

THE VALLEY VILLAGER

VALLEY VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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



New Name, Same Mission

Valley Village *Homeowners* Association has a new name and new logo but our dedication to serve our community remains the same. Why was the name changed and what does this mean?

A brief VVHA history lesson tells us that the Valley Village community first came together in the late 1930s. In the 1950s, the use of the name was over-powered by the influence and glamour of Hollywood and the influx of many actors who were moving into our community. So, the Valley Village name was moved to the side as North Hollywood became more commonly used. In 1986, the threat of four- or five-story buildings looming over our ranch-style homes caused residents to unite and the Valley Village Homeowners Association was formed.

Wanting to stand alone and separate our identity from North Hollywood, VVHA encouraged residents to use Valley Village instead of North Hollywood as part of their address. The Association also advocated for the protection of property values by creating the Specific Plan which laid down specific building parameters and was ratified by the City in 1993, two years after the designated area laid down in our masthead was named Valley Village.

In 2014, a new VVHA Board recognized that many renters were long-time residents of Valley Village and shared with homeowners the same sense of community – renters worry about affordable housing and overbuilding (which reduces street parking) and noise from the Burbank airport, and they enjoy walking and jogging along our quiet residential streets and in Valley Village Park. So again, the Bylaws were modified and approved, extending membership to all renters, though the Association chose to maintain homeownership as a requirement for serving on the Board.

Six years passed and another VVHA Board concluded that the Association's name was no longer a fair representation of its members. So, the Bylaws, now reflecting the new name and opening up Board positions to renters, were re-written and adopted at the Association's general meeting on January 20.

The Board's goal is to expand its membership by making its activities known to *all* residents as it welcomes renters into the fold. Valley Village Residents Association will serve all Valley Villagers with shared community concerns. After all, as VVHA always said, "numbers count when speaking to our government representatives." We look forward to working together for an expanded and brighter future.

Rob's Beat

Hello again,
Valley Village Residents,

I hope you have all been staying healthy and happy. The first quarter of 2021 has passed by quickly and



as we move back to a sense of normalcy, the LAPD continues our focus to address crime and reduce its impact in

Valley Village. 2020 ended with an overall 11% total crime reduction; however, the first 3 months of this year saw increases in residential burglary, personal theft and aggravated assault.

Residential burglaries are up a little, so we need to take the preventive measures that we know keep us safe: Make sure to keep your doors and windows locked when you're away from home; assess your exterior lighting; and consider installing a home video system if you don't already have one.

The increase in aggravated assault is in large part transient-on-transient related and we are responding to various encampments for outreach and enforcement as needed. Although we still have a considerable number of homeless

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Rob's Beat (continued from Page 1)

persons on our Valley Village streets, the area of Chandler and Laurel remains cleaner than in past years and we have had success in clearing out some of our past problem locations. Even with the crime increases in these categories, stolen vehicles and car break-ins are significantly down compared to last year.

A reminder to all, the City and County parking policies, relaxed because of Covid, have come to an end. Please be mindful of parking restriction signs and make sure your vehicles are current on registration. I don't want anybody to get an unnecessary parking ticket.

Stay well, everybody!
Rob Benavidez
Senior Lead Officer, Valley Village

A Letter from the President

Hello Villagers,

I dare say we might be turning the corner on the shut-down of the past year. It's been a challenging twelve months, but it hasn't been without some bright spots – families walking and biking together throughout the day, front yard-distanced visiting with neighbors, and wonderful chalk art on the streets reminding us to be kind and gentle toward each other.

Throughout the pandemic our Association has continued its work on the issues that affect our quality of life. We have recently created a Beautification Committee and intend to plant lots of residential trees along our streets (volunteers welcome!). Additionally, we are working with State Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian to get our freeway off-ramps cleaned up, and VVRA continues its advocacy for single-family and affordable housing. We have also been keeping a watchful eye on flights out of the Burbank Airport and the FAA's response to the Task Force recommendations made last year.

I look forward to seeing you at our April 21st General Membership Meeting via Zoom (details on the back page).

Best to all,
Beth Fulton, President

Keeping Our Fingers On The Pulse

Your VVRA Board members keep abreast of important local and statewide issues that impact our community, with the assistance of these particular organizations:

Livable California: www.livablecalifornia.org A nonprofit group that advocates for empowerment of local governments to foster equitable, livable communities and affordable housing. VVRA relies on Livable California for updates on housing legislation in Sacramento.

United Neighbors: www.unitedneighbors.net A California coalition to protect single-family residences while supporting affordable and equitable housing for all. VVRA follows and often acts upon United Neighbors advocacy and recommendations.

Scenic Los Angeles: www.scenic.org/losangeles Scenic Los Angeles aspires to preserve and protect the visual character of Los Angeles. VVRA particularly follows this group's advocacy against billboards – and particularly, at the moment, digital billboards in bus shelters.

These are all non-profit organizations that we recommend you follow and, if possible, support.

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The Digital Billboard Saga

When the ban on new billboards in Los Angeles was finally approved in 2002, it contained a loophole that allowed new billboards to be added through the establishment of “sign districts” (designed to allow the relaxation of the general sign regulations by considering the unique character of the designated area). Since then, the billboard companies have been attempting to use these sign districts as a way around the citywide ban.

Fast forward to 2020 when, after years of deliberation, the City Planning Commission approved a different version of the ordinance – heavily influenced by the billboard companies – that would allow bright, flashing digital billboards to be erected in Tier 3 sign districts, permitting them in all commercial and industrial zones, many of which are adjacent to residential neighborhoods. If passed, it would have reduced the ratio for removing non-digital billboards to 4:1 in exchange for new digital billboards, and it would require that 30 digital billboards be erected on City-owned property, resulting in the City of Los Angeles entering the billboard business which result in a conflict of interest of constituents’ best interest versus the City’s financial gain.

On February 25, the City Planning Commission voted to affirm its Version B+ of the Citywide Sign Ordinance (approved in 2009) by supporting the Planning staff’s recommendation to delete the Tier 3 sign districts, limit new digital billboards to only areas of the City designated as regional commercial, and impose a stricter takedown ratio of 9:1, which would result in a much better-looking City. In addition, billboards that were illegally erected and removed should not be counted toward signs taken down. Furthermore, no tracking devices should be included with the digital billboards that would enable them to gather data on passing cars and cell phones.

The Planning Commission’s Version B+ will be sent back to the City Council for final consideration. If approved, this version will ensure that digital billboards remain few and far between. It will also mean that the City’s appearance in the coming decades will steadily improve as those existing billboards removed as a result of new construction or un-renewed leases are not replaced by new ones of any kind.

July 4th Is Coming Up

In a nod to the continued need for Covid caution, VVRA will be hosting another drive-by food drive this July 4th in lieu of our annual July 4th Parade. We thought we would give you a nice long heads-up so you could make plans to decorate your cars most patriotically for the occasion and help us collect food for the North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry. Last year we delivered close to 5,000 pounds of food (plus another 2,000 pounds from our October drive). More details to follow in the June issue of The Valley Villager. North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry <https://nhifp.org>



Tiny Homes For The Homeless



LA’s first tiny home village, with interim housing and services for the homeless, has opened on a piece of city-owned property on Chandler Boulevard opposite North Hollywood Park. It comprises thirty-nine colorful homes, each with 54 square feet of space and its own locking door; showers and restrooms are close by. The village, named Chandler Street Village, is operated by Hope of the Valley, which has two more local projects in the pipeline, one under construction just north of Oxnard Street off Laurel Canyon. Councilmember Krekorian has been an active advocate in this effort to find homes, however temporary, for those people who want to leave the streets and make a better life for themselves.

Counselors at Chandler Street provide mental health services, legal aid and assistance with job searches, and it is expected that its 75 residents will use these services and housing as a stepping stone, moving on to more permanent situations in a few months.

Each unit cost about \$7,500, labor and materials, and the total cost of the project was about \$5 million. Hope of the Valley is reimbursed by the City at a rate of \$55 per day per resident to cover the meals and services. Source: LA Times 2/25/21

For more information see:

Chandler Street Village Tiny Homes project: <https://ktla.com/news/local-news/l-a-opens-its-first-tiny-home-village-to-house-homeless-individuals>

Development Projects in the Works

Proposed:

1. **5246-5250 Hermitage Avenue:** This is a proposed nine-unit apartment building on the east side of Hermitage between Chandler and Magnolia with a height of 58 feet/ five stories and 2 or 3 bedrooms; two of the units will be reserved for renters with very low incomes. Because the project site was recently re-designated as a Transit Oriented Community, it became eligible for height and density incentives – 20% increase for height and 3.98:1 for floor/area ratio. The existing trees will be removed and replaced on a 2:1 ratio with 14 Japanese maples and two palm trees. This project exceeds the height limit of the Specific Plan and recently was opposed by the Neighborhood Council Valley Village.
2. **5119-5125 Colfax Avenue at Hartsook Street:** This is also a nine-unit apartment project with 20 parking spaces. The project site is 14,000 sq. ft. and is zoned RD1.5. This will be a three-story building, replacing two existing buildings. Fifteen trees will be removed and replaced. The new building will have a brick and off-white stucco exterior and aluminum-sided windows. The project conforms to the Specific Plan.
3. **11710-11712 Hartsook Street, west of Colfax Avenue:** The number of dwelling units stays the same on this two-lot, small-lot subdivision. The property is zoned RD1.5 for lower density multifamily residential development, and the new building will have three floors and a height of 30 feet. Side-by-side rather than tandem parking will be provided. Access will be from both the street and the alley to the rear.
4. **5409 Morella Avenue:** This is a four-unit small-lot subdivision on an 8,000 sq. ft. lot zoned R2. It will have three stories, a height of 30 feet and two parking spaces per unit. Each unit will have three bedrooms. Four trees will screen the project from the single-family homes to the north. Eight trees will be removed and replaced with eight new trees.
5. **11829 Chandler Boulevard at Carpenter Avenue:** This is an S.B. 1818 density bonus project with 12 units, two of which are low-income, on a site zoned R3. It will have four stories and be 47 feet high. This exceeds the 30 feet permitted by the Specific Plan, which is overridden by S.B. 1818. The Council office will try to have the height stepped back.
6. **5229-5235 Vantage Avenue:** This 18-unit, 4-story apartment project is 45 feet in height and has 35 parking spaces. Most of the units have three bedrooms. The building has a modernist style and surrounds an interior courtyard. Because it is an S.B. 1818 project there is a 10% reduction in the number of parking spaces in exchange for providing bicycle parking.

Under Construction:

7. **Laurel Canyon Boulevard/Vantage Avenue:** Construction is nearing completion on this multifamily and single-family home project next to the Ventura Freeway on-ramp between Vantage and Laurel Canyon. It consists of four apartment units approved for the C2-zoned portion facing Laurel Canyon and one single-family home on the R1-zoned portion facing Vantage. The developer had originally requested 14 units on the site facing Laurel Canyon but on appeal the Area Planning Commission upheld the four units that had been approved.
8. **11700 Magnolia Boulevard:** This project – to redevelop the former auto repair shop at the southwest corner of Magnolia and Colfax Avenue with 19 residential units and 1,510 square feet of retail space – is almost complete. The applicant's intent is to create a quality design that will improve the neighborhood and be environmentally sustainable. However, the modernist design with its white exterior has been criticized for clashing with the more traditional architectural styles and colors of the surrounding buildings, particularly North Hollywood High School directly across from the project.
9. **Galaxy Car Wash Site:** Construction is underway on this mixed-use, S.B. 1818 density bonus project at the southeast corner of Chandler Boulevard and Whitsett Avenue. Seventy apartment units are planned, along with 1,750 sq. ft. of ground floor commercial space and 80 parking spaces. Because it is a density bonus project, its height of 56 feet/five stories is allowed to exceed the limit of 45 feet established by the commercial zoning for the project 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.
10. **5303 Hermitage Avenue:** Construction is well underway on a 26-unit small-lot subdivision along both sides of a short section of Weddington Street west of Hermitage. An open area with two mature camphor trees at the northwest corner of Weddington Street and Hermitage will be preserved as open space. The project has a Cape Cod architectural style that will be compatible with the neighborhood.

Completed:

11. **12147 Magnolia Boulevard:** This is an S.B. 1818 density bonus, mixed-use project with 36 one-bedroom apartments, 36 parking spaces and ground floor commercial space at the northeast corner of Magnolia Boulevard and Vantage Avenue. As a density bonus project its height of 47 feet/four stories is allowed to slightly exceed the 45-foot height limit established by C2-1 zoning. This project drew opposition from the neighborhood because its 3-story height was considered out of scale with the surrounding one- and two-story buildings and because of traffic and parking impacts on Vantage Avenue, a narrow two-lane street. The project was also criticized for the inadequate amount of parking provided, the minimal amount of ground floor commercial space, the lack of two- and three-bedroom units for families and its mundane modernist architectural style.

Back-To-School At Colfax

On April 19, local elementary schools will begin to open up for students after more than a year of distanced learning. The schools will have a staggered start, with a pupil-free day on Monday, and our youngest learners starting on Tuesday. While the District average for returning elementary students is currently at 38%, our local schools have a higher percentage – Colfax Charter Elementary School has around 80% of students who are choosing in-person learning.

While this is a step toward a return to normalcy, the schedule is not one we are used to. For instance, there are two different cohorts, morning and afternoon. For some classes the morning session will be in-person, while the afternoon is virtual. For other classes, where a higher percentage has chosen to return in person, both the morning and afternoon cohorts will be in-person. All class placement requests were made via a survey sent out by LAUSD; principals determined class placement based on survey results.

The secondary schedule is less well received and is being referred to as “zoom in a room.” Secondary students who choose in-person learning will be in school either two or three days a week depending on their homeroom cohort. They will remain in their homeroom for the entire school day while continuing to be on zoom with their individual teachers. This was the only solution that allowed students to be on campus while avoiding mixing cohorts among rotating classes. It was also determined that this late in the school year it didn't make sense academically to start moving students into different classes.

As we continue to show a decline in student numbers, and more of our population gets vaccinated, we are hopeful that by the Fall our schools will look a bit more like they did before the pandemic.

Back-To-School At Colfax



When students return to Colfax Elementary on April 20, they will see many changes. Passing along some information sent from the Community Relations folks at LAUSD, we learn that the new 2-story administration

building with 16 classrooms and 10 restrooms is finished, there is a new 2-classroom kindergarten building, new trees have been planted, the PA and telecom systems have been updated, and the farm has been relocated with, we're sure, the requirements of each animal noted. The auditorium, lunch shelter and car & pedestrian approaches along Colfax Avenue were completed in March, and the Auditorium, a new parking lot on Huston and many other exciting additions are due for completion this month. The beat goes on at Colfax, and the most current information is at <https://achieve.lausd.net/latestnews>.

Historical-Cultural Status

WEDDINGTON GOLF & TENNIS: Last minute: There will be a hearing of the Cultural Heritage Commission during the afternoon on Thursday, April 15 to determine the validity of making the Weddington Golf & Tennis property, now under the ownership of Harvard-Westlake School, a Historical Monument. If so recommended, the issue would pass to the City Council for final approval. Written comments on this issue may be sent through the following website: <https://saveweddington.org/take-action>.

MAGNOLIA BOULEVARD OAK TREES: On Thursday, April 15 the Cultural Heritage Commission of the City of Los Angeles will be considering an application for a Cultural-Historic Monument designation for the 15 Coast Live Oak trees shading North Hollywood High School along Magnolia Boulevard. Initiated by the prior chair of the Neighborhood Council Valley Village Vision Committee, Sandy Hubbard (also a VVRA Boardmember), and continued by the Committee, the historic designation seeks to preserve these mature and magnificent oak trees. Also, due to their cultural and historic significance; such designation will protect them from any future attempts to widen that section of Magnolia Boulevard west of Colfax Avenue.

The Committee enlisted the expertise of Charlie Fisher, a local historian who researched the status of the trees and prepared a report for the Commission. More than half of the trees are over 100 years old, dating back to the time of the Valley's agricultural past and the first stages of North Hollywood's development as a suburban residential community. In fact, they date back to the construction of North Hollywood High itself in the late 1920s and the subsequent development around it. Valley Village Residents Association, the Neighborhood Council, Councilmember Paul Krekorian's office and other groups and individuals all spoke in favor of this request and, based on the various favorable comments and reports from the Planning Department, it looks like the designation will be approved by the Cultural Heritage Commission and later by the Los Angeles City Council.

Safety In The Park

As of today, the pedestrian tunnel under the 170 freeway at the north end of Valley Village Park is wide open – it was closed in 1988 as a measure to reduce crime in the park.

The plywood barrier at the tunnel portal was broken into last year and the tunnel became a habitat for transients. It was completely destroyed when a sofa placed just inside the tunnel was set on fire earlier this year.

Efforts by both our Association and NCVV to have the entrance barrier replaced with one made of cinder blocks (which would match the one at the south end of the park) largely fell on deaf ears. However, due to recent involvement by Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian's office, the problem is now getting addressed. The CHP removed the tunnel's occupant in a safe and professional manner, a hazmat crew has taken out the debris damaged by the fire and, according to a very recent notification from Nazarian's office, CalTrans has agreed to seal the north tunnel by the end of this year – a welcome culmination of a long wait to restore our park to a place of safety for all.

Residents Association Membership Meeting

IN LINE WITH THE PREVAILING REQUIREMENTS OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC,
THE ASSOCIATION WILL HOLD ITS GENERAL MEETING VIA ZOOM AT

7:00PM ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21

This link and the dial-in phone number will be sent to you closer to the meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/97902581593?pwd=R2Q4OVFhU3NaMzFoSzZjQzIXNXBDUT09>

Meeting ID: 979 2058 1593 Password: 959578

Dial-In Phone Number: (669) 900-9129

**OUR GUEST SPEAKER WILL BE CONGRESSMEMBER BRAD SHERMAN,
MEMBER OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

who will talk about the current status of flight patterns out of Burbank Airport and other
legislation relevant to us here in the Southland, followed by a Q&A session.

Rob Benavidez, LAPD Senior Lead Officer - Valley Village, will give a short report.

**Mark Your
Calendar:**

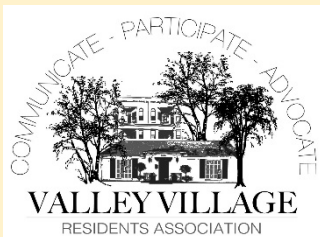
2021 Membership Meetings will be on Wednesdays

April 21 * July 21 * Oct 20

2021 Board of Directors Meetings will be on Mondays

May 3 * June 28 * Aug 9 * Oct 18 * Dec 13

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"Communicate, Participate, Advocate"