

# THE VALLEY VILLAGER

VALLEY VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



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P.O. BOX 4916, VALLEY VILLAGE, CA 91617

## Update on Colfax School Addition

On January 28, Colfax Charter School held the second public hearing\* on the Classroom Addition Project designed to absorb the growing number of families choosing Valley Village as their home and needing good schools for their children. The school is projecting an increase of 156 students by 2020, a fairly conservative figure chosen to ensure the friendly atmosphere sought by principals of elementary schools and LAUSD alike.

Alix O'Brien and Fortunato Tapia were on hand to walk the audience through a comprehensive slide show and talk about what comes next. Three designs were shown; the third (and the one most favored by all parties so far) features a two-story building housing 14 classrooms and Administration whose shorter side fronts onto Colfax Avenue; a generous new drop-off area is right outside. There will be a total of 86 parking spaces in the new configuration, if adopted, and questions regarding the state of the trees and the future of the on-site farm received positive feedback.

What next? LAUSD will continue its design development, with considerable input from the school and its stakeholders. In the fall of this year, the final design will be submitted to the Division of the State Architect,\*\* which will give its approval in 10-12 months; it is anticipated if all goes well that ground will be broken in early 2018, and the project will take 2 to 2.5 years to complete.

For more information and access to the 1/28 Powerpoint presentation, contact Fortunato Tapia, LAUSD Community Relations Dept., by email at fortunato.tapia@lausd.net.

\*The initial meeting at the school was on April 14, 2015

\*\* The Division of the State Architect provides design and construction oversight for K-12 schools.

## Manny's Beat

Area News!

There have been a total of thirty-five crimes reported between February 24, 2016 and March 20, 2016. With the warm weather approaching, we are starting to see property crime increase. The area most affected is on the Chandler Boulevard corridor between Laurel Canyon and Whitsett Ave. In these areas the crimes reported are stolen cars and car break-ins. Most of these crimes are occurring because car doors are being left unlocked. Protect yourself and your property. Lock your doors, hide your property and don't become a victim.

Recently, North Hollywood Division has been handing out "crime alert" flyers in these areas as part of our "Hide it, Lock it, Keep it" campaign. Remember to always report suspicious people in your neighborhood to the police department. It is important to remember that criminals often prey on those who are unaware of their surroundings or pre-occupied with something else. It is worth noting that most of the crimes are occurring between the hours of 12:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. That is not an opinion, it is fact.

Sincerely, Manny Arreygue  
Senior Lead Officer for  
Valley Village 818-634-0829

## North Hollywood School Project

At its second public meeting on the school's Comprehensive Modernization Project in February, representatives from the LA Unified School District brought those in attendance up to date, and explained the progressive stages: It is at present in the Design phase (approx. 18 months), followed by a report on the Environmental Impact on the Community (10-12 months), and finally Construction, which should take 2-4 years. Of the 582 schools in the District, 11 of them are in need of major upgrades; this school is one of the eleven, and at this point the projected cost of the work is \$197 million. The project goes to the Board of Education for approval at its meeting on April 12.

There are 2,700 students at the school now and, based on 5-year projections, there are no plans to increase the student population; all the work to be done is designed to bring this 90-year-old building into compliance with present standards while respecting much of its historic value.

For a copy of the slide presentation from the meeting on February 17, 2016, contact [jose.depaz@lausd.net](mailto:jose.depaz@lausd.net) who will send it to you.

## Notes from the Board Meeting, March 14

Officers approved a letter to City Attorney Mike Feuer requesting action on a specific Airbnb building that is considered to be in violation of the Valley Village Specific Plan. Also approved: A letter to Councilmember Paul Krekorian's office requesting action on installing traffic lights at Riverside Drive and Laurelgrove Avenue; Other topics of discussion: possibly hiring a "holiday truck" for this year's end-of-year celebration; optimum ways to present topics at the Association's general meetings.

### ***VVHA Board:***

**President: Paul Hatfield**  
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## A Letter from the President

The Valley Village Homeowners Association recently took positions on two development projects.

One was at 12444 Chandler, the Galaxy Car Wash site. The developers wanted to build a five-story, mixed-use structure with inadequate parking, definitely not in conformance with the Specific Plan.

It was opposed by VVHA and NCVV. What will ultimately be approved by the City is not clear, since the developer was using density bonuses allowed by law. These bonuses undermine the effectiveness of the Specific Plan. However, we are hopeful that the City will scale the project down based on our opposition.

Another project gave us pause, but we did not oppose it.

An apartment building will go up at Hermitage and Weddington. It will eliminate existing units arrayed in a park-like arrangement, with mature camphor trees. However, the project will be considerably less dense than allowed by the Specific Plan, and will comply with all other requirements.

It saddens us to lose established affordable housing and some of the trees, but it would be shortsighted to push back against a developer who is willing to respect the Specific Plan; that would be the wrong message to send. Other builders might then be inclined to propose projects which would exceed the maximum density using City bonuses. Why would they bother playing ball with us if we do not observe our own rules?

The Association is not against development, per se. We recognize the need for improvements; we just want to keep change within the overall scale of Valley Village.

Regardless, we are concerned with the cumulative effects of new commercial and multi-family housing. Under the best of circumstances, density will increase. With it comes a greater demand on over-stretched utilities and more traffic congestion – even with proposed rapid transit improvements.

The subject of density will be on our agenda for the general meeting on Wednesday, April 20, when Jill Stewart, former managing editor of the LA Weekly and now campaign chair for the measure known as the Neighborhood Integrity Initiative, will explain how this measure could impact density. It was initially scheduled for the November 2016 ballot, but has been moved to the spring.

It is a very technical proposal, so the extra time will allow residents the opportunity to review the details.

Please join us. Paul Hatfield, President

*Like VVHA On Facebook!*

*[www.Facebook.com/ValleyVillageHA](http://www.Facebook.com/ValleyVillageHA)*

## July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade – Share Your Photos, Share Yourself

We are starting to plan our fabulous July 4th Parade – it is one of the things that makes Valley Village special. So that others can see just what a swinging event it is, we'd like to invite you to **share your photos and memories** from parades past so we can add them to our website. Please email any items to: [valleyvillageha@gmail.com](mailto:valleyvillageha@gmail.com). Thank you!

Also it's not too early to **offer your help** on the day – we need help with set-up, directing folks on the route and much else. Please call or email Dorothy Apple (818-424-4440 or [appledorothy@gmail.com](mailto:appledorothy@gmail.com)) who has all the volunteer opportunities at her fingertips.

## Billboard Ban Upheld

On March 10, the State Court of Appeal, 2<sup>nd</sup> District upheld the City's ban on the construction of new billboards that was enacted in 2002. In upholding the ban, the Appeal Court overruled an alarming decision issued in October 2014 by Superior Court Judge Luis Lavin to strike down the City's 2002 ban on the construction of new billboards.

Judge Lavin's decision was based on his unusual reading of the free speech protections in the California Constitution, that the long-standing distinction between on-site business identification signs and off-site advertising signs (billboards) is invalid, and that billboards and on-site business identification signs have to be treated the same. Thus, because business identification signs are essential for businesses and are permitted, billboards must also be allowed. Drawing a distinction among commercial signs based on their *location* is constitutionally permissible; thus, other State court cases have upheld this distinction.

It has been a long struggle to control the proliferation of billboard blight, which has made the streets of this city uglier than those of other smaller cities. The very capable work of the City Attorney's office, it should be noted, was an important factor in the favorable decision of the Appeal Court.

But there's one more wrinkle: Because of State law, the City is prohibited from removing almost 6,000 billboards that still remain along the City's commercial streets, so it seems the people of Los Angeles will have to put up with continued billboard ugliness for the long-term future.

## Safety First on Riverside Drive

The intersection of Riverside Drive and Laurelgrove Avenue is slated for a traffic signal that has yet to be installed. In light of recent collisions that have taken place, the Association has sent Councilmember Paul Krekorian the following letter:

"The Board of Directors of the Valley Village Homeowners Association request that immediate action be taken to add a traffic signal at the intersection of Laurelgrove Avenue and Riverside Drive. This location has been slated for safety improvement for many years, but has yet to be realized.

"There are many streets in Valley Village that unceremoniously qualify under the Mayor's High Injury Network, and Riverside Drive is one of the most dangerous of them all. High speed collisions are frequent, and last December a person crossing the street was killed.

"We ask the councilmember to make this traffic signal a high priority and for other enhancements to make the streets safer for all residents in Valley Village."

According to a spokesperson at LA Department of Transportation, there is a federal grant to add 11 signals in our area, but it fell far short of the \$300K estimate, which may again delay this project.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Tax Break** ~ April 16 is Emancipation Day, the day in 1862 when President Abraham Lincoln signed the Compensated Emancipation Act, which freed about 3,100 slaves living in Washington D.C. The holiday, which is little known outside the District of Columbia, will officially be celebrated April 15 this year. That pushes the official tax-filing deadline to the next business day, Monday, April 18. That's right: Everyone – residents from Illinois, California and everywhere in between – will receive an extension to file their tax return.

## Village 'vents

**Wednesday, April 20**

**VVHA Membership Meeting**

6:30pm for refreshments;

7:00pm Meeting

Colfax Charter School auditorium

11724 Addison Street (see back page)

**Saturday, April 23**

**Earth Day Clean-Up**

9:00am. Meet at corner of Morella and

Huston Streets. Wear comfortable,

closed-toe shoes, bring gloves and a

rake if you have one. Questions?

Contact Dorothy Apple at

appledorothy@gmail.com.

**Friday, April 29 – VVHA Blood Drive**

8:00am – 1:30pm

Colfax Charter School auditorium

11724 Addison Street

*All blood donations will go to Children's*

*Hospital LA. Please make an*

*appointment to be a donor! It's a*

*perfect life-giving opportunity to help*

*those children who need just what we*

*have to give. Go to*

*<https://www.chladonateblood.org/ind>*

*[ex.cfm?group=op&expand=1402&zc=9](https://www.chladonateblood.org/ind)*

*1607. Questions? Contact Dorothy*

*Apple at [appledorothy@gmail.com](mailto:appledorothy@gmail.com)*

**Fri. April 29 & Sat. April 30**

**Faire of the Ages**

Fri. 1-6pm; Sat. 10am-6pm – Festival,

Silent Auction and Anti-Bully Challenge

Walter Reed Middle School

4525 Irvine Avenue

**Saturday, May 21 – Colfax World Fair**

11am-7pm

Colfax Charter Elementary School

11724 Addison Street

*Come experience the biggest*

*school fair in the Valley, with over*

*a dozen local food vendors, an*

*incredible Silent Auction,*

*inflatables, games, music, the*

*famous Colfax Cake Walk, and so*

*much more! Parking and*

*admission are free. Celebrate our*

*Valley Village community by*

*supporting this wonderful*

*neighborhood school!*

*See you there!*

## Building Projects in Play

Below is a list of developments projects VVHA is keeping an eye on. They have all been proposed within the past nine months.

1. 11680-94 Riverside Drive. This project is 16 single family homes with 36 parking spaces in a small lot subdivision on the southeast corner of Riverside Drive and Irvine Avenue. The houses will be 30 feet tall. The alley on the south side of the project site will be vacated. The architectural style is modernist.
2. 5303 Hermitage Avenue. This is 26 single family homes in a small lot subdivision along both sides of a short section of Weddington Street west of Hermitage Avenue. An open area with two 80-foot Camphor trees at the northwest corner of the site will be preserved as open space. The project has a Cape Cod architectural style.
3. 11443-57 Riverside Drive. This is a density bonus project to replace three single family homes with 29 apartment units (3 stories) on the north side of Riverside Drive west of the Hollywood Freeway. In exchange for the additional units, two low-income units will be provided. The building is three stories with a height of 36 feet. The architectural style will be modernist with façade articulation and several different materials.
4. Galaxy Car Wash Site. This is a mixed use, density bonus project at the southeast corner of Chandler Boulevard and Whitsett Avenue. Seventy apartment units are planned along with 1,750 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 80 parking spaces. Because it is a density bonus project, the height of this 5-story building (56 feet) is allowed to exceed the limit of 45 feet established by the commercial zoning for the site. In exchange for the additional units permitted by the density bonus, nine of the 70 units will be set aside for renters with low and moderate incomes. The architectural style is modernist with a variety of colors.
5. 5022 Whitsett Avenue. This is a nine-unit, density bonus condominium project with one of the units to be set aside for low-income tenants. The height is 35.5 feet and the design includes a Cape Cod-influence wood-siding front facade.
6. 4725 Radford Avenue. This is a density bonus project for 21 apartment units to replace an existing single family home. Per the density bonus, the building is allowed a greater height (47 feet) than the 36-foot limit established by the Valley Village Specific Plan. Two of the units will be set aside for persons with low incomes.

## Planning & The Specific Plan

At its quarterly meeting in January, our Association hosted a public forum on Planning. Moderated by VVHA President Paul Hatfield, the meeting included a panel discussion and Q&A with representatives of VVHA's Board, Neighborhood Council Valley Village's (NCVV) Planning and Land Use Committee and the Office of Paul Krekorian.

More than 100 people heard updates on Valley Village projects as well as an open discussion about planning and zoning, including information about the Valley Village Specific Plan and North Hollywood/Valley Village Community Plan. "The discussion made it clear to the members present that both VVHA and NCVV are dealing with development and mansionization issues to the extent zoning and ordinances allow" said President Paul Hatfield after the meeting. "Houses or projects that appear to be too large are in many cases allowable – however out of character they may appear – yet all cases brought to the attention of both NCVV and VVHA are thoroughly evaluated against the requirements of the Valley Village Specific Plan." Source: NCVV *Bridge*, January 2016

## Query Corner

Here are a couple of the queries your Association has handled in the past weeks:

Someone shot a bb gun pellet through your window. What to do? For such a serious event, phone Manny Arreygue (818-634-0829) at the North Hollywood Police Station, and think about joining a Neighborhood Watch chapter in your area. VVHA's Dorothy Apple (appledorothy@gmail.com) can help with Neighborhood Watch.

You feel your neighbor's fence is too high? Go to the Department of Building & Safety website (ladbs.org) and click on Report Violations. Including a photo of the alleged offending fence will get you that much further.

Keep the queries coming; we are happy to help if we can. Email [info@valleyvillageha.com](mailto:info@valleyvillageha.com) or call 818-506-5158 and leave a message.

## Sound Wall

We are still waiting, but don't despair, the 170 Freeway will have a sound wall. The design is ready for bids. The utilities are being checked. And we have a new potential date for the start of actual construction: end of this calendar year. You heard it here!

## Election Results

Neighborhood Council  
Valley Village - April 7, 2016  
Newly elected four-year term boardmembers are:

**Dorothy Apple**  
*Business Representative*  
**Glenn Block & Jeff Walker**  
*Homeowners Representatives*  
**Suzanne Lewis & Paulette Stokes**  
*Renters Representatives*  
**Dale Liebowitz-Neglia**  
*At-Large Representative*  
**Lisa Miller**  
*Education Representative*

## A Growing Concern

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The next best time is now." – *Chinese Proverb*

The recent felling of a magnificent 100-year-old pine at 11752 Huston Street and the general concern about the eucalyptus on the Colfax Elementary School campus merit a few sentences about the importance of caring for the existing great trees in our community.

From improving our health to improving our environment, trees work very hard for us, and ask very little in return. A tree-filled landscape reduces stress to passersby; workers with a view of nature are said to be more productive and have fewer sick days; research has shown that patients in hospitals heal faster if they have a view of nature. There has even been increasing evidence that tree cover correlates to reduced crime rates!

For all these reasons, taking care of our arboreal residents seems only fair. The Valley's extremes in temperature mean higher energy usage, but the shade afforded by taller trees offsets air-conditioning needs during the summer, and there is less need to keep resurfacing shady streets.

The bigger the tree, the more particulate matter it filters, the more storm water it captures and, by extension, the more benefit it provides to the community. What you see above you pales in comparison to what lies beneath you – root systems are frequently twice the size of the canopy! And while birds and other creatures live in the branches of the tree, an incredible ecosystem is sustained below.

The planting of new trees, no matter how many, is no substitute. Data shows that maturity matters; thus, it is imperative to preserve and nurture what we already have. It is well worth the effort to maintain the health of our beautiful trees; they more than return the favor.

## The Treasurer's Report

Welcome to Springtime in Valley Village! There will be many great events to enjoy over the next five months, the time of year when your Association spends a good portion of Member donations to put on our most popular events. Because we have increased the number of Members and thus our revenue by 20+%, we are able to do some serious planning, and we are now in the process of prioritizing our work projects for the next fiscal year.

- VVHA wants to spend more time – and thus money – on making sure our Valley Village Specific Plan is maintained, improved and followed by developers. This is so important to maintaining what we love about our village. Most residents are not aware that we will see almost \$250 million of improvements to our local public and private schools in the next 5-7 years a huge capital improvement that will make Valley Village an even greater magnet for families with children.
- We also want to plan more local outreach and beautification projects in the coming year and are requesting your ideas as a guide to what means the most to you, our Members.

As for our financial health, our balance on March 31, 2016 was \$20,676, which represents donations from 427 Members.

Thank you for your financial support and love of Valley Village. Please ask your neighbors to become Members along with you so we have a stronger voice within the City of Los Angeles.

Ronald Meyer, Treasurer

## A Real Sense of Community

We have all noticed the changes in our neighborhood, both for the better and for the worse. Sometimes it seems that they occur while we are sleeping. All of a sudden, a longtime, favorite restaurant is gone, or a grand, mature tree has been cut down. The price of progress, we may lament. Or, "Well, I guess that's just the way it goes." So often we feel that things are beyond our scope of influence, and those feelings contribute to a sense of helplessness.

The truth is that we each have power. And together, we have more power. But we must claim and assert that power in order to make a difference.

Small things can make a big impact. Like the parable of the seeds being scattered on the earth, we can't always know what the result of our actions will be, but it will likely be infinitely more beneficial than no action at all. Back in the 60's we used to say, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem." It is a timeless adage, as true today as ever it was.

And yet, we wonder what we can do. The answer is, quite simply, something. *Anything*. Do you know a senior who doesn't drive anymore? Offer to give them a lift to the store, or pick up groceries for them while you're at the market. Feeling lonely? Volunteer to help at the Colfax World Fair (<http://www.colfaxelementary.org/worldfair>). Frustrated with a neighborhood situation? Attend a Valley Village Homeowners Association meeting, or a meeting of the Neighborhood Council ([www.myvalleyvillage.com](http://www.myvalleyvillage.com)), voice your concerns and join others in finding a solution. Want to do something with instant results? Help out at the North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry ([www.nhifp.org](http://www.nhifp.org)). There is no end to the possibilities – any and all of which are worthwhile and contribute to the community.

The side effect of active participation is a sense of empowerment – that Valley Village is ours, we all belong to the Village. And we all benefit from that!

# Homeowners Association Membership Meeting

*Wednesday, April 20, 2016 - 6:30pm refreshments - 7:00pm meeting*  
*Colfax Charter School Auditorium*  
*11724 Addison Street, Valley Village*

## Featured Speaker: Jill Stewart

Jill Stewart, former Managing Editor of the *L.A. Weekly* and recently named Campaign Director of the 'Neighborhood Integrity Initiative' by the Coalition to Preserve L.A., will discuss the growing concern about housing density and its impact on life in Valley Village. The initiative's goal is to help preserve the character of City neighborhoods by requiring developers to follow the City's General Plan and other applicable laws.

Also at the meeting:  
Valley Village Homeowner Association Updates and Announcements

**Mark Your  
Calendar:**

*2016 Membership Meetings will be on Wednesdays*  
*\* April 20 \* July 20 \* October 19 \**  
*2016 Board of Directors Meetings will be on Mondays*  
*\* May 9 \* June 13 \* August 8 \* October 10 \**

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*Neighbors Working Together To Improve The Quality Of Life*