

exhaustiveness of the processes described does not allow narrowly drawn interests to survive. In each case a full range of ideas is considered by a broad range of constituencies and interest groups in full public view. Decisions and consequent design are debated and crafted by citizens acting as design and planning experts. Ideas, indeed design ideas, mutate and coalesce through either the threat of a direct vote or a pending vote of the people's representatives. Democracy, where "the people form a master that must be obeyed," once again takes command of the design of neighborhoods, streets, the city, and the region.

This democratic planning and design process, far from being ad hoc, is increasingly institutionalized through the formation of new layers of mandated public input. In this regard, voters in Los Angeles have recently approved two new means to facilitate public planning review. The first, a mandated network of city-sanctioned neighborhood councils, was one of the more visible outcomes of a voter-approved change to the city's charter in 2000. Charter reform also spawned a second means to formally address community concerns, the new Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE). This department oversees the self-organizing neighborhood councils that are locally elected and partially funded by the city. While the neighborhood councils are only advisory, they do have mandates to comment on any and all kinds of planning, development, and design issues. While the power to comment without the power to approve is limiting, the fact of their mandate now very much shapes council debates and decision making. The viewpoints of the neighborhood councils, given their propensity to highlight alternative approaches and breed visible leadership challenges if their viewpoints are ignored, keep the elected decision makers listening, coordinating, and cooperating.

In addition to the area planning councils and DONE, Los Angeles has created a stew of public planning checks and balances. Dozens of advisory boards oversee specific plans, historic preservation zones, community design districts, and specialized overlay zones throughout the city. Where these plans are in effect, all but the smallest projects are reviewed at open meetings for a wide array of use, bulk, and general design criteria. Many of these advisory boards in turn feed their work products to the neighborhood councils. Democratic micro-incrementalism results. Power is distributed. No one group has the ability to realize unreasonable demands. The net result is an organized planning filter that in aggregate is bending the development