



## MEMORANDUM

Date: May 19, 2008

To: Neighborhood District Councils and City Neighborhood Council

From: Stella Chao, Director

Re: District Council Membership

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Greetings! I want to personally thank you for the time and commitment all of you give to your neighborhoods, the District Councils you represent and our City. Allow me to welcome those of you who are new District Council representatives on the City Neighborhood Council (CNC) as well as those continuing in leadership roles on the CNC. The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) is committed to an effective working relationship with all of the Councils.

As you take on this body of work, I would also like to take this opportunity to share and clarify the role of the City Neighborhood Council as enacted through City Council Resolutions, including the City's guidelines for participation on the District Councils

The Neighborhood District Councils were instituted in 1988 as a part of City of Seattle resolution establishing: A Neighborhood Planning and Assistance Program for the City of Seattle. This resolution, which was amended in 1989, established the tenets for the Neighborhood District Councils.

***“Each neighborhood district shall have a District Council consisting of representatives of all community councils and neighborhood business organizations within the district who wish to participate.”(Resolution 27709)***

***“Other representatives may be added at the discretion of the District Council. The District Council will seek to reflect the geographic, racial, cultural, and economic characteristics of the district.” (Resolution 28115 added on October 18, 1989)***



One specific question from more than one neighborhood is: “Should non-profit organizations be considered for District Council membership?” Resolution 27709 and Resolution 28115 make it clear that the City Council supports efforts of District Councils to have broad membership and strive to be more inclusive. To that end, non-profit organizations should be encouraged to participate and be members in their local District Council, especially when representing the voices of traditionally under-represented communities. Our goal is to encourage more participation so community dialogue includes the many voices of the neighborhood.

**The specifics of membership in District Councils is the responsibility of each District Council. The Department of Neighborhoods is not prescriptive of your governance structure, nor has the City Neighborhood Council been given authority to prescribe the membership or governance structure of District Councils.**

It was in 2006 we asked each Neighborhood District Coordinator to work with their respective District Councils to increase community group and organization involvement so that District Council representation is reflective of the diversity of its neighborhood. – By the end of that year the District Councils increased their membership by over 25% and addressed many important community issues. DON gave \$1,000.00 per district in District Council Enhancement funds in 2006 and 2007 to aid the District Councils in their efforts around membership diversity, as we are committed to supporting your organizational growth and development. All of us in DON are committed to supporting the District Councils in our city-wide efforts to engage a broad and diverse representation from our communities.

As we move forward in our community-building work, I would also like to stress the importance and commitment that DON staff members provide quality service to the community. We strive to work with community members in a spirit of respectful partnership. DON staff members understand that their communications always need to be respectful, and in mutuality, that everyone also communicates respectfully with DON staff. Working together, we can more effectively advocate for stronger and healthier neighborhoods.

I look forward to supporting the Councils in their capacity building, and in finding new avenues for civic engagement that increases our ability to meet the needs of all our community members and neighborhoods.