



**June 18, 2007 Meeting Report  
by  
David DeVoss**

**North Hollywood Finds Its Center**

The Thomas Property Group largely is responsible for the downtown skyline of Los Angeles. Soon the same thing may be said about North Hollywood. **Ayahlushim Hammond**, a senior vice president with the company, told Valley VOTE that her company soon will begin planning a \$750 million development of the Universal Studios backlot that will include 1.1 million sq. feet of office space, 300,000 sq. feet of studio production facilities, 25,000 sq. feet of retail and 25,000 sq. feet of parking.

As envisioned, the center of the development will be two 24-story office buildings fronting on the Universal metro station. The project is in accordance with the city's goal of concentrating new development near transit hubs. "This is the ideal location for development," says Hammond, "because it's a place where people can take (mass) transit."

Campo de Cahuenga (see following item) sits in the middle of the proposed development, but Hammond says the historic site will be protected and made more accessible by traffic improvements

There will be a community meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Marvin Braude Center on Van Nuys Blvd on Monday June 25th where the project will be discussed in more detail.

***Lest We Forget***

The San Fernando Valley is blessed with talented leaders. Chief among them is historian **Guy Weddington McCreary**, who is fighting to preserve what little that remains of the Valley's storied past. Several months back, McCreary briefed Valley VOTE on his efforts to preserve the crumbling Lankershim train depot, an 1896 structure that was incorporated into the Pacific Electric red car system. Years ago, McCreary was promised \$1.2 million to preserve the station, but the money never was spent. Because of bureaucratic indifference it now will cost \$3.6 million to restore and stabilize the property. Last week, the CRA finally agreed to spend \$1,011,000 million to save the station. The other two-thirds will come from the MTA.

McCreary also is fighting to improve Campo de Cahuenga, the old adobe in the shadows of Universal Studios where California Governor Pio Pico surrendered his authority to John C. Fremont on January 13, 1847. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed the following year made the dream of Manifest Destiny a reality and set the stage of California's 1850 entry into the union. Campo de Cahuenga has funding of \$160,000 to improve the building, provide some security and fund a

weekend docent program.

### ***Power to the People***

UCLA graduate **Terry Marcellus** is a personable public speaker who chairs the education committee of the Playa del Rey Neighborhood Council. His message to Valley NC representatives attending the June meeting: get involved with LAUSD reform even if you no longer have school-age children.

“When it comes to viable public schools, communities are the stabilizing factor,” he insists. “At our high school we’ve had seven principals in the past 15 years,” he says. “The problem is not the teachers’ it’s the managers.”

Parent teacher associations exist to provide direction, but parents usually leave when their children graduate. That’s why communities, and community leaders, must become more active, as is the case in Pacific Palisades which this year added 14 bungalows to serve as classrooms for students who until recently attended private schools. Marcellus also gives high marks to Grenada Hills High School, a charter school that also works hand-in-hand with the community.

### ***Neighborhood Councils: Use ‘em or Loose ‘em***

The 912 Commission, officially known as the Neighborhood Council Review Commission (NCRC), is charged with assessing the efficacy of Neighborhood Councils and is eager to hear from Valley residents who have an opinion about the performance of their NC. **Polly Ward** reports there will be a public meeting on June 30 in the South Valley at Pierce College starting at 10AM. The times and venues for all 7 public hearings around the city can be found on the Commission's website [www.ncrcla.org](http://www.ncrcla.org) -

### ***Airports Update – Good News, Bad News***

The first flights out of Palmdale by United Airlines commenced June 7. This is tangible proof, says **Denny Schneider** that Los Angeles World Airports is working to create a regional network of airports to serve Southern California.

Also this past month a new Flyaway bus service has begun from UCLA to LAX. Schneider expects this to be exceptionally helpful in reducing auto traffic from this area into LAX. LAWA has promised that at least ten of these routes will be established within the next few years.

Although there is new soundproofing authorized for those around Van Nuys Airport living within the federally mandated limit of 65 CNEL, the new noise monitoring system continues to be behind its implementation schedule. Almost a year behind schedule. Similarly, the Part 161 study to get FAA support in reducing noise around LAX and Van Nuys is also behind schedule. Schneider hopes to get a new schedule for the Van Nuys portion, but has been told that the LAX portion is on indefinite delay waiting for completion of a new flight mix estimate by the Master Plan section.

### ***Rental Housing Redux***

If the mayor and city council used economic common sense they would see the common thread between the growth of gangs and the shortage of affordable housing and change two parts of the Rent Stabilization Ordinance. Reinstating the original capital improvement permanent 100% pass through of costs would create thousands of good jobs, generate tens of millions of dollars of tax revenue annually, and preserve affordable housing at the same time. Allowing use of a just cause 30-day notice to evict suspected gang members and other tenants who make life miserable for their

neighbor tenants would significantly help reduce the gang problem at no cost to the taxpayers.

Valley VOTE treasurer **Vic Viereck** reports that at recent Los Angeles City Council meeting, Housing Department General Manager Mercedes Marquez said that there are about 115,000 two to four unit properties in Los Angeles. Those units total about 75% of the city's 620,000 "rent stabilized" units. To the extent that such properties may have the same lot size as properties with two, three, or more times as many units, there is already a pricing incentive for developers to buy the lots with fewer units. With the new redistribution fees (the politically correct term is relocation fees) of up to \$17,080 a unit, the concentration on the properties with fewer units is greatly intensified, if the developers even have any interest left in Los Angeles. The city council's efforts to meet a state mandated "Housing Element" is leading to densification that eliminates the feasibility of developing smaller apartment buildings.

Between the government induced densification and deterioration of older apartments, the practice of people investing in smaller properties in order to become middle class, and have a nest-egg for retirement, is being eliminated.

### ***Filthy Lucre or Clean Money***

The California Clean Money Campaign's (CCMC) San Fernando Valley coordinator **Robin Gilbert** notes that this spring, the City Ethics Commission issued a preliminary proposal for public financing of City Council races, which was forwarded to the City Council with the suggestion that it would benefit from extensive public input. The City Council Rules Committee has asked the Los Angeles Neighborhood Councils to review the Ethics Commission proposal, together with several alternative funding models developed by the City Legislative Analyst. The Neighborhood Councils' recommendations will be transmitted to the City Council for incorporation into a comprehensive proposal that reflects citizen priorities.

The City staff has developed an information package on campaign finance reform which will soon be sent to the neighborhood councils. In the mean time, CCMC volunteers have been speaking to neighborhood councils to provide a brief introduction to full public financing and encourage the board members to study the proposal in detail.

### ***1.3 Million and Counting***

Recently, the U.S. Census Bureau proposed removing the San Fernando Valley as a distinct location with separate reporting of census data. In a letter sent last week to U.S. Census Bureau Director Charles Kincannon, Valley VOTE President **Joe Vitti** urged Kincannon "to continue reporting data for the San Fernando Valley" in the bureau's census county division. "The San Fernando Valley is a unique geographic and cultural region and is recognized as such by the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles and the State of California. The invaluable information provided by the CDD helps our organization deal with issues of fair treatment for the Valley from all levels of government."

### **Valley VOTE Mission Statement**

Valley VOTE, a diverse coalition of San Fernando Valley residents, business people, educators, community activists and organizations is committed to exploring and implementing programs that empower the people of the San Fernando Valley and the City of Los Angeles, including opportunities to improve local governance, education and public participation on policy matters.

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