

CANYON AREA PRESERVATION

Information about preserving our canyons, hillsides, and the foothills.

Summer 2005 Volume 1, Issue 16c

VIEWS

LOCAL INPUT / LOCAL CONTROL



Canyon Hills Re-Scheduled For PLUM September 27

Whitebird Canyon Hills is a high density housing proposal on hillsides and canyons along the 210 Freeway near La Tuna Canyon Road and extending to the cross on Verdugo Crestline Drive in Tujunga. Whitebird is a Nevada based land speculator backed by Texas money.

The LA Planning Commission approved 230 clustered homes only on the north side of the 210 Freeway. Most of the remaining acreage is extremely steep and will be open space, except for parcels on the hill overlooking La Tuna Canyon Road where Whitebird wants to retain building rights.

Most of the 887 acres are designated Minimum Density in the General and Community Plans, but the developer is seeking a General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation to Low Density. If they succeed in winning approval from the LA City Council, they will **NOT** have to follow the Slope Density Ordinance, which limits the number of homes that can be built to 45-87 (depending on which map is used) due to the steep topography.

There are many other issues of concern: increased traffic on La Tuna Canyon Road, loss of wildlife habitat, sound walls in a Scenic Corridor, and more – all reasons to limit the density of new construction in our area as outlined in our Community Plan.

Come to the meeting to make your voice clearly heard and say what needs to be said –

TELL THE CITY TO FOLLOW THE LAW AND DON'T ALLOW A LEGAL PRECEDENT TO BE SET THAT NEGATES THE LAND USE LAWS WE ALL VOTED FOR.

We are continuing our efforts to get the meeting rescheduled in October to give us all time to change our schedules. Please visit www.verdugos.org to check if the schedule is changed again.

Planning and Land Use Management Committee (PLUM) *

Tuesday September 27, 2005 1PM

Los Angeles City Hall

Board of Public Works Hearing Room 350

200 N. Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA

Case No. CPC 2004-4344 GPA/ZC/MPR

Please copy this page and distribute as a flyer to your neighborhood.

* Time and location may change. Visit www.verdugos.org for timely updates, or contact us at CAPViews@comcast.net.

Canyon Area Preservation

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the editor's)

Getting To The PLUM Meeting

The absolute best way to get downtown to the PLUM meeting is by the MTA Subway Red Line. Parking is expensive and hard to find near City Hall.

Please carpool to the N. Hollywood station. It can also be hard to park there, so plan accordingly. It's a short walk to City Hall from the Civic Center station.

If you need a ride to the station, contact your neighbors and carpool. Choose a departure time that gives you leeway to get through security at City Hall.

Depart N. Hollywood	Arrive Civic Center
11:01AM	11:28AM
11:13AM	11:40AM
11:25AM	11:52AM
11:37AM	12:04PM
11:49AM	12:16PM
12:01PM	12:28PM
12:13PM	12:40PM
12:25PM	12:52PM
12:37PM	01:04PM
12:49PM	01:16PM
01:01PM	01:28PM

Depart Civic Center	Arrive N. Hollywood
05:07PM	05:35PM
05:17PM	05:45PM
05:27PM	05:55PM
05:37PM	06:05PM
05:47PM	06:15PM
05:57PM	06:25PM
06:07PM	06:35PM
06:17PM	06:45PM
06:28PM	06:56PM
06:40PM	07:08PM
06:52PM	07:20PM



Write A Letter NOW!

The PLUM committee members need to hear from you by Sept. 20 if you want your input to be considered at the meeting.

If you bring a letter to PLUM it will be entered into the public record. If you intend to file a law suit in the future, you need to bring up the issues in writing at this or other meetings on Whitebird.

The PLUM committee members really do listen! Please be factual with your input.

Los Angeles City Council, 200 N. Spring St., LA, CA 90012

PLUM Committee Members:

- CD1: Ed Reyes, Rm 410, reyes@council.lacity.org
- CD5: Jack Weiss, Rm 440, weiss@council.lacity.org
- CD6: Tony Cardenas, RM 455, Cardenas@council.lacity.org
- Our Representative for District 2**
- CD2: Wendy Greuel, Rm 475, wgreuel@council.lacity.org
- Don't forget our Mayor! Write him, too!**
- Mayor: Antonio Villaraigosa, mayor@lacity.org

SAVE THE VERDUGOS
Say "NO" To Canyon Hills
www.verdugohills.net/canyonhills

*Website for this group is now www.verdugos.org

Send Us Your Donation!

All of us involved with this fight against the Whitebird Canyon Hills development are volunteers concerned about our quality of life here in the foothills. The groups involved represent local citizens spending their own time and money to pay the costs of getting the word out. We need your help!

We hired a law firm to represent us at the proceedings, and they need to be paid. If this issue goes to a lawsuit, it will cost tens of thousands of dollars. Please help us (and yourself!) by making a tax deductible donation to:

Glendale-Crescenta V.O.I.C.E.
PO Box 273
Montrose, CA 91021
818-249-0900
www.gcvoice.org

- More information is available at the following:
- www.lacity.org/PLN - Click on "Environmental/Final EIRs."
 - www.verdugos.org - Local activist site.
 - www.canyonhills.info - This is the developer's web site.
 - www.gcvoice.org - Glendale-Crescenta VOICE.
 - www.savetheverdugos.com - New site with a great song!
 - www.sunlandtujunga.org - S-T Neighborhood Council
 - www.foothilltrails.org - Foothills Trails District NC
 - www.tujungawatershed.org - Tujunga Watershed Council

Frequently Asked Questions

*** How many homes is Whitebird legally allowed to build?** This is the big question. In the original Draft Environmental Impact Report it states that the Slope Density Ordinance and current zoning allow only 87 homes on the 887 acres of the project, due to steep topography. In Fall 2004 Wendy Greuel asked Whitebird what they *really* thought was the “by right” number, and they claimed they could build 175 homes spread across the entire property (now down to 169). Several experts in the community have determined that the number could be as low as 45 homes. They initially wanted 280 homes, but now the Planning Commission has approved 230. Confused? – We’re not surprised.

*** Is clustering the homes a better choice than building across the entire parcel?** There is actually no choice in the matter. The Community Plan and the Scenic Preservation Specific Plan REQUIRE clustering for new developments in steep hillside areas. Whitebird has “threatened” to develop the entire property because they know this is not acceptable to Wendy Greuel or most residents. They are using this as a “red herring*” to extract entitlements to more homes and higher density than is allowed “by right”. (***Red Herring**: comes from the sport of fox hunting in which a dried red herring is dragged across the trail of the fox to throw the hounds off the scent. Thus, a “red herring” argument is one which distracts the audience from the issue in question through the introduction of some irrelevancy.)

*** Does the “by right” number refer to homes, or to lots?** According to the Deputy Advisory Agency, the number refers to approved homes, not lots. The confusion comes from the fact that the land is zoned A1-1 which allows two structures for each 5 acre lot as long as they are under the same ownership, like a house and a barn.

*** What would the project be like if Whitebird followed the law?** We are not against development! And we want to find a solution that meets all needs. First, a correct number of allowed homes would be determined according to the math formula in the Slope Density Ordinance. That number would be clustered in the most naturally level portions of the property (roughly where Area A is now, north of the 210 Fwy near the Edison lines. The area *could* be rezoned as RE-40 (~1 acre lots) and the lots would accommodate horse-keeping. The project would obey the guidelines of the Community and Scenic Plans (no grading of hillsides). There would be no General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation. There would be no sound walls on the 210 (move or cancel the homes that need sound wall protection). If these condi-

tions are met, Canyon Hills could be built. But please don’t disrespect our Community Plan!

*** If the land is now designated Minimum Density and zoned A1, how can they just change the General Plan to allow a higher density project?** The Planning Department routinely grants General Plan Amendments, zone changes, and variances across the City of LA. Most communities don’t know of these kinds of actions, so they go through without any scrutiny. The difference here is Planning recommends a General Plan Amendment in order to avoid requiring the applicant to obey a land use law. ***More important, we are now paying attention to their actions.*** Apparently, the applicant has been coached by Planning Department staff as to how to achieve the goal of avoiding the law (indicated by Whitebird’s lawyer’s outburst at the Planning Commission meeting in Feb.). A zone change would be acceptable, but not less than RE-40.

*** How can the City allow sound walls along the 210 Freeway. Isn’t that now a Scenic Highway?** It turns out that sound walls are not specifically prohibited in the Scenic Preservation Specific Plan passed in 2002. Typical of Whitebird’s legal tactics, their lawyers say if not specifically banned they can do whatever is necessary to build their homes. If this is allowed, it will be governing with legal loopholes rather than following the intent of the laws as they are written. We will work to amend the Scenic Plan in the future.

*** How can I participate at this late date?** You need to focus on a particular issue of concern and write a letter or plan to attend the PLUM meeting. Are you worried about the traffic on La Tuna Canyon? The loss of wildlife habitat? The burden on our social services? The poor state of the emergency access road? The crossing over Verdugo Crestline Road with houses? Choose one topic and drive your point home. Need to know who to contact? Get in touch with CAPViews@comcast.net.

*** If I go to the PLUM meeting can I speak? Will it matter if I go?** The PLUM committee needs to know that our community cares. Your attendance at the meeting will mean a lot, regardless whether you speak or not. You should definitely register to speak, but be prepared to give up your slot. We expect upwards of 300 people, and not everyone can talk. If your issue is addressed by someone else, decline your time. Our community leaders will give presentations that should cover most issues, but it is your right to be heard if you want. Come and be counted!


Mayor Villaraigosa Endorses Whitebird General Plan Amendment

In a stunning show of insensitivity to the voters in CD2, LA's new mayor Antonio Villaraigosa signed an approval for Whitebird's requested General Plan Amendment in July.

We hope it was a case of not reading the material put before him for his signature (like how Radar got Colonel Potter to sign things in the M.A.S.H. TV show without his knowing what he signed!).

Councilmember Wendy Greuel and Chief Planning Deputy Dale Thrush told the Foothill Trails District Neighborhood Council on Aug. 18 that his signature was just a routine procedural act, but this document looks like an official endorsement.

We urge all our readers to write Mayor Villaraigosa and tell him he made a mistake.

TRANSMITTAL		
TO	The Council	DATE JUL 22 2005
FROM	Mayor	COUNCIL DISTRICT CD 2
<p>General Plan Amendment for property at 7000-8000 La Tuna Canyon Road (Sun Valley/La Tuna Canyon Community Plan - Geographic Area 1, Window No. 144 - North Valley) CPC No.2004-4344 GPA/ZC/MPR</p> <p>I herewith approve the above-entitled General Plan Amendment, and transmit this matter for your approval.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA Mayor</p>		
		7/14/05

Community Opposition to Canyon Hills Grows

People from all over the foothills are expressing themselves publicly about Canyon Hills. Individual acts of spontaneous expression are encouraged!

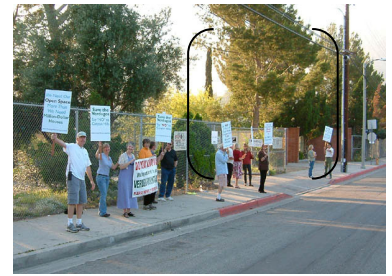
Clockwise from right: Mock funeral at North Valley City Hall mourning the death of our rural community if Canyon Hills passes; Councilmember Wendy Greuel's car in the Sunland-Tujunga 4th of July parade; the F.A.L.C.O.N. entry in the 4th of July parade – bulldozers knocking down hillsides will be coming to our area soon! But 10 times bigger than this Bobcat rented from Bonners in Tujunga.



Photo courtesy of Lynne Lucas, Deja View Photography

Photo courtesy of Lynne Lucas, Deja View Photography

C.A.P.
PO Box 633
Tujunga, CA 91043



Save postage. See the newsletter in color! Register your e-mail address with us today. Many e-mail notices have been sent this past year that have not been mailed. Keep informed. Register your e-mail address with us today!

About Canyon Area Preservation...

Please contribute the names and addresses of people/organizations you think can be important to our cause. Contact the CAP Views editor at CAPViews@comcast.net

Canyon Area Preservation was formed in 1997 by a group of homeowners and citizens to fight a development near La Tuna Canyon Road and the 210 Freeway (Duke Development).

Since then, we have been actively involved with informing citizens, government agencies, and community organizations about threats to the environment and rural quality of life in the Crescenta Valley, San Gabriel Mountains, and Sunland/Tujunga area.

Please join us. We are all volunteers concerned about our environment.

Feel free to make copies of this newsletter to give to neighbors, send in more e-mail addresses of people who want to help or know more, and contact agencies that can provide assistance. Thank you.

.....Important Contact Information.....

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www.SunlandTujunga.org/council

Valley Horse Owners Association
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La Tuna Canyon Community Assn.
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Tujunga Watershed
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