

# THE VALLEY VILLAGER

VALLEY VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



VOL. 19 NUMBER 1

January 2009

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

## Valley Village Mansionization Controls Recommended

In August 2008, after four years of discussion and debate, the Valley Village Homeowners Association and Neighborhood Council Valley Village recommended to the City Council a set of controls to prevent the further construction of out-of-scale single family homes in Valley Village. The proposed controls would limit the maximum residential floor area contained in all buildings to 34% of lot size. An increase in the floor area to 40% would be permitted if the second story is not more than 75% of the ground floor area or if there is set back of the façade of the second story by an amount equal to at least 25% of a building's width. This density bonus provides an incentive to create building articulation and avoid the boxy look that is a characteristic of a mansionized home. The proposed controls are very similar to what was recommended by the consultant retained by the Valley Village Homeowners Association in 2006.

The proposed controls are the result of research done by a subcommittee of the Planning Committee of the Neighborhood Council, which determined that the controls in the Citywide Mansionization Ordinance approved in the spring of 2008 would be inadequate to protect Valley Village from out-of-scale homes. The citywide ordinance would still allow 44% of the larger homes currently in Valley Village to be built and 88% if the density bonus is utilized. The research also showed that the location of the out-of-scale homes is unevenly distributed. Most are in the western and southern portions of Valley Village with the southwestern corner of Valley Village having the greatest number of mansionized homes.

In order for the controls recommended by the Valley Village Homeowners Association and Neighborhood Council Valley Village to take effect, a special overlay district authorized by the Citywide Mansionization Ordinance must be enacted by the City Council. Councilwoman Wendy Gruel's office is working with Councilman Jack Weiss' office to prepare a joint City Council motion to instruct the Planning Department to prepare an overlay district and take it through the steps of the approval process.

## Foreclosures In Valley Village

While the foreclosure crisis has decimated entire tracts in the outlying suburbs, turning some neighborhoods into ghost towns, Valley Village is fortunate. At this time, it appears we have only 25 homes in foreclosure, based on data from Trulio.com.

A few foreclosed properties may not have much impact on our community's overall quality of life unless they are clustered together. However, if you live by one such property, it could affect your home's value and make your block a target for vandalism or worse crimes. Although there is nothing you can do to prevent a neighbor from defaulting, there are measures you can take to prevent an abandoned property from becoming blighted. The most difficult period is usually the first several weeks, maintenance is often neglected. That is when you must be assertive. Contact your City Councilmember and ask for intervention by Building and Safety. You may have to make several requests, but the squeaky wheel gets the oil. If health and safety become an issue, the County Health Department or the LAPD may be needed. Here again, persistence is critical since service levels are strained.

If the property reverts to a federally chartered institution, you might contact Congressman Howard Berman's office to intervene. A federal bank will be sensitive about inquiries from the Congressman's office.

Be attentive to conditions on your block. Take action early. Valley Village Homeowners Association supports the efforts of neighbors working together to improve the quality of life.



## Mail Slot

This letter was received from member Lory Oberg regarding the 30 foot lot on Huston Street.

December 11, 2008

Dear Neighbors & Supporters,

It has been a long, hard struggle but today the fence came down at 11476 Huston St. and the property is for sale. We no longer have a 30' lot on Huston Street.

Thanks to all who helped, both actively and by just being there whenever you were asked for your support. It is amazing what people can accomplish when they are willing to make the effort.

Thank you, thank you. Special thanks to Tom Paterson who was our driving force and to Jim Dantona of Wendy Greuel's office for their support, to our Neighborhood Council led by Tony Braswell and our Homeowners Association led by Peter Sanchez & Breice Reiner. And of course to our dear neighbors and my understanding husband, Ken.

Thank you so much, Lory

(Editor's note: Lory Oberg is a longtime Valley Village Homeowners Association member and sits on the board of Neighborhood Council Valley Village.)

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## A Letter from the President

Dear Neighbors:

The national elections are behind us and the message was America is looking for hope and change. I hope that we can carry the enthusiasm, excitement and participation to our local election in March 3, 2009.

We will be voting for the Mayor, the City Attorney, the City Controller and other offices. Primary elections tend to have a poor turnout. It is not a good time for complacency. I don't need to tell you about the economy or the City's deficit, my message is vote.

Is hope and change what we need on a local level? You decide by casting your vote on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Peter

Ps: Another important election is below:



## Board Election – January 21<sup>st</sup>

Biennial election of officers and board of Valley Village Homeowners Association will be held at the January 21, 2009 membership meeting. The nominating committee, Stuart Simen, Lori Dinkin, Philip Raucher, Steve Simon, Page Adams and Robert Pine will present a slate of nominees who have agreed to run. They are:

President:	Peter Sanchez
Exec. Vice President:	Breice Reiner
Vice President:	Stuart Simen
Secretary:	Betty Velasco
Treasurer:	Cynthia Fagin
Past President:	Lori Dinkin
At Large:	Page Adams Steve Ajalat Jerry Fagin Kenneth Hearn Leslie Owens

Nominations for any office will also be accepted from the floor. Nominees must be paid up members of Valley Village Homeowners Association and willing to serve. The election is by ballot at the beginning of the meeting. The results should be available at the close of the meeting.

## Bylaws Committee Formed

A committee chaired by parliamentarian Stuart Simen has been appointed to review the Valley Village Homeowners Association bylaws. Board members Steve Ajalat, Ken Hearn and President Peter Sanchez will also serve on the committee. The goal will be to create shorter, more cohesive bylaws and to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the officers and the board members. The new set of bylaws will be presented to the membership at a future meeting.



## City Council Approves Billboard Interim Control Ordinance

On December 17, 2008 the Los Angeles City Council approved an Interim Control Ordinance, proposed by the Planning Commission, to prohibit the erecting of new billboards, the conversion of existing billboards to digital billboards, supergraphic signs on the sides of buildings and alterations of existing billboards and supergraphics signs.

The Interim Control Ordinance is necessary due to a breakdown in the City's efforts to control billboards in Los Angeles. After three attempts starting in the mid 1970s, in 2002 the City Council finally approved a ban on the erecting of new billboards and a sign inspection program. At the time, there were an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 billboards already existing in the City, some being constructed without permits.

However, along with the ban, the City Council also allowed exceptions to it. It approved an enabling ordinance that authorized the establishment of supplemental use districts. It granted the City and the City Councilmembers power to arbitrarily pick and choose which billboard companies were granted exceptions. Billboards were also allowed in specific plan areas. Several lawsuits were filed regarding the ban.

In 2006 and 2007 the City Council approved settlements to the lawsuits filed by five billboard companies, Vista Media, Clear Channel, CBS Outdoor, National Advertising and Regency Outdoor, against the sign inspection program. The settlements allowed in exchange for the companies removing 3% of their signs (equal to one year of attrition) that any illegal signs they had put up without permits would be retroactively legalized. In addition, the companies were allowed to convert up to 878 of their existing billboards to digital billboards.

These digital billboards are very bright. They are similar to the signs on the Las Vegas strip. They generated immediate protests when they were placed in neighborhoods such as Silverlake, West Los Angeles and other parts of the City. So far, Valley Village has been spared any digital billboards.

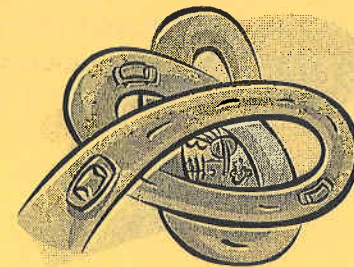
Another lawsuit, World Wide Rush vs. City of Los Angeles, argued the exceptions resulted in an inconsistent application of the 2002 ban. The Superior Court agreed with these arguments and in August 2008 issued an injunction against the City's enforcement of the ban against World Wide Rush's signs. This case is under appeal by the City.

While the Interim Control Ordinance is in effect, a new billboard ordinance is being prepared by the Planning Department in an effort to be more consistent to all billboard companies. The City Council should strengthen the 2002 ban by repealing the supplemental use district enabling ordinance and the provision which permits billboards to be allowed in specific plan areas. The City Council must not approve any more lawsuit settlements which legalize existing billboards or allow them to be converted to digital displays. This would result in a gradual improvement in the City's appearance over 20 to 40 years as billboards are gradually removed through attrition and are not replaced.

## Are We Finally Getting Soundwalls On The 170 Freeway?

In March 2008, State Assemblymember Mike Feuer wrote to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority CEO Roger Snoble requesting action on Valley Village 170 soundwall project. Enclosed are the Assemblymember's March 14, 2008 letter and the December 15, 2008 response.

Please take a moment to send an email or a letter to both Mike Feuer and Roger Snoble telling them you support this long delayed project and encouraging them to follow through.



# Homeowners Association Meeting

*Wednesday, January 21, 2008 - 7:00pm*  
*Colfax School Auditorium*  
*11724 Addison Street*  
*Valley Village, CA 91607*

## Valley Village Homeowners Association Board Election 7:00 pm

Also at the Meeting:

- > We will honor retiring Colfax School Principal, Joanie Freckman.
- > Senior Lead Officer, Mike Lewis will give an update on Valley Village police activities.
- > City of Los Angeles Mayoral Candidates have been invited to introduce themselves and answer questions regarding the March 3<sup>rd</sup> election.

Refreshments will be served at 7:00 pm.

VALLEY VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

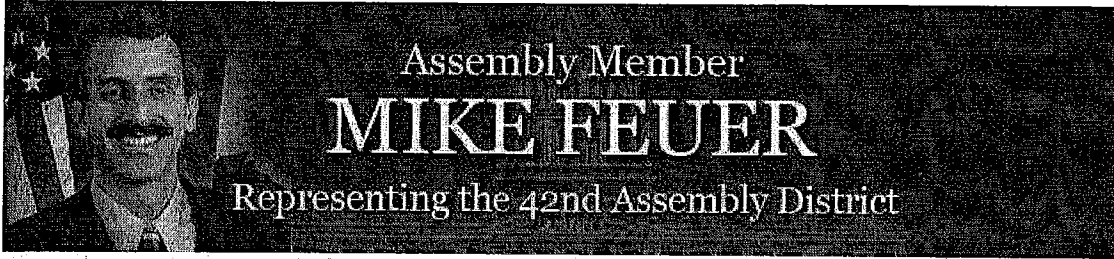


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*Neighbors Working Together To Improve The Quality Of Life*





March 14, 2008

Roger Snoble  
Chief Executive Officer  
Metropolitan Transit Authority  
1 Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Mr. Snoble:

In June, 2007, I contacted you to request that the Metropolitan Transit Authority take timely steps to provide funding to conduct the design study needed for Sound Wall Project Package 11 – specifically, the four sound walls planned for the 170 Freeway through Valley Village.

As you know, Package 11 is, and has for some time, been the next in line for funding. I realize it will take some innovative efforts to locate the money needed to begin this important project. Nonetheless, this community has long been promised this project and throughout their wait has dealt with the negative impact of the lack of sound walls. It is time for the MTA to make locating the funds needed to begin the design study phase of the project a priority and to keep its commitment to Valley Village.

As always, I look forward to continuing to work with Metro and I look forward to working together to provide this community the sound walls they have long needed.

Sincerely,

Mike Feuer  
Assemblymember, 42<sup>nd</sup> District

cc:  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Councilmember Wendy Greuel  
Valley Village HOA





Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

**Roger Snoble**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
213.922.6888 Tel  
213.922.7447 Fax  
metro.net

# Metro

December 15, 2008

The Honorable Mike Feuer  
Assemblymember, 42<sup>nd</sup> District  
9200 W. Sunset Boulevard #15  
West Hollywood, CA 90069

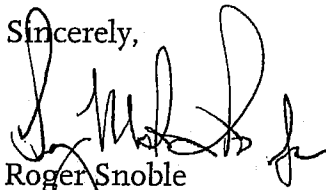
Dear Assemblymember Feuer:

We appreciate receiving your November 11, 2008 letter concerning Soundwall Package 11 along the State Route (SR) 170 Freeway through Valley Village in the City of Los Angeles. This Soundwall Package is the next one in line for funding.

As you may be aware, we have been working with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Los Angeles District office to identify funding for the design of this Soundwall Package. Currently, we are optimistic that design funding will be available through project savings from a completed soundwall project and two projects whose construction contracts were recently awarded for under the Engineer's estimates. If the funds are available, we plan to request Board authorization to proceed with Package 11's design in February 2009.

We look forward to working with you and your staff on this Soundwall package's implementation and other transportation projects to improve mobility for Los Angeles County residents.

Sincerely,



Roger Snoble  
Chief Executive Officer

cc. Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Councilmember Wendy Greuel  
Doug Failing, Caltrans  
Valley Village Homeowners Association  
Neighborhood Council Valley Village