, who serve on Boards to monitor the delivery of City services to their communities and its stakeholders as well as present budget priorities to the Mayor and City Council. NCs advocate for their communities on important issues like planning and land use, homelessness, and emergency preparedness.

Each NC operates according to the Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils and Bylaws that define the NC's governing board structure, geographical boundaries, and candidate and voter eligibility requirements. NCs also operate according to the City Charter, applicable municipal ordinances, Board of Neighborhood Commissioners policies, and directives issued by EmpowerLA and the City Clerk.

The City Clerk's EAs will work closely with NCs, either through their Election Committees or through other designated representatives, on ensuring each NC election is conducted fairly and according to procedure.

1.6 Stakeholders

NC participation is open to all stakeholders. Stakeholders are those who live, work or own property in the neighborhood or who declare a stake in their neighborhood as a community interest stakeholder. The latter is defined as a person that has involvement with a community organization within the NC's boundaries. A community organization is defined as continuously maintaining a physical street address within the boundaries of the neighborhood council for not less than one year, and that performs ongoing and verifiable activities and operations that confer some benefit on the community within the NC's boundaries and who may be in a community organization such as, but not limited to, educational, non-profit or religious organizations.

All stakeholders, when running as a candidate or voting, must specify a qualifying address within the NC's boundaries to participate. Stakeholder claims cannot be based on participation occurring outside of a given NC's boundaries.

Throughout this handbook, the terms "candidate" and "voter" may be used in place of "stakeholder."

2. NC ELECTION DATES

2.1. Regional Election Assignments and Timelines

All NC Elections will take place between March and June in 2021. As in previous NC elections, NCs will be assigned to geographical regions, in groups of six to ten NCs, and the groups within that region will hold their elections on the same day.

1. Due to the pandemic, the City Clerk - Election Division's office may be closed to the public, however, staff is available Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. by phone and email. Office hours may change depending on implementation of City furloughs.
2. When a deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or a religious or national holiday, the actual deadline date will be moved to the following City of Los Angeles business day.

For more information on your NC's election region and election date, please refer to **Attachment A: 2021 Neighborhood Council Regional Election Schedule**.

For more information on your NC's regional election timeline, which includes important election deadlines, please refer to [Attachment B: 2021 NC Election Timeline](#).

3. THE CANDIDATE FILING PROCESS

3.1 Candidate Filing Information - First Steps

The City of Los Angeles encourages all stakeholders to participate in the 2021 NC Elections. If you are interested in running for a NC board seat, please consider taking the following steps:

1. Find out which NC you belong to. To find your NC, please enter your qualifying address here: neighborhoodinfo.lacity.org.
2. Attend your local NC meeting and subscribe to your NC's Early Notification System to receive your NC's meeting agendas here: [NC's Early Notification System](#)
3. Review your NC's Bylaws to understand your NC's board seat qualifications. It is the candidate's responsibility to know and select the seat they are running for. Board seat qualifications are defined in [Article V \(Governing Board\)](#) and [Attachment B \(Governing Board Structure and Voting\)](#) in all NC Bylaws. All current NC Bylaws can be found on [EmpowerLA's website](#) at: [NC Bylaws](#).
4. Review your NC's election timeline in [Attachment B: 2021 NC Election Timeline](#) or on the City Clerk's Election Division website at clerk.lacity.org/elections for more information on important deadlines.
5. Complete a Candidate Filing Application and provide the City Clerk with all of the information and documentation required for candidate certification. Once certified, all candidates will be expected to review and adhere to the Candidate Guidelines below ([3.12 Candidate Guidelines](#)).

3.2 The Right to Run for a NC Board Seat

Stakeholders cannot be denied the opportunity to run for a Board seat for which they hold stakeholder status unless otherwise prohibited by a NC's Bylaws (e.g. term limits, age requirements).

3.3 The Candidate Filing Period

The candidate filing period will begin approximately 120 days before Election Day and will last for 45 days. All candidate filing and candidate challenge deadlines will end at 5:00 p.m., Pacific Standard Time.

3.4 Completing a Candidate Filing Application

Stakeholders interested in running for a NC board seat must complete a Candidate Filing Application (online or paper) and submit it to the City Clerk's office for review and verification.

Candidates can complete and submit a Candidate Filing Application online at _____ or obtain a paper application from the City Clerk's website. Paper applications may be submitted in person, by mail, email, or by fax at the following:

Office of the City Clerk
Election Division
C. Erwin Piper Technical Center
555 Ramirez Street, Space 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Email: clerk.electionsnclacity.org

Fax: (213) 978-0376

When completing a Candidate Filing Application, candidates must provide the following information:

1. Neighborhood Council Name*;
2. Board Seat Name*;
3. Stakeholder Status (Live, Work, Own property, or Community Interest)*;
4. Name as it will appear on the Ballot*;
5. First and Last Name*;
6. Date of Birth;
7. Telephone Number;
8. Email Address;
9. Qualifying Address;
10. Mailing Address; and
11. A photo identification and any documentation necessary to establish board seat eligibility.

NOTE: If submitting a paper application, the candidate must also provide their signature.

***THIS INFORMATION IS CONSIDERED PUBLIC AND SUBJECT TO LIMITED DISCLOSURE. PERSONAL ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBERS ARE NOT DISCLOSED.**

3.5 Qualifying Documentation

All candidates must submit identification and any applicable documentation to establish their eligibility for the board seat they are applying for. Candidates must submit all necessary documentation within three (3) days of the candidate filing deadline.

Since there is a wide variety of NC board seats, the documentation required to qualify for these seats vary. For an example of what type of documents may suffice, please refer to **Attachment C: 2021 NC Election Documentation Guide**.

All candidates must agree to the Candidate Board Service Acknowledgement and Affirmation prior to certification. **Attachment D: Candidate Board Service Acknowledgement and Affirmation**.

The City Clerk will review each Candidate Filing Application and applicable documentation to determine if the candidate meets the NC's board seat qualifications, as stated in the NC's Bylaws. Once certified, any documentation submitted by the candidate will be deleted from the City Clerk's candidate filing system.

CANDIDATES WHO DO NOT SUBMIT A CANDIDATE FILING APPLICATION, FAIL TO SUBMIT DOCUMENTATION, DO NOT MEET SPECIFIC BOARD SEAT REQUIREMENTS AND DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THE CANDIDATE BOARD SERVICE AFFIRMATION WILL NOT BE CERTIFIED.

3.6 The Neighborhood Council Candidate Filing Portal and Instructions

Candidates who wish to complete a Candidate Filing Application online **must** create a profile in the NC Candidate Filing Portal. To create a profile, candidates can access the NC Candidate Filing Portal at _____ and complete the following steps:

1. Click on the 'Create New Account' button and enter the following information:
 - a. First and Last Name
 - b. Email Address

2. An email will be sent to the candidate confirming registration. Candidates must then create a Password. The Password must be at least eight (8) characters long and must include at least one (1) uppercase letter, one (1) lowercase letter, one (1) number, and one (1) punctuation character. Example: **Password8\$**.
3. Click 'Submit'.

Once the password has been confirmed, candidates will automatically be returned to the NC Candidate Filing Portal, where they can sign in with their email and password to begin the Candidate Filing Application. When creating a new user profile, it is strongly suggested that candidates write down their login information. Candidates can reset their password by using the *Forgot Password* link.

City Clerk staff will be available throughout the candidate filing period, during regular City business hours, to assist candidates with their filing.

3.7 Candidate Statement and Photo

Candidates will have the option of submitting a candidate statement and photograph, both of which will be posted on the City Clerk's website. Candidates may submit their optional statements and photographs up to seven (7) days before Election Day, however, please note that since voting begins 29 days before Election Day, it is to your benefit to submit your statement and photo as early as possible.

The NC Candidate Filing Portal allows candidates a maximum of 1,000 characters for a candidate statement.

3.8 Write-In Candidates

There will be no write-in candidates for the 2021 NC Elections.

3.9 Running in Multiple Neighborhood Councils or for Multiple Board Seats

Stakeholders may run as a candidate in multiple NCs as long as they meet each NC's board seat requirements. Within each NC, a NC's Bylaws dictate how many seats a candidate may run for. Most NCs limit candidates to one seat. However, some NCs allow candidates to run for more than one seat.

3.10 Candidate Withdrawal

Candidates who choose to withdraw their name from the ballot must do so no later than 65 days before Election Day, by clicking the *Withdraw* button in the Candidate Filing Portal. If a candidate filed a paper Candidate Filing Application, they must contact the City

Clerk to withdraw their name from the ballot. If a candidate withdraws from a contest, but wishes to run for another seat, they must refile through the Candidate Filing Portal or on a paper Candidate Filing Application no later than 75 days before Election Day.

Once a candidate withdraws, the candidate's name, statement, and photo will be removed from the City Clerk's webpage. Candidates who wish to withdraw after the withdrawal deadline must notify their NC of their request since their name will remain on the ballot. In the event a candidate wins a seat but does not wish to serve, the NC may need to take action to vacate the seat, which then will be filled by the NC, in accordance with their Bylaws. This type of post-election withdrawal will not be processed by the City Clerk.

3.11 Certified List of Candidates

The City Clerk will post the NC's Certified List of Candidates 60 days before Election Day. Candidate contact information, including a candidate's name, telephone number, and email address will be provided to EmpowerLA and their NC to notify candidates of any training, outreach, or candidate forum opportunities. A NC, if it so chooses, may ask candidates to participate in a Candidate Forum prior to Election Day. The City Clerk will not conduct or participate in any NC Candidate Forums.

3.12 Candidate Guidelines

All NC candidates will be provided with a set of guidelines:

1. Candidates must adhere to the guidelines prescribed in this Handbook and all other NC Election policies and procedures established by the City Clerk and EmpowerLA.
2. Candidates may not use City facilities, equipment, supplies, funds, or other City resources for **campaigning** activities.
3. Candidates may not use the City of Los Angeles Seal (logo) or Letterhead, the EmpowerLA logo, the City Clerk logo, the NC logo, or any other official NC designation created by EmpowerLA in candidate photos or any candidate campaign material, which can include items such as hats, t-shirts, buttons, or signs.
4. Candidates may not receive endorsements from the governing NC Board as a whole.
5. Candidates may receive endorsements from individual board members, acting as individual stakeholders.
6. Candidates may not post handbills on public property. Candidates must observe all handbill posting laws (**Attachment F: Los Angeles Municipal Code Sec. 28.00-28.04**).

7. Candidates may run as a slate on the condition that all participating candidates provide written consent to the slate organizer agreeing to participate.
8. Candidates should report any illegal or fraudulent activity to the City Clerk.
9. Candidates must immediately notify the City Clerk and NC if their qualifying stakeholder status changes prior to the election, which may result in disqualification from the board seat they are seeking.

A violation of these guidelines could result in disqualification of candidates per sections **3.14: The Candidate Challenge Period** and **3.15: Resolving Candidate Challenges**.

3.13 Board Affirmation and Loss of Quorum

In the event there are no candidates for a single NC board seat, that contest will be omitted from the Official Ballot.

In the event there are not enough candidates in a NC election or if any of the board seats do not have a competitive contest (two or more candidates) after the List of Certified Candidates has been released, the election for the given NC will be suspended and canceled. Any candidates that have been certified will be seated by EmpowerLA through the Department's prescribed Board Affirmation process.

If there are not enough candidates to meet a quorum of the board, EmpowerLA will use the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners' Loss of Quorum policy to seat a new board. For more information regarding this process, visit the EmpowerLA website at empowerla.org.

3.14 The Candidate Challenge Period

A candidate's eligibility to run for and serve on a NC board can be challenged by any NC stakeholder.

In order to file a candidate challenge, a stakeholder must provide the following information to the City Clerk:

1. Name
2. Telephone Number
3. Email Address
4. A justification for the candidate challenge
5. Documentation supporting the challenge claim
 - a. Challenges filed without supporting documentation will not be accepted.

Please note that a challenger's name and justification for the candidate challenge is subject to public disclosure under the California Public Records Act (See [Section 8: Public Records Requests](#)). Supporting documentation is subject to limited disclosure.

Candidate challenges can first be submitted approximately 120 days before Election Day. The final day to submit a candidate challenge is 69 days before Election Day. The City Clerk must receive all candidate challenges by this deadline. All candidate filing challenges must be resolved 65 days before Election Day. Candidate challenges will not be reviewed until the challenged candidate has been certified. Candidate challenges, as they pertain to their eligibility, will not be accepted after the Candidate Challenge Period ends. Any other challenges related to candidates must be filed after Election Day. Please review [Attachment B: 2021 NC Election Timeline](#) for exact dates.

Challenges must be submitted to the City Clerk online, in person, by mail, email, or fax at the following:

Office of the City Clerk
Election Division
C. Erwin Piper Technical Center
555 Ramirez Street, Space 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Online Application: _____

Email: clerk.electionsnc@lacity.org

Fax: (213) 978-0376

3.15 Resolving Candidate Challenges

The City Clerk will review all candidate challenge submissions that meet the criteria above. If a candidate challenge is accepted, the City Clerk will notify the challenger, the candidate in question, and the affected NC.

Once a determination is made concerning the candidate challenge, the City Clerk will notify the challenger, the candidate in question, and the affected NC. If a candidate's certification is invalidated, and the document submission deadline (see [3.5 Qualifying Documentation](#)) has not passed, the candidate may provide additional documentation to support their eligibility claim.

If a candidate's certification is invalidated and the candidate does not provide additional documentation supporting their candidacy, the candidate will be disqualified.

The City Clerk will serve as the final decision maker for all administrative reviews concerning the NC candidate filing process.

4. VOTING ELIGIBILITY

4.1 Stakeholder Voting Eligibility

Those that meet the stakeholder criteria per section [1.6 Stakeholders](#) and the criteria set forth in individual NC Bylaws, will be eligible to vote in NC elections.

4.2 Voting Age

In order to cast a ballot in the election, a voter must meet the voting age requirements set forth in each NC's Bylaws.

4.3 Self-Affirmation and Documentation Requirements

There are two stakeholder verification methods used in NC Elections: Self-Affirmation and Documentation-Required.

NCs that opt for a Self-Affirmation verification method require voters to affirm, under penalty of perjury, that they are eligible to vote in the NC's election. The voter will not be required to submit documentation to substantiate this claim.

NCs that opt for a Documentation-Required verification method require voters to submit identification and documentation to corroborate their eligibility claim. Stakeholders who wish to participate in Documentation-Required NC elections may refer to [Attachment C: 2021 NC Election Documentation Guide](#) for more information.

5. VOTE-BY-MAIL OPERATIONS

5.1 Vote-By-Mail Application

Stakeholders interested in voting must complete a VBM application through an online portal or a paper application. The City Clerk will use this form to determine the voter's eligibility and which ballot(s) to issue to the voter.

When completing a VBM application, candidates must provide the following information:

1. Neighborhood Council Name;
2. First, Middle, and Last Name;
3. Qualifying information used to determine Stakeholder Status (Live, Work, Own property, or Community Interest);
4. Date of Birth;
5. Mailing Address;

6. If documentation is required, documentation must be provided proving stakeholder status (See [Attachment C: 2021 NC Election Documentation Guide](#));
7. If submitting a paper form, a candidate must also provide their signature.

A voter's information on the VBM application is subject to limited disclosure under the California Public Records Act. Please see [Section 8: Public Records Requests](#) below for more information.

Stakeholders who do not submit a VBM application, fail to submit documentation (if applicable), or who do not meet specific voter requirements will not receive a ballot.

5.2 Vote-By-Mail Period

The VBM application period will begin 60 days before Election Day. All VBM applications must be received 7 days prior to Election Day by 5:00 p.m., Pacific Standard Time.

Ballot(s) will be mailed to the voter beginning 29 days before Election Day. Please review [Attachment B: 2021 NC Election Timeline](#) for exact dates.

5.3 Neighborhood Council Vote-By-Mail Portal

Stakeholders who wish to complete a VBM application online must first create a profile in the NC VBM Portal. To create a profile, stakeholders can access the NC VBM Portal at _____ and complete the following steps:

1. Click on the 'Create New Account' button and enter the following information:
 - a. First and Last Name
 - b. Email Address
2. An email will be sent to the stakeholders confirming registration. Stakeholders will create a Password. The Password must be at least eight (8) characters long and must include at least one (1) uppercase letter, one (1) lowercase letter, one (1) number, and one (1) punctuation character. Example: **Password8\$**.
3. Click 'Submit'.

Once the password has been confirmed, stakeholders will automatically be returned to the NC VBM Portal, where they can sign in with their email and password to begin the VBM Application. When creating a new user profile, it is strongly suggested that stakeholders write down their login information. Voters can reset their password by using the *Forgot Password* link.

Stakeholders will be able to track the status of their application and ballot in the NC VBM Portal.

City Clerk staff will be available throughout the VBM application period, during regular City business hours, to assist stakeholders with their filing.

5.4 Completing a Vote-By-Mail Paper Application

Stakeholders may also submit a paper VBM application to receive a NC ballot. City Clerk staff will enter the information on the paper application into the VBM portal for processing. Paper applications may be submitted by mail, email, or fax at the following:

Office of the City Clerk
Election Division
C. Erwin Piper Technical Center
555 Ramirez Street, Space 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Email: clerk.electionsnclacity.org

Fax: (213) 978-0376

NOTE: An authorized agent may return paper applications on behalf of the voter. Voters must complete the "Authorized Agent" portion of the application.

5.5 Voting in Multiple Neighborhood Councils

Stakeholders may be eligible to vote in multiple NCs provided they meet each NC's voter requirements. Stakeholders may submit only one application per NC.

5.6 Official Ballots

The City Clerk will conduct a random alphabetical drawing to determine in which order candidate names will appear on the ballot for all NC elections. The drawing will be posted on the City Clerk's livestream Youtube channel and included in the Election Division's webpage.

The City Clerk will be responsible for developing and printing the official ballots for all NC elections.

Voters will be provided with a postage-paid envelope to return voted ballots.

5.7 Replacement Ballots

In the event that a stakeholder does not receive a ballot, makes an error while voting the ballot, or receives the wrong ballot, the stakeholder must contact the City Clerk to request a replacement ballot. Once a ballot is reissued, the original ballot is voided.

5.8 Election Day Ballot Boxes

On Election Day, ballot boxes will be located within each NC to accommodate voters who were unable to mail their ballot. Ballot box locations and hours will be posted on the City Clerk's website at least 30 days prior to Election Day.

NOTE: Voters may designate an authorized agent to return ballots on their behalf. Voters must complete the "Authorized Agent" portion of the ballot return envelope.

5.9 Electioneering

Electioneering is strictly prohibited at the ballot box on Election Day. Individuals, candidates, organizations, or other entities cannot solicit a vote, or speak to a voter, media representative, observer, or other person on the subject of marking their ballot on Election Day within 100 feet of the ballot box. This includes the audible dissemination of information that advocates for or against a candidate on the ballot.

6. ELECTION RESULTS

6.1 Election Tally Location and Time

The City Clerk will begin counting ballots one (1) business day after Election Day. The tabulation of ballots shall take place at:

Office of the City Clerk – Election Division
C. Erwin Piper Technical Center
555 Ramirez Street, Space 375
Los Angeles, CA 90012

The tally process is open to the public for observation via livestream. Links to the livestreaming ballot tabulation will be available on the City Clerk's website.

6.2 The Tally Process

The City Clerk will tally ballots using high-speed scanners. In the event these scanners are unavailable for tally, the City Clerk will hand count NC ballots.

The City Clerk will post unofficial results up to five (5) business days after Election Day and official results up to sixteen (16) days after Election Day on the City Clerk's website at clerk.lacity.org/elections.

6.3 Recounts

Recounts will only be available if the vote margin is less than 1% for a specific contest. Requests must be from stakeholders who voted in the applicable NC election.

6.4 Tie Votes

Tie votes will be resolved by drawing lots after the official results are posted. The City Clerk will conduct the tie resolution in public view and candidates or their designated representatives will be requested to be present.

6.5 Candidates Elected to Multiple Seats

Some NCs allow candidates to run for more than one board seat in an election. If a candidate is elected to multiple board seats, the candidate will be required to choose one board position no more than three (3) calendar days after the posting of the official results or from the day when any and all election recounts and challenges are resolved for the specific NC election, whichever date is later.

The board seat(s) declined by the winning candidate will be awarded to the candidate who received the second most votes. If there are no other candidates, the vacant seat(s) will be filled in accordance with the vacancy provisions in the NC's Bylaws.

If a candidate does not select a board position by the deadline above, the candidate will be deemed elected to the position for which the candidate received the most votes.

6.6 Election Challenges: Submitting an Election Challenge

Any stakeholder who voted in the applicable NC election may file an election challenge with the City Clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on the business day after the unofficial results deadline. A form to submit a challenge is available on the City Clerk website, here _____.

All election challenge requests must meet the following requirements:

1. Identify basis for the challenge to the election;
2. Provide contact information of the person(s) issuing the challenge;
3. Provide all supporting documentation, including any witness statements (Please note that no statements will be accepted after a request is filed);

4. Ensure the supporting documentation demonstrates the challenge is not only valid, but the alleged offense made a difference in the outcome of the election. Challenges without such supporting documentation will not be accepted; and
5. Provide optional witness statements (up to three (3) statements are allowed).

Information provided in an election challenge may be subject to public disclosure under the California Public Records Act. Please see [Section 8: Public Records Requests](#) for more information.

6.7 Election Challenges: Acceptable Challenge Categories

For a list of challenges, see [Attachment E: List of Acceptable Challenges](#).

6.8 Election Challenges: Processing Election Challenges

If the requirements are met, election challenges will be processed by the City Clerk and resolved by the Independent Grievance Panel. The Independent Grievance Panel will be composed of two (2) NC Stakeholders and one (1) staff member from the City Clerk's Office.

6.9 Election Challenges: Challenge Remedies

If a challenge is deemed valid, the panel will provide a written, recommended course of action. Remedies can include, but are not limited to, letters of correction/reprimand, disqualification of voters, NC funding penalties, and referral to the City Attorney's Office for criminal prosecution.

Decisions made by either the City Clerk or the Independent Grievance Panel are final and may only be appealed on procedural grounds.

7. POST-ELECTION PROCEDURES

7.1 Seating Newly Elected Board Members

Newly-elected NC board members will be seated in accordance with their NC Bylaws or EmpowerLA procedures after the City Clerk has issued certified election results and all election challenges have been resolved. The incumbent board members will continue in their duly elected/appointed positions until the newly elected board members are seated.

The newly-elected board must be seated as a single unit. If one or more challenges to a single board seat have not been resolved, the rest of the board cannot be seated. Any board member seat(s) that is/are not filled through the election process will be deemed vacant when the new governing board takes office. Vacant seat(s) will be filled according

to the NC Bylaws. If less than a quorum of the board seats are filled, then the NC will fall under the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners' Loss of Quorum policy.

7.2 Stakeholder Registration Information

Following each NC election, the City Clerk will provide stakeholder registration information to EmpowerLA and each NC. This information will be provided strictly for the purposes of conducting ongoing outreach. Once EmpowerLA and each NC take custody of this information, both are required to adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in the California Public Records Act.

Unless otherwise requested via the California Public Records Act, the City Clerk will not disclose personal stakeholder information to any other person or entity.

7.3 Election Records

The City Clerk will retain all NC election-related materials for a period of 90 days after the certification of election results for the last region.

During this period, the City Clerk will make the following items available for pick up by each NC:

1. Stakeholder Registration Forms (excluding stakeholder documentation) for any voters;
2. Candidate Filing Records (excluding candidate documentation); and
3. Ballots.

The newly-elected board must designate an individual to pick up the above-mentioned material on behalf of the NC. The designated individual must contact the City Clerk to schedule an appointment to pick up the materials.

Please note that all documents retained by a NC are subject to the California Public Records Act for the length of time the documents are retained by the NC.

Thereafter, NC election-related materials will be destroyed in accordance with citywide records destruction guidelines.

8. PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS

8.1 The California Public Records Act

Under the California Public Records Act (CPRA), the public may request City records. Once a CPRA request is made, the City will have 10 calendar days to inform the requester

what can or cannot be disclosed (with explanation), time needed to fulfill the request, and any applicable fees. Please note an additional 14 calendar days to respond is permitted. Extensions may be required due to special circumstances.

In some instances, City records may be subject to limited disclosure under the CPRA. A record may be subject to limited disclosure and redacted in order to protect an individual's right to privacy or to preserve the City's need to perform its assigned functions in a reasonably efficient manner. Otherwise, records related to NC elections are subject to disclosure under the CPRA.

8.2 Requesting a Public Record

Public record requests can be made either in writing (including e-mail) or orally. Although not required under the CPRA, the City Clerk encourages the public to use this public request portal: recordsrequest.lacity.org when submitting a public record request. This portal will help the City Clerk keep track of record requests and provide the public a record of previously published requests and records.

Please note that if photocopies of materials are requested, the City Clerk may charge \$0.10 for each photocopy. Payments can be made in person or sent to the City Clerk at 555 Ramirez, Space 300, Los Angeles 90012 prior to the copies being made. Checks should be made out to the City of Los Angeles.

8.3 Public Record Requests - Candidate Filing Information

Since candidates for NC board seats are vying for public seats, some candidate filing information is considered public information and subject to disclosure under the CPRA. Specifically, the following information is subject to disclosure:

1. Neighborhood Council Name;
2. Board Seat Name;
3. Stakeholder Type (Live, Work, Own Property, or Community Interest);
4. Name as it will appear on the Ballot;
5. First and Last Name;
6. Candidate statement and/or photo, if applicable; and
7. Any correspondence between the City Clerk and the candidate.

In order to protect a candidate's right to privacy, the following information will be redacted and is not subject to disclosure:

1. Date of Birth;
2. Telephone Number;

3. Email Address;
4. Mailing Address;
5. Qualifying Address;
6. Photo identification or any documentation necessary to establish board seat eligibility;
7. A candidate's signature, if applicable; and
8. Any identifying information as determined by the Office of the City Attorney.

Any private information for minors under the age of 18 will not be subject to disclosure.

8.4 Public Record Requests - Stakeholder Registration Information

VBM Applications are considered public information but are subject to limited disclosure under the CPRA. The following information is considered public information and subject to disclosure:

1. Neighborhood Council Name;
2. Stakeholder Type (Live, Work, Own Property, or Community Interest);
3. First and Last Name; and
4. Staff notes made regarding the application.

In order to protect the stakeholder's right to privacy, the following information will not be subject to disclosure:

1. Date of Birth;
2. Telephone Number;
3. Email Address;
4. Mailing Address;
5. Qualifying Address;
6. Photo identification or any documentation necessary to establish board seat eligibility;
7. A stakeholder's signature, if applicable; and
8. Any identifying information as determined by the Office of the City Attorney.

Any private information for minors under the age of 18 will not be subject to disclosure.

Please note that non-residential addresses must be disclosed and that completed Stakeholder Registration Forms may only be requested after the official tally is complete for a given NC election to ensure critical documents are available for use by staff when needed. This is to avoid any interference with the election process or the possibility of duplication and/or fraud.

8.5 Public Record Requests - Election Challenges

Election Challenges are subject to disclosure as a public record. When requested, the name of the person filing the challenge and the grounds for filing the challenge must be disclosed. However, a challenger's private contact information may be protected from disclosure as well as any documentation submitted by a challenger to support his or her challenge.

8.6 Public Record Requests - Other Election Materials

Processed ballots are considered a public record and must be provided upon request after the completion of the official tally. Any identifying information on paper ballots, such as a stakeholder's signature, must be redacted.

All other election documents will be considered public records, but may be subject to limited disclosure.