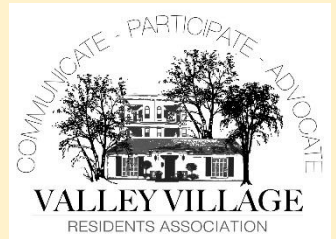


THE VALLEY VILLAGER

VALLEY VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



VOL. 33 NUMBER 4 October 2023 P.O. BOX 4916, VALLEY VILLAGE, CA 91617

LA Metro's Digital Billboard Proposal

The City of Los Angeles is considering a proposal by the LA County Metropolitan Transit Authority (Metro) to allow the placement of 49 digital billboard structures and 89 sign faces on land that Metro owns next to its rail and bus stations. In the southeast Valley, three of the signs would be in the vicinity of the Universal City Station of the Red Line subway, and three would be along the Orange Line busway in Van Nuys.

VVRA believes that this proposal is harmful to the public. The face of the digital boards will be 672 sq ft in size and the bright LED display will be allowed to change every eight seconds, which poses a major safety concern for drivers. Moreover, the lights from the LED display will intrude into residents' homes and alter the character of local communities into commercial entertainment districts. The rationale for allowing these new digital billboards is to enable Metro to post public service and traffic messages; however, seven out of eight messages on the signs will be paid advertising with the revenue split 50/50 between Metro and the City.

Under the proposal, 33 of the 89 sign faces would be facing the freeways with the remainder facing surface streets. In exchange, 200 existing non-digital billboards on Metro properties would be removed.

To make this program legal, a Transportation Communication Network District (TCN) is proposed to be added to the Zone Code. The TCN District is in addition to the existing Sign District that was included with the approval of the 2002 billboard ban. The Sign District provides a loophole that allows the City Council to grant exceptions for new billboards despite the citywide ban. It has been mostly used for entertainment districts such as Hollywood.

The digital billboard program would grant a major exception to the 70-year-old ban on billboards facing the freeways that has kept Los Angeles freeways free of billboards. The ban on freeway-facing billboards is a redeeming aesthetic feature of Los Angeles. With an existing inventory of around 8,000 billboards in Los Angeles, the removal of 200 existing smaller billboards will result in only a modest reduction (2.5%) in sign clutter along the surface streets. The takedown ratio of billboards removed versus billboards added will be only 2.32 to 1. About eleven years ago, a similar proposal to allow digital billboards was rejected in response to strong citizen protests.

Some say Metro has a history of putting its own interests first. For example, about ten years ago, then Councilmember Jan Perry approached Metro and asked whether the City could buy some surplus Metro-owned property in South Los Angeles for a much-needed park. Metro agreed on the condition that the City of Los Angeles establish a Sign District on Metro property on the north side of the Santa Monica freeway where it passes by the south edge of downtown. Jan Perry agreed to Metro's demand; the Sign District was established and two large V-shaped billboards with four sign faces were erected on the north side of the Santa Monica Freeway.

(Continued on page 3 **Metro**)

Rob's Beat

Hello Valley Village,

I hope everyone had a wonderful summer and is ready for the autumn season – I know I am!

This year continues to be good for Valley Village. Total crime remains down at 2.5% year to date. We lost a little bit of ground compared to the beginning of summer when we were down in crime by 6.0%. Crime picked up during the summer months for most of the North Hollywood Division.

The northern part of the division saw crime increases of 7-11%, while Valley Village, Studio City and Toluca Lake remained lower year to date. Violent crime is down a total of 32% with aggravated assaults being down over 50% compared to last year.

Property crime is up slightly by 1.5%, while grand theft auto (stolen vehicles) is up by 20.0%, and burglary from vehicles (car break-ins) is up by over 7.0%. If you have a garage, please use it. Also, check to make sure all of your key fobs are out of your cars and accounted for. A large number of vehicle thefts are occurring because owners are leaving fobs and keys in their cars. Remember also to remove all valuables from vehicles or move them to the trunk area and out of plain sight.

As a reminder, LAPD continues to hold catalytic converter etching events. The Northeast Division is currently doing these events monthly. You can check for dates on their website.

Stay safe and be well.

Rob Benavidez
LAPD Senior Lead Officer for
Valley Village

The VVRA Board:

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Vice President: Dorothy Apple

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Treasurer: Ellen Wilheim (pro tem)

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Membership Reminder

This is a friendly reminder to renew your annual membership. You can do this in a couple of minutes at: <https://valleyvillagera.com/membership>

The larger our membership, the more influence we have when local and state decisions are made. And your dues pay for *The Valley Village*, beautification projects, our iconic July 4th Parade, also to supporting our local schools and the expenses incurred to maintain a successful non-profit organization.

A Letter from the President

Dear Member,

I hope this issue of The Valley Villager finds you well as we transition into the beautiful autumn season. Fall is a time of change and reflection, and I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on our Association's recent activities and share some important information.

Firstly, I want to express my sincere appreciation to all of you who volunteered and participated in our recent community events. The success of these gatherings not only fosters a sense of togetherness but also enhances our community's strength and unity. I encourage all members to continue participating actively in our Association's events and committees, as your involvement is essential to the betterment of our community.

Here are some key updates and reminders for the fall season:

1. **Meeting:** Our members' Association meeting is scheduled for Oct 18th. (further details on the back page). We strongly encourage all members to attend. During this meeting, we will receive an update from Rob Benavidez of LAPD, and welcome our guest speaker, Nils Nehrenheim of Our Neighborhood Voices.
2. **Dues and Assessments:** Please ensure that your VVRA dues are paid in a timely manner. These funds are crucial for maintaining our Association work.
3. **Safety and Security:** With the shorter daylight hours, it's essential to be vigilant about safety. Ensure your outdoor lighting is working correctly and consider joining or starting a neighborhood watch program.
4. **Communication:** Stay connected with your neighbors through our community website and social media platforms. It's an excellent way to share information, stay informed about local events, and foster a sense of belonging within our neighborhood.
5. **Volunteer Opportunities:** If you have ideas for community improvement or are interested in joining our board or committees, please reach out. We are always looking for dedicated neighbors who want to make a positive impact.

In closing, I want to emphasize that our association's success depends on the active participation and cooperation of all members. Let's continue to work together to make Valley Village an even better place to live.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to me. Your input is valuable, and we are here to serve the best interests of our community.

Thank you for your continued support, and I wish you and your families a joyful and safe autumn season.

Warm regards,
Beth Fulton, President

New Developments on Development Round-Up

See pages 4 & 5 of the June 2023 Valley Villager, add the following:

Proposed Development Project:

12243 Riverside: This is a project that would replace a single-family home with a six-unit small lot subdivision. A 10% height limit increase has been proposed.

Completed Project:

11700 Magnolia Boulevard: This project redeveloped the former auto repair shop at the southwest corner of Magnolia and Colfax with 19 residential units and 1,510 square feet of retail space. The applicant's intent is to create a quality design that will improve the neighborhood and be environmentally sustainable. However, the modernist design with a white exterior was criticized for clashing with the more traditional architectural style of the surrounding area, particularly North Hollywood High School on the north side of Magnolia Boulevard.

Metro (Continued from page 1)

Adding these two large billboards would enable Metro to settle a lawsuit filed by the billboard companies whose signs had to be removed as part of the reconstruction of big and little Santa Monica boulevards. Critics of the V-shaped billboards were accused of opposing the new park for the residents of South Los Angeles.

On September 14th the Metro's proposal was approved 6-0 by the Planning Commission and it is likely to be approved by the City Council with our own Councilmember, City Council President Paul Krekorian, supporting it. Mayor Karen Bass supports Metro's proposal as well.

So far, VVRA and at least 15 neighborhood councils are in opposition to Metro's plan.

Tell the five members of the Planning Committee of the Los Angeles City Council what you think about Metro's Digital Billboard Proposal.
Send your emails to:

Heather Hutt
cd10@lacity.org

Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Chair
Councilmember.Harris-Dawson@lacity.org

John Lee, Vice Chair
Councilmember.Lee@lacity.org

Katy Yaroslavsky
Councilmember.Yaroslavsky@lacity.org

Imelda Padilla
Councilmember.Padilla@lacity.org

North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry Needs Your Help

The North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry (NHIFP) is experiencing a dramatic increase in food distribution to those in need. In addition to pandemic-related relief coming to a halt, the WGA and SAG/AFTRA strike has impacted this need at an alarming rate. There is currently a 25% increase in the NHIFP clients - up from an average of 300 grocery bags distributed weekly to 400 bags distributed weekly. Because the NHIFP heavily relies on food donations and volunteers to serve our community, the need for food donations and volunteers has seriously increased as well during this particularly challenging time.

GET INVOLVED - the need is great and the effort is gratifying. Volunteers pack grocery bags, sort and stock food donations, and work the line on distribution days. Organize a food drive in your neighborhood, workplace, book club, school, or simply pick up some extra canned goods to donate on your next trip to Trader Joe's or Costco.

To VOLUNTEER go to [NHIFP.org/volunteers](https://www.nhifp.org/volunteers) or email [info@nhifp](mailto:info@nhifp.org)

To DONATE FOOD go to [NHIFP.org](https://www.nhifp.org)

For specific needs check the NHIFP Amazon Wish List:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3M1500OZO59FV/ref=nav_wishlist_lists_2

The NHIFP drive-thru or walk-up Distribution Center at 11634 Moorpark Avenue, Studio City, is open every Monday and Friday from 7:30AM-11:00AM to both pickup groceries or to drop off donations.

**Ask a Neighbor ~ Ask a Friend ~ to join
Valley Village Residents Association**

Sego Nursery

A Valley Village Landmark

George Murakami of Sego Nursery has a wonderful story to share.

George is 90 years old. His father is from Japan and his mother from Oxnard, CA. George and his brother, Roy, grew up in the area and attended North Hollywood High School. After graduating high school, they attended Pierce College, and were part of the first or second graduating class.

During the Second World War, George's family was incarcerated at the Manzanar internment camp, where they stayed from 1941 to 1945. The family was liberated in 1945 and moved back to North Hollywood.

Fast forward to 1947 when SEGO NURSERY opened! The parents of both Roy and George were the two who operated the nursery until George and Roy were able to handle the day-to-day operations. Roy's children (third generation to maintain Sego Nursery) now operate Sego six days a week (closed Thursdays). George's children had no interest in plants. Roy passed a while back while Roy's wife was still part of the crew until about three years ago.

The nursery is a place of wonder – just about any plant, tree or bush you may want is there. You can see, touch, and grow vegetables to eat. George explained that his parents instructed both brothers when they were very young to: “Always take care of the customer; give customers advice and instructions on what to do with whatever plant they are purchasing; help with the growth process of the plants and assist whenever possible to keep customers happy.”

Roy and George's Father loved cats – when they purchased the property there were feral cats all over. George estimated between 30-40 cats. These cats were fed and were given a life off the streets where they would be safe. To that end, today you can still see a feline in the store.

Cheers to tradition!

Presentation and Q&A from the Bureau of Street Services

At July's Membership Meeting, VVRA welcomed guest speakers from the City of L.A.'s Bureau of Street Services (Streets LA) to learn about the street maintenance process and to get specific maintenance questions addressed. Guest speakers included:

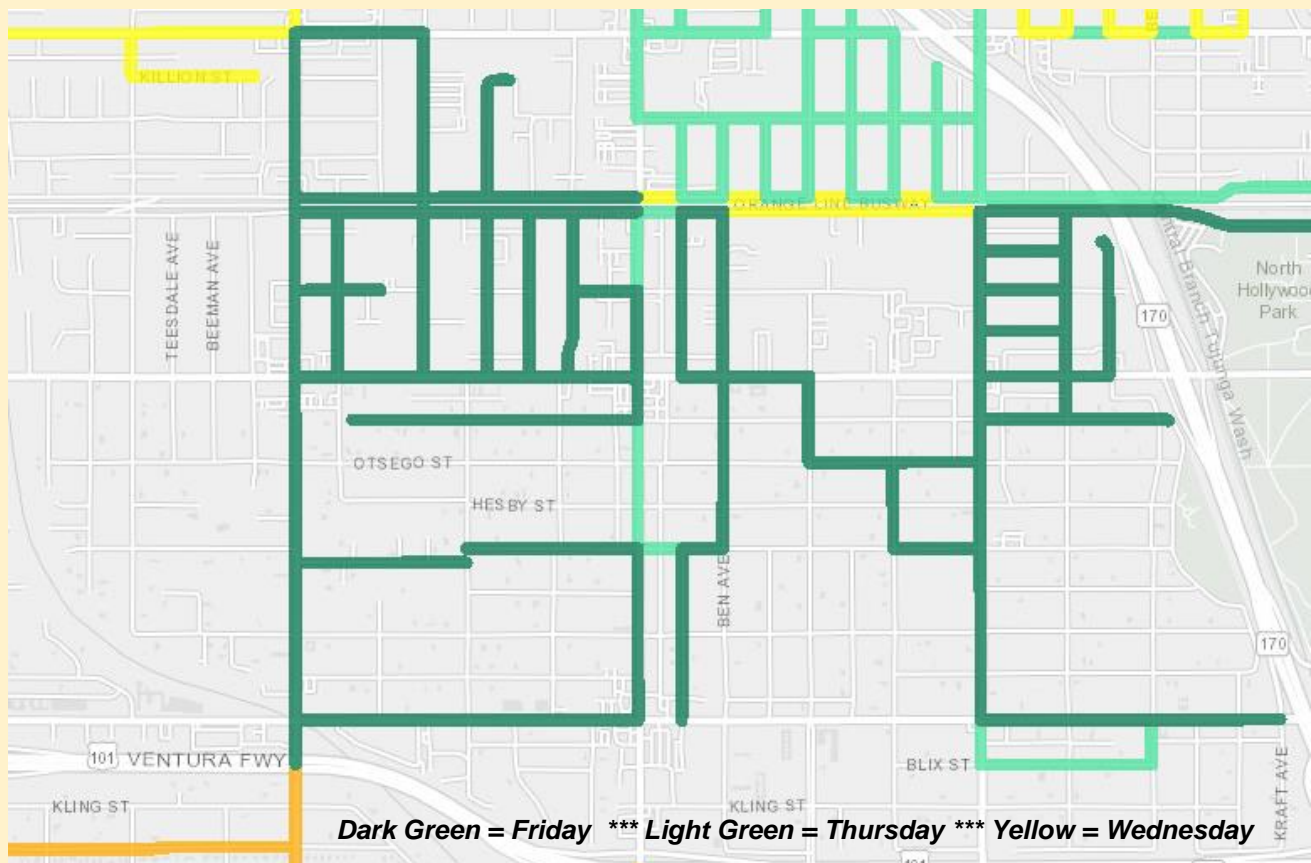
- Dan Haldan, Senior Advisor, External Relations Team
- Stephen Duprey, Street Tree Superintendent, Urban Forestry Division
- Darline Mallet, Street Maintenance Division
- Elias Najjar, Tree Surgeon Supervisor, Urban Forestry Division
- Sherarade Nichols, Division Manager, Street Renewal Division
- Craig Shaw, General Superintendent, Bureau of Street Services

There were three divisions of Streets LA that presented information – The Street Maintenance Division (SMD); Street Renewal Division (SRD); and Urban Forestry Division (UFD).

Street Maintenance Division (SMD)

The Street Maintenance Division performs regular maintenance functions to keep streets clean and free of debris, including biweekly street sweeping. Street sweeping routes were established by the City Council and have remained set for decades. When resources are available, members of the public may request special street sweeping for a non-posted route.

Posted bi-weekly street sweeping routes for Valley Village are shown on the map.



You can find out more about your street sweeping schedule and sign up for updates at <https://streetsla.lacity.org/sweeping>. The City moved to a biweekly street sweeping schedule in March 2021 due to the ongoing challenges of the pandemic.

Street Renewal Division (SRD)

The SRD maintains and repairs the City's street system, which includes 23,000 lane miles of street and 800 miles of alleys, the largest municipal street system in the nation. Most of SRD's work involves resurfacing and slurry seal projects:

- Resurfacing involves comprehensive repaving of streets. On average, this occurs every 15-20 years for select streets and 25-30 years for local streets.

Street Services continued

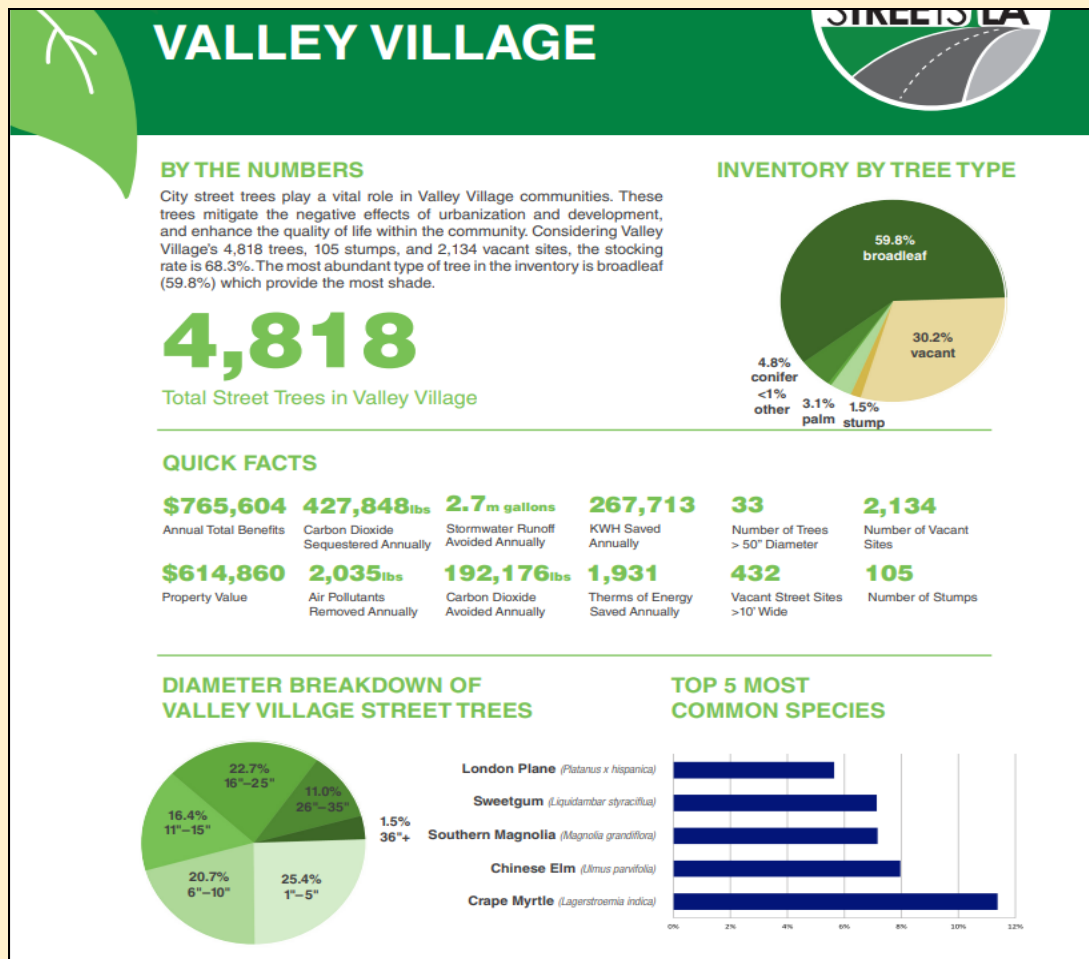
- Slurry Seal functions as a “maintenance coat” and is done, on average, every 3-5 years for select streets. The seal is applied to prevent water penetration into the asphalt and inhibit oil from oxidizing the pavement, extending the serviceable life of the street. Year to date, nearly three miles of Valley Village streets received slurry seal. It’s important to note that slurry seal projects can be cancelled due to weather such as rain.

As residents, it is more common to observe crews working on Slurry Seal projects given the frequency (every 3-5 years) compared to Resurfacing projections (every 15-20 years).

Street conditions are assessed annually and repaired based on the area and need. The Pavement Condition Index (PCI) for Valley Village indicates most streets are in good condition. More information, including an interactive map, is viewable via the “Road Repair” link: <https://streetsla.lacity.org/>. Once on the map, click on “Pavement Preservation” to review streets identified for work.

Urban Forestry Division (UFD)

The UFD manages roughly 700,000 street trees growing along 6,500 miles of public roads. It is responsible for a significant portion of the City’s urban forest, which is comprised of street trees, native protected trees and shrubs, landscaped median islands, and most importantly, people.



We thank the Bureau of Street Services for sending a knowledgeable and helpful team to meet our members and answer their questions. The presentations were well-received by VVRA members. Members asked numerous questions on topics ranging from the cancellation of slurry seal projects to the need for tree trimming at specific locations. Responses by Street Services were thoughtful and informative.

This meeting reminded us that it is our responsibility as residents to report safety and maintenance concerns. Without our input, Street Services cannot address the areas that require attention. Service requests can be submitted through the MyLA311 Website or via the MyLA311 App. Please visit: <https://lacity.gov/myla311>

Residents Association Membership Meeting

***** IN PERSON and LIVE! *****

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18 - 6:45pm

Caldwell Hall, Faith Presbyterian Church, 5000 Colfax Avenue

Enter Caldwell Hall on Hesby Street

GUEST SPEAKER: NILS NEHRENHEIM, of OUR NEIGHBORHOOD VOICES

Nils Nehrenheim is a Councilmember for Redondo Beach. He supports preserving community character through balanced, sustainable growth.

Senior Lead Officer Rob Benavidez will give a short update from the Police Department

Light refreshments will be available at 6:45pm

Meeting begins at 7:00pm

**Mark Your
Calendar:**

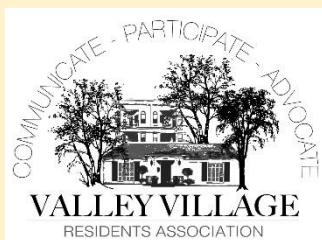
Membership Meetings in 2023 will be on Wednesdays

** October 18*

Board of Directors Meetings in 2023 will be on Mondays

** November 6*

VALLEY VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



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"Communicate, Participate, Advocate"