



# Valley VOTE

Organized Toward Empowerment Voters  
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## **VALLEY VOTE REPORT: October 19, 2015 MEETING**

Minutes accumulated by Denny Schneider

**Galpin Ford - 2nd Floor Meeting Room, 15555 Roscoe Boulevard, North Hills, CA 91343**

*Valley Vote meetings are held the third Monday of each month to address critical public policy issues impacting the San Fernando Valley. **The next meeting will be November 16, 2015.***

This meeting featured LA City Councilmember Mitchell Englander and the President of the Board of Public Works, Kevin James. Also presented were reports covering various topics of interest by several Board members.

To volunteer for positions as Board member and Executive Board member of Valley Vote or to see the dozens of impact position statements taken to improve the SFV visit our website: [www.ValleyVOTE.org](http://www.ValleyVOTE.org)

### **Mitchell Englander – LA City Councilmember District 12**



Councilmember Englander has been a regular visitor to Valley VOTE and was a member when secession was our objective. Unlike most presenters, Mitch used the majority of his time for an extended questions and answer period.

Councilmember Englander is President Pro Tempore of the City Council and Chair of the Public Safety Committee. He is also Vice Chair of Budget and Finance and member of Health, Mental Health & Education, Planning & Land Use, Board of Referred Powers, and Ad Hoc on Comprehensive Job Creation Plan. He told us that major disaster response programs are in place. One piece of that program is to identify people in need. Over 300,000 signs have been distributed which have the words "OK" on one side and "Need Help" on the other to be used to establish those in need of help. We have placed equipment in areas expected to be needed when el nino hits and also prepared for earthquakes as well. Crews will be on call as threats are anticipated as well. He praised the people who fostered the Disaster Preparedness Meeting.

He told us that our City takes hit and runs seriously and that the City routinely posts rewards for information leading to the identification and conviction of offenders. Rewards are a graduated range from \$50K for fatalities down to \$1K for property only. Last year 45% of all traffic collisions were hit and runs. The 21,548 H&Rs last year was down from 2005! LAPD keeps stats as to severity and location of all of these events.

See [www.La24.org](http://www.La24.org) to see our Olympic plans. Most costs are in infrastructure. We have most facilities already in place and the City has not accepted the financial risk of loss from an unprofitable games. This is important to being known for our world leadership and useful when consummating business with other countries. It will be good for the economy.

Plum is expected to approve the Granada Hills Community Plan update which will negate the ICO need that is in place. Mitch favors a mansionization ordinance to control the overbuilt size of homes built in our neighborhoods which are inconsistent with the area character. Ultimately, updated CP should address and restrict over building as well.

Mitch initially opposed the Mobility 2035 Plan because it had specific implementation requirements built into the Plan. Changes during the ordinance approval changed the Plan to a vision which left room for the

City to review projects and consider community input. There is a pending lawsuit which could invalidate the changes that made the plan palatable so this is currently up in the air.

Councilmember Englander strongly supports Business tax reform. Budget is the item holding back total elimination of the Business tax. 20 yrs ago 154 car dealers, is down to 63. \$30m tax to city is lost to LA due to the migration of dealers out of LA. Recently BH Porche was brought back by eliminating the tax for car dealers. Mitch is working on a 15 year phase out proposal in concert with convincing other Councilmembers of the potential for increased taxes by removing the tax and bringing back more businesses.

Mitch expects a compromise on sidewalk repair with relegating half of the future costs on property owners after they are repaired the next time.

### **Kevin James, President, Board of Public Works**



KevinJames, as head of Public Works, is making significant changes. He is also Film and TV Office head to coordinate support for the industry AB1839 tax credits and to streamline permitting actions. He has established a one stop for coordinating all of the permit actions within the City.

Mr. James told us that sidewalk repair will cost about \$1.4B and that it is expected to start this year. The legal settlement to do this starts with the City spending \$31m per year and this amount increases each 5 years for a total of 20 years. . Settlement set

order for repairs: first City facility sidewalks, then high traffic, shopping centers, hospitals, and then neighborhood sidewalks. A further requirement is that 20% of the repair locations must be w/o regard to location, but instead based on ADA needs. The City is seeking an ADA coordinator. Kevin suggested submitting service requests into the cue ASAP.

Budget and Finance held a "road show" to get input for preparing detailed plans for transitioning responsibility back to the property owner. The plan is not yet established.

50/50 dollars for sidewalk repair went rapidly and is no longer available. Many of us were surprised when Kevin told us that when meandering sidewalks around sidewalk-destroying trees were suggested property owners generally opposed them because it took more of their property. Ficus trees are a major cause of sidewalk failures and no longer being planted. See BSS.:LACity.org for list of approved trees.

More miles of street maintenance at the varied levels was done this year than ever before and it was done more efficiently by working with the Council offices to group streets. Although 2200 miles of streets was budgeted the City completed 2400 miles of paving this year. Pot hole repairs are being completed in about 3 days using coordination from 311 smart phone requests.

Bureau Sanitation will be starting multi-family trash pick up soon. Each area of the City has a designated, approved hauler.

Upgrades of street lighting is reducing energy costs. Many of the lights have been converted to high output LEDs. 164,000 converted street lights resulted in major reductions in CO2...

Street sweeping inconveniences are being reduced. A new tracking system on sweepers is allowing parking on restricted streets as soon as sweeping is accomplished. BSS.lacty.org will identify street sweeping routes delayed and so that no tickets will be issued in those locations. Traffic control cancelled and returned payments for tickets during the past six months for those affected. Next calendar year street sweeper schedules will be displayed on a software application to determine if it is legal to park on a posted street. Note that only 40% of the streets are restricted to allow sweeping.

There is a Clean streets initiative to pick up bulk items and trash. The LA Times did a public record request which showed sometimes poor services in parts of the City. Money added into budget to pick up the trash. The problem was not as bad as implied by the data. Recording pick ups as requested was not timely and sometimes done in batches months after completion. Sanitation is addressing this problem. The example of misleading information was that the data showed timely pick up last year of 50 tons from CD12 but a total of 1959 tons from CD9 which was supposed to have had bad service.

Another fix for utilites will be expansion of the City 311 Service Call Center extending to 24 hours instead of the current business hours. There will be a target of maximum 2 minute answer times.

LA has the largest urban forest in the country. In the previous five years there was nothing budgeted for trimming. This year \$4M was added to the budget. All trimming was being done by contract with Council members establishing priorities. Bids by contrators increased to double that expected due to no competition. When Tree Services added one City crew bids for jobs reduced by almost 50%. Whenever a dead tree needs to be removed use the MyLA311 phone application for fastest service. Kevin wants to double again the dollars for urban forest maintenance.

### **Valley VOTE Committee Reports:**

#### **Victor N. Viereck- Sidewalk Vending**

Probably the primary attraction to people who do street vending is the substantially lower cost compared to what owners of businesses in brick and mortar property pay. Some people, including elected officials, advocate some form of licensing for sidewalk vendors. They say that the licensing of sidewalk vending would raise the revenue necessary for enforcing regulations on street vendors.

Aside from any other problems that may be caused by street vending, reduced tax revenue would be a major problem. The substantially reduced cost of operating sidewalk vending businesses enables sidewalk vendors to substantially undercut prices at brick and mortar businesses. That reduces sales and profits at the brick and mortar businesses. Even if sidewalk vendors of merchandise responsibly report the volume of their merchandise sales, the reduced level of sales would be a big negative hit to sales tax revenue. Brick and mortar businesses also absorb a fairly necessary level of consistent overhead costs. Such costs cannot necessarily be reduced as easily as the sales level.

The impact of the reduced level of profit at brick and mortar businesses is also harmful to the community and the city. Reduced profit reduces income tax revenue. While income tax revenue only affects state and national revenue, reduced profit at brick and mortar locations negatively affects the value of such property. Reduced property value reduces property tax revenue. Sales tax and property tax are two major sources of tax revenue for cities, counties, school districts, and states. Too many other needed governmental services could be reduced as a result of the sidewalk vending.

Victor N. Viereck For additional info: Victor N. Viereck, CPA 12702 Tiara Street, Valley Village, CA 91607 (818) 985-9174 vicviereck@sbcglobal.net

#### **Ralph Kroy, Sunshine Canyon**

Background: The landfill is located at 14747 San Fernando Road, west of the 1-5 and 14 Freeway intersection, The facility is owned and operated by Republic Services Inc as the BFI Sunshine Canyon Landfill (a subsidiary). The landfill sits astride the Los Angeles City and County line and is jointly operated under a combined Los Angeles City and County permit. It is among the top 10 of the largest landfills in the United States.

Status: The landfill continues to receive more and more complaints and violations from the SCAQMD. For the last 3-years Sunshine Canyon Landfill has been 23-1/2 times worse than the 15 other landfills combined within the 10,500 square miles that the SCAQMD oversees. Since January 2009 thru September 2015 there have been 7894 odor complaints and 150 Notices of Violation (NOV) alone issued under AQMD Rule 402 NUISANCE which states: "A person shall not discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public, or which endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public, or which cause, or have a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property."

So far this year there have been 1275 odor complaints. In September 2015 alone there have been 337 odor complaints and 7 NOVs issued which constitutes the worst month EVER. On October 12, 2015 the landfill started a Pilot 1-year Alternate Daily Cover (ADC) Project using Geosynthetic Panels. Basically, plastic wrap is placed on the trash at the end of the day in place of the 9-inches of daily soil cover currently required by County Public Work who ordered it at the end of 2010 in response to the years of odors. It is alleged by the City and others that it will have a beneficial action as potentially it will replace the daily soil cover which they say contributes to the odor problem (its sulphurous, it causes lensing, causes wells to be watered-in, and it interferes with gas collection). At this point there appears to be a legal problem. While many of the local agencies have approved its use, the County of Los Angeles' Public Works has not, and has issued a letter stating that Republic will be in violation of their Conditional Use Permit (CUP), and that they will be cited.

There is a Phase III 10-year Review by the City Planning Commission scheduled for Thursday, October 22, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. at Valley City Hall which is supposed to consider the operational history, condition compliance, mitigation compliance, additional corrective measures as deemed necessary, and closure plans but it appears from the Staff Report that they asked for approval of compliance without considering the odor issue because it is under the control of other agencies. Ralph Kroy [REKroy@aol.com](mailto:REKroy@aol.com)

### **Susan Shelley – Pierce College Farm**

The effort to permanently protect the Pierce College Farm remains a work in progress. Pierce College Foundation chair Denise Robb has been working to schedule meetings with members of the L.A. Community College Board of Trustees to explain how the land can be protected with an agricultural conservation easement. This is a legal restriction that is recorded with the deed at the County offices. It would prohibit commercial or residential development on the farm, while allowing the full use of the land for academic purposes. The LACCD would continue to own and control the land, with that development restriction attached to it.

Currently, the Board and the College President state for the record that there are no plans to develop the land. However, there is no guarantee that this will continue to be true in the future. The Pierce College Foundation is asking the Board of Trustees to conduct a study of the feasibility of an agricultural conservation easement, and this request has the support of the college community including the faculty and staff unions. The request for a study also has the support of community leaders and elected officials including Valley VOTE, the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils, the United Chambers of Commerce of the San Fernando Valley, Assemblywoman Patty Lopez, and City Councilman Bob Blumenfeld. Some recent developments: Dr. Leland Shapiro, longtime professor of animal sciences and chair of the Department of Agriculture, retired. One of his former students, Dr. Lu Dao, has been hired to teach the animal sciences classes and to be the veterinarian for the livestock on the farm. However, the management of the farm has been turned over to the Plant Facilities department, which manages the buildings on campus, and there are serious concerns about the lack of

experienced and knowledgeable people managing the farm, and what this means for the future of the programs.

The concern is that the academic programs will be cut back to the point that the Board of Trustees will make a finding that the land is "surplus" and not needed for education. This would clear the way for the sale, lease or development of the farm.

The farm laboratory is expensive to maintain, and this is why the Pierce College Foundation is seeking to step up the fundraising to support it. With a legal protection in place for the land, major donors will be more willing to support the farm and it is believed that an endowment of \$20-50 million could successfully be established. Fresno State's Agriculture Foundation is an example of a foundation supporting a farm laboratory that would otherwise be forced to rely on limited dollars from the state.

And one last update: Pierce College president Kathleen Burke is seeking a new position as president of El Camino College in Torrance and is one of five finalists for the job.

Susan Shelley [Susan@SusanShelley.com](mailto:Susan@SusanShelley.com)

### **Ernie Hilger – Veterans**

A 700 acre site was established for Veteran homes and support in 1888.

In the earlier part of this century the expansive Veterans Administration properties in West Los Angeles were being leased out for non-Veteran purposes to the detriment of those Veterans in need of a home and support services. The Annenberg Foundation issued a detailed report identifying many inappropriate uses and ACLU along with six prestigious law firms filed several lawsuits by the on behalf of the Veterans resulting in rededication of the facilities for veterans and their families.

To achieve this purpose the veteran's community in Southern California concurrently formed a Veterans Service Organization Coalition. The VSo Coalition is composed of the following eight congressionally chartered VSO organizations consisting of Disabled American Veterans(DAV), in concert with the Veterans of Foreign Wars(VFW) I the American Legion (AL), American Veterans (AMVETS), Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH ), Jewish War Veterans (JWV), American G/ Forum (AG/F), Vietnam Veterans of America (VA).

Although now supported at all levels of government, the continued Veteran dedicated use must be vigilantly monitored to ensure that services continue to be provided and that non-veteran uses continue to be prohibited. The Plans are about to be released for 45 day public comment.

A "Veteran centric only" business plan and mission state for the rededicated "National Soldiers Home" on the GLA West LA VA is now in place. It is recognized and supported by the VA, Our Veterans Service Organization Coalition, the Greater Los Angeles Community of Citizens, supportive political entities (Federal, State and Local Governmental Agencies).

For more information: Ernie Hilger, Legislative Chair, DAV Chapter Camp Kearney, Van Nuys  
[ErnieHilger@hotmail.com](mailto:ErnieHilger@hotmail.com)

### **Denny Schneider - Airport Report**

Construction, Construction, Construction: \$\$Billions of work continues on the Landside of LAX... Most terminals have some construction going on, but the basic layout of the Central Terminal Area is unchanged. Improvements in space utilization are being mixed with a sprucing up of the look. The roadway and parking lots are also being given facial improvement. It appears that the Modernization will continue without major layout changes or improved design.

One real change will be mass transit access. As I've noted many times, the MTA Crenshaw-LAX line will have a new stop a couple miles from LAX on Aviation Boulevard at 98th street.

Connection into LAX will be via an automated people mover (APM) from that station which will

include a stop at an Integrated Transportation Modal Center of buses, cabs, vans, and auto drop off. The APM will connect that station with a new consolidated rental car facility in Manchester Square along with some hotels into the Central Terminal Area (CTA).

The target date for this transit activity completion is before the 2024 Olympics. LAWA tells us that to do so the APM design will be what I'll call "the cheap and dirty." It will enter the CTA between the two runway complexes in the middle of the CTA parking lots and be a two way spine with a couple stops inside. From the stops people will gather their luggage, children, disabled, elderly and other "incidentals" and proceed up to 1000 feet via pathway and moving sidewalks to the curbside for check in and finally to the gates.

In the meantime our Modernized LAX is a massive traffic jam with on-going construction blockages. Details of airport support roadway changes along the Freeway and through the local community have not been worked out, but are being evaluated and considered. As traffic from the FAA projected increases in passengers continues we can expect to see at least a 40% increase in autos. Every day at LAX will be like Thanksgiving Day traffic...

Although there is nothing in place to formally stop the controversial north runway move it is delayed. With this delay, the Lincoln Boulevard changes are therefore delayed. One can only hope that reason and logic will prevail and that this is never started. The 2006 Stipulated Settlement expires at the end of this year and the newer trials to delay this questionable action won't occur until next year.

For more information:

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**Valley VOTE Mission Statement**

**Valley VOTE is a diverse coalition of San Fernando Valley residents, business people, educators, community activists, and organizations, committed to exploring and fostering the implementation of programs that empower the people of the San Fernando Valley and the City of Los Angeles, to improve local governance, education and public participation on policy matters. We meet monthly to address key policy issues and hear reports from our standing committee chairs. For additional information about Valley VOTE, for an upcoming meeting agenda, or for previous meeting reports and press releases, we encourage you to go to the Valley VOTE website.**