



## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

November 5, 2007

Candidates for Election to City of San Diego Office

Dear Candidates:

Attached please find a letter dated November 5, 2007, addressed to the City of San Diego's recognized community planning groups. The letter addresses the subject of the groups' participation in the upcoming political elections. We wanted you, as candidates for office in the City, to be aware of the directives given to planning group members through Council Policy 600-24 *Standard Operating Procedures and Responsibilities of Recognized Community Planning Groups*.

The Policy advises a planning group not to lend its influence in the election of any candidate for political office. The Policy also advises that, when participating in political elections, a planning group member should not identify him/herself as a member of a planning group. This would apply to any sitting planning group member who is running for a municipal office; you are advised to not use your role on a planning group as a way to campaign on subject matters either within or outside the planning group's role. You may, however, participate, as any other member may, in an action of the planning group on any matter on the planning group agenda.

Please note that the Policy does not suggest that, as an individual, a citizen who happens to be a member of a planning group cannot participate in political elections – it only advises someone to not identify him/herself as a member of a City community planning group when participating.

Excerpted below is Article II, Section 5 of Council Policy 600-24. To view the full policy, please go to the City of San Diego's website at:  
[http://docs.sandiego.gov/councilpolicies/cpd\\_600-24.pdf](http://docs.sandiego.gov/councilpolicies/cpd_600-24.pdf).

If you have any questions, please contact me at 619-533-4528.

Sincerely,

Mary P. Wright, AICP  
Deputy Director  
City Planning & Community Investment

MPW:BAM

Attachment: October 26 Letter to Community Planning Group Members

*Section 5. A recognized community planning group shall not take part in, officially or unofficially, or lend its influence in, the election of any candidate for political office. Planning group members shall not identify affiliation with a planning group when endorsing candidates for public office. A planning group may take a position on a ballot measure.*

### City Planning and Community Investment

202 C Street, MS 4A • San Diego, CA 92101-3864  
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## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

November 5, 2007

Community Planning Group Members

Subject: Upcoming City Elections

The City's municipal election for council members and the city attorney is of interest to all citizens of San Diego. We, in the City Planning & Community Investment Department, are very aware of this. I wanted to take this opportunity to remind all elected members of the City's recognized community planning groups about the provisions related to planning groups, planning group members, and political elections. In your role as an elected member of a planning group, you are responsible for being familiar with, and following the requirements of, Council Policy 600-24 *Standard Operating Procedures and Responsibilities of Recognized Community Planning Groups*.

Council Policy 600-24, Article II, Section 5 states: "*A recognized community planning group shall not take part in, officially or unofficially, or lend its influence in, the election of any candidate for political office. Planning group members shall not identify affiliation with a planning group when endorsing candidates for public office. A planning group may take a position on a ballot measure.*" This provision is in the Policy to shield planning groups from political solicitations and pressures of individual candidates.

Of course, as an individual citizen, you have no restrictions placed upon you regarding your political activity. However, your community planning group as a whole and you, when you identify yourself as a member of the planning group, do have some restrictions. With City elections about to get underway, here are specific procedures for planning groups as a whole, and for individual members, to follow:

1. A planning group should not take a position, formally through a vote or informally, in support of a candidate seeking a political office.
2. A planning group should not invite a single candidate to speak to the planning group in any case: either when there are multiple candidates running for the same office, or when multiple offices have candidates seeking them.
3. A planning group should defer to business organizations or town councils or other organizations in the community to sponsor candidate forums. If there is no appropriate organization in the community to hold this forum, and a planning group feels the community would benefit from such a forum, the group should invite all candidates in the race to participate.
4. A planning group may allow any candidate to speak during the Public Comment portion of the agenda. The candidate should be given the same amount of time to speak on any topic not on the agenda as any other speaker would receive. A planning group must



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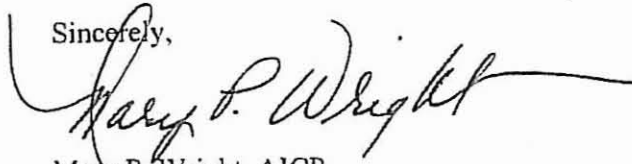
follow the Policy provision related to Public Comment, i.e., no debate, discussion, or action.

5. An individual planning group member should not identify any candidate's view during an item of business on the planning group's agenda.
6. An individual planning group member should not identify him/herself as a member of the planning group if making statements in support of, or against, any candidate for office. This statement should not occur during a meeting of the community planning group.
7. An individual planning group member should not identify him/herself as a member of a planning group in ballot statements, letters to the editor, or campaign material for individual candidates.

Again, our Council Policy-based advice to you is intended to preserve the impartiality of your planning group as the planning voice of your community. Positions on political candidates are outside the scope of your responsibilities as a planning group member. If you have any questions, please call me at 619-533-4528 or Cecilia Gallardo at 619-236-6578.

Thank you for your attention to the handling of political campaigns. Maintaining your political impartiality will keep your planning voice stronger.

Sincerely,



Mary P. Wright, AICP  
Deputy Director  
City Planning & Community Investment

MPW:BAM

cc: Mayor Jerry Sanders  
Honorable City Council Members  
City Attorney  
Community Planning Staff via e/mail