



WHHO Newsletter

February 2021

Woodland Hills Homeowners Organization
P.O. Box 6368, Woodland Hills, CA 91365 |
www.whho.com

WHHO General Meeting

This Wednesday February 24,
7:30 PM

Webinar Virtual Meeting – Register to take part by going to www.whho.com

*Vahid Khorsand-- Mayor Garcetti's
West Valley Representative*

At this Wednesday's WHHO Community General meeting, Vahid Khorsand, the new West Valley Representative for Mayor Eric Garcetti, will discuss some of the most critical issues impacting our community, including the City's efforts on Covid-19 in the West Valley, policing, and the City's position on Sacramento's efforts to usurp all local zoning regulations and oversight. As the former Vice-Chair of the City Planning Commission, he will also offer insights on potential growth and development issues in our community. The Webinar meeting begins at 7:30 P.M.

This Wednesday, 7:30 PM: Vahid Khorsand--the Mayor's eyes in the West Valley, and how Eric Garcetti sees the most important issues impacting us.

This Wednesday evening, the Woodland Hills community will have the first opportunity in years to

finally interface with a representative of the Mayor's office, as Eric Garcetti's newly appointed West Valley Representative Vahid Khorsand joins the WHHO February virtual General Meeting at 7:30 PM on Wednesday evening, February 24.

Khorsand, who once served on the Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council, has played a crucial role in a number of critical decisions impacting our community as the former Vice Chairman of the powerful City Planning Commission. He was only recently chosen by the Mayor to serve as a conduit between the West Valley's neighborhoods and the Mayor's office.

"We are very pleased that Vahid has agreed to appear on the WHHO webinar on Wednesday and discuss some of the most pressing issues our homeowners and businesses are facing," stated John Walker, WHHO President." We know Vahid is well versed on significant problems and opportunities that will affect our community, and we think the Mayor has entrusted him to thoroughly explain the City's position on those issues."

The WHHO General Online Zoom Webinar Meeting will start at 7:30 PM, and you can pose questions on the Q&A tabs of the Zoom Webinar link once the meeting starts. To gain access to Wednesday's WHHO Webinar, simply go to the WHHO website and register there. (We suggest that you keep questions short and refrain from adding commentary.)

According to Walker, the Covid-19 vaccinations and testing efforts in the West Valley will be paramount in the discussions—especially the just announced opening of the new Pierce College vaccination site

which will be the second largest vaccination site in LA County behind Dodger Stadium. “There are questions, comments and thoughts that almost everyone has on this, and we want to be sure Vahid touches on as many of the most important factoids as possible,” Walker emphasized.

Also on the WHHO’s initial questions list is where the Mayor stands on the “Re-imagine the LA Police Department” issue and whether the Mayor backs any efforts to defund the LAPD or reduce the numbers of active officers patrolling our streets. “I think is question has generated a lot of concern in neighborhoods throughout our community, and needs some very informed answers,” Walker added.

The efforts in both the Sacramento Assembly and Senate to introduce Bills that virtually strip the City of its local planning and land use controls and empower developers to build virtually anything they want, are expected to be another key topic for discussion on Wednesday. So too is the situation of the LAUSD “trading” vacant Woodland Hills school properties for properties owned by developers in other areas of the City, and then giving the developers the ability to build whatever they want in the middle of our residential neighborhoods.

According to Walker, he has already received questions about what the City intends to do with the DWP’s rapidly deteriorating water lines, sewers and electric systems, and also questions about the City’s earthquake preparedness now that we’re just past the 50th “anniversary” of the huge Pacoima earthquake.

And of course, there will be questions and opinions concerning the on-going homeless crisis and how the Mayor intends to solve that thorny situation.

Walker is urging anyone with a concise question concerning an issue that is impacting the West Valley or a specific neighborhood in Woodland Hills, to pose a question on the Q and A link of the webinar page during the discussion with Vahid Khorsand.

Remember, the meeting begins Wednesday at 7:30 P.M. and that you need to register in advance of the meeting to access it at www.whho.com.

City announced Pierce College as a primary Covid-19 Vaccination Center—the second largest in LA County.

The City of LA has just announced that it has opened the second largest Covid-19 vaccination center in LA County (behind Dodger Stadium) in the parking lots of Pierce College.

According to sources, the new large-scale vaccination site will be run by the city of Los Angeles and will open Tuesday February 23rd. But, it is expected that the doses will be limited in the beginning. The College has made Parking Lot 7 available to the City of L.A. and the L.A. Fire Department, who are working in a partnership to run the drive-through vaccination and testing center.

Pierce will be the city’s sixth permanent vaccination super site. The site will still offer Covid testing along with the vaccinations. However, this is important: You will need a verified appointment to receive the vaccine.

You can access the testing without an appointment, and the testing site accepts drive-ups and walk-ins. The operating hours at Pierce are Mon-Sat 8am-4pm, and the site will eventually be able to handle more than 3,000 vaccination appointments per day.

However, as dosage supplies are still very limited they are only able to book a small fraction of that number right now. When vaccine dosage supplies increase as they are expected to in the very near future, the logistics for receiving far larger numbers of individuals for vaccinations is already in place. They will have the facilities and staffing to handle the larger numbers and will be able to book and fulfill all of the needed appointments.

If you have NOT already received either your first or second vaccination, and you do NOT have an appointment already scheduled for another site, please be sure to book your appointment as soon as possible if you are eligible (a healthcare worker or senior 65+). All appointments can be booked at: <http://coronavirus.lacity.org/vaxappointment>

All County and City protocols will be followed. Please visit the L.A. County website for more detailed and up-to-date information: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/vaccine/newsignup/>.

Proposed In-N-Out on Ventura Blvd. gets thumbs down from neighbors, Neighborhood Council, Blumenfield—and Planning.

The proposed new In-N-Out burger location envisioned to replace the old car wash at Ventura Blvd. and Capistrano may be cooked before it ever sells its first “Double-Double.”

The LA Planning Department has issued a Determination Letter from the Zoning Administrator administering the proposal that denies the proposed restaurant from having a drive-thru window in its location, and denies the restaurant from operating after 11 pm.

Although In-N-Out could still open a full service restaurant without drive-thru service and opening from 7 AM to 11PM, the probability of that occurring is slight since the franchise makes drive-thru service and late night service the core of its business model.

The neighborhood surrounding the site joined forces with several groups to create a written and video presentation to City leaders that highlighted the potential for massive disruptions to their streets from drivers trying to avoid traffic on Ventura, and for the potential of hundreds of cars blocking Ventura Boulevard traffic due to huge lines of cued drivers

trying to wait in the drive-thru line. It was projected that more than 1,000 cars would access the In-N-Out at this site each day until the request 1:30 PM closing time.

The Woodland Hills Neighborhood objected to the project’s vehicular ingress/egress, the building design, request for changes in the required corner windows, huge blank wall facing Ventura Blvd., and site design that required pedestrians and customers to cross in front of the exiting drive-thru line of vehicles.

CD-3 Councilman Bob Blumenfield registered concerns for traffic and safety for residents, and the project not being analyzed as part of the City’s High Injury Network, which spotlights streets with a high concentration of traffic collisions that result in severe injuries and deaths. He sent Planning a letter opposing the project.

In-N-Out still has the right to file against the Zoning Administrator’s determination, but overcoming the Councilman’s concern and the neighborhood’s unified stand, it seems unlikely they will be allowed to build the restaurant with a drive-thru. And without the drive-thru, it wouldn’t be a real In-N-Out.

Bad news: Zoning changes may be on their way from Sacramento

For the past few years, legislators have grappled with new ways of addressing the California housing affordability crisis, which to them means one thing—building a lot more housing units.

McKinsey & Co. estimated in 2016 that California needed to build/create 3.5 million more homes by 2025 just to meet current housing needs (a number that Gov. Newsom has embraced but a lot of other experts refute). That goal will not come close to being achieved due to a myriad of state and local regulations and considerable push-back from communities.

The current solution being vigorously explored and debated concerns the allowance of more units to be built on single-family home lots that current zoning

laws permit, effectively ending single-family home zoning.

For example, some zoning proposals would allow single-family home lots to be split into two parcels with up to four units/homes (including two Accessory Dwelling Units—ADUs) on each parcel. This equates to having 8 homes, albeit smaller homes, on one currently zoned single-family home lot.

To make matters worse, garages or parking areas are not mandated which means all those additional cars will be parked on already over-parked neighborhood streets.

Nearly two-thirds of the residences in California are single-family homes, according to U.S. Census data. In the city of Los Angeles, 62% of the developable land is zoned for single-family homes. The impacts of State mandated zoning changes are staggering.

Up in Sacramento, State Senator Scott Weiner (D-San Francisco) has feverishly proposed a seemingly endless succession of transit-density housing bills over the past few years – allowing more apartments and condos to be built closer to “transportation hubs” (which are really only bus stops and a few metro rail stations.).

To do this, Weiner’s bills have focused on putting all land zoning decisions in Sacramento’s control; stripping them *away* from local governments. Some of those Sacramento bills even give the developer the final determination of what gets built where--meaning neighborhood zoning will be at the whim of the developers and communities will have no say in what their neighborhoods will be like.

Weiner’s bill, SB1120, and co-authored by Senate President Pro Temp Toni Atkins, was defeated last year before the State constitutional deadline. Since that defeat on a “technicality,” Weiner and Atkins have grown their coalition and are revamping SB-1120 with the help of our State Assembly Representative, Jesse Gabriel, into the newly proposed SB-9.

At WHHO’s October meeting, we discussed the technical defeat of SB-1120 with our State Assembly Representative, Jesse Gabriel, and he predicted the new iteration of the bill “would quickly be passed by the Legislature. Now that Gabriel has been promoted to Majority WHIP of the Assembly, it is in fact his job to “whip up” the votes in the Assembly and get the bill approved. That can mean trouble for your neighborhood, and your home investment.

Given Woodland Hills’ proximity to the Orange Line and the 101, 118 and 405 freeways, we can anticipate significant negative and irreversible impacts to our neighborhoods should this new “State Overreach” bills pass. The livability and personality of many neighborhoods will be forever maligned and compromised.

The WHHO is actively doing our part to defeat these one-size-fits-all State zoning bills, and will continue to update you on these issues and formulate what we can all do together to preserve our neighborhoods. But, you should also get involved in what’s going on.

Your letters and e-mails to Assemblyman Jesse Gabriel and Senator Henry Stern expressing your concern and urging them to stand up to this onslaught of poor legislation could really make a difference.

--By WHHO Board Member Bobbie Wasserman

Last minute moves may keep West Valley Animal Shelter from permanently closing its doors.

Only a few days ago, the once “temporary plan” to shutter City operations at the West Valley Animal Shelter, due to COVID-19 situation, could have looked like it was about to become a permanent casualty due to costs and the enormous financial deficits the City is experiencing.

But now, the City Council, led by Councilman John Lee of the Northwest Valley District, has come up with new, tentative plans to re-open the West Valley

Animal Shelter (located in Chatsworth) and keep it open permanently once a few issues are resolved.

If it had closed permanently, all sheltered and displaced animals in the Valley would have been forced to be housed in the East Valley Shelter located in Van Nuys. According to Councilman Lee, with both the West Valley and East Valley Animal Shelters operating, they will service a geographic expanse that constitutes 40% of the total area of L.A., and service 1.77 million people and their pets.

In 2019, the West Valley shelter impounded a total of 9,320 animals, while the East Valley shelter impounded 14,605 stray or lost animals. If the West Valley Shelter had been permanently closed, the East Valley Shelter would have had to care for and estimated 24,000 animals. The City only operates a total of eight animal shelters and the remaining six are not realistically close enough to help serve the West Valley.

In November 2000, Los Angeles voters overwhelmingly approved Measure F which provided nearly \$533 million in bond funding for a major upgrade of both the City’s fire stations and animal shelters. However, almost all of that funding has been expended and the City has been seeking ways to cut expenses.

It appeared that the West Valley Animal Shelter would be eliminated until Councilman Lee was joined by several other Councilmembers and the Mayor’s office received a deluge of letters, calls and emails from animal lovers and pet owners begging him to find some other expenses to trim.

In Case You Missed It:

CD-3 Councilman Blumenfield discusses critical issues impacting the West Valley at the January WHHO meeting.

In what was anticipated to be a broad overview of key issues impacting the Woodland Hills area, the virtual WHHO meeting with CD-3 Councilman Bob Blumenfield didn’t get to cover a broad overview but instead spent the bulk of the time concentrated on the Homeless issues in the District and the actions now being taken to resolve them in the CD-3 area.

He did touch on the new efforts for Covid tests and vaccinations being taken on by the City and County, and also touched on the funding—or alleged de-funding—of the LA Police Department.

The Councilman did say he is in touch with City health executives and that while ICU capacity at the time was very low, the Xmas caseload of new infections was declining. He told the audience that there would be important announcements in the near future. (*See Pierce vaccination story in this issue*) He also said that while the LAPD funding for the upcoming year was being cut, it was NOT a de-funding and that only a tiny fraction (2/3 of 1%) of LAPD’s budget will be trimmed because every service and department in the City had to be cut. The Councilman stated he is adamantly against closing the Topanga LAPD station and is working with the Police Chief to prevent that.

Concerning the homeless issue, housing and steps the CD-3 and the City are taking:

- Four (4) homeless are dying each day.
- An eviction crisis is looming as State protections end and landlords can take legal actions.
- Two permanent shelters and 2 hotel purchase/conversion projects are taking place in the CD-3.
- Howard Johnson: transitions to permanent housing. Super-8: transitional housing.
- Creating two “Cabin Communities” of 72 tiny homes (approx. 64 square feet) behind CD-3 offices in Reseda and on Topham near Orange Line. Separate facility for water and sewers. Will have fenced-in dog run and security guards. Cost: Approx. \$5,000 per unit. No

hard surface pads. Total cost: \$60,000-Reseda; \$72,000-Tarzana.

- The Councilman is trying to have the City prohibit tents from being set up in or around each Cabin Community so there will no “over-flow” outside of the fenced perimeters.
- This housing is intended to be temporary—not someone’s “forever home.”
- Also have a program where City will pay to move someone back to their original home city out of state.
- City will work with federal judge to enforce anti-camping laws and prevent move-ins to already cleared areas.
- Of the 60 people living previously living in underpasses, 59 have accepted shelter.
- Rehab housing and Project Room Key will continue for a limited time.
- He doesn’t believe that the City is “criminalizing” being homeless. But they are trying to require people to accept shelter when offered, or leave the area.
- The Councilman stated that he doesn’t believe “a person has a legal right to claim any public space they choose.”
- If 60% of a District agrees, the City can enforce shelter laws. The CD-3 has 704 homeless—lowest in the City.

The Councilman also addressed the lack of “Affordable Housing” and “Workforce Housing” in his District:

- He is trying to mandate both Affordable Housing and Workforce Housing through the 2035 WC Specific Plan.
- Westfield agreed to minimum 5% Affordable and 5% Workforce housing for the Promenade project. Adler agreed to 10% Workforce pricing in their master-planned community.
- We will try to set aside both Affordable and Workforce housing mandated for every new project in Warner Center that has any residential housing.

Because there were so many important topics to talk about on the Councilman’s list of items to discuss

before time ran out, the WHHO Board will ask Councilman Blumenfield if he could address those topics at an upcoming WHHO meeting.

(A recording of the January WHHO meeting with Councilman Blumenfield has been posted on the WHHO website and on the WHHO Facebook page.)

A View from WHHO:

By Ari Coine, a WHHO Board Member

A Better Approach to Community Policing in Our Communities?

Over the past year, the role of the police has come under increasing scrutiny-- and in some high-profile cases, deservedly so. But a majority of those problems have taken place far from our Woodland Hills neighborhoods. Still, the calls for changes in police responses have reached far and wide, and they might wind up having a significant impact on our neighborhoods.

We're fortunate to have a lot of really good police officers walking and driving our neighborhood beats; officers who have made the effort to reach out to homeowners and businesses, both in person and on social media. That's exactly what community policing is really all about: building relationships and trust.

Last year, in reaction to some of the controversial police cases drawing attention, Councilman Bob Blumenfield introduced a new idea, the "Unarmed Crisis Responder Program," which would divert nonviolent calls to, as the name suggests, unarmed crisis responders. One of the benefits touted by the program's proponents is that rerouting these kinds of calls would let beat officers focus on higher-priority crimes impacting our neighborhoods. If that is indeed the case, it's an intriguing idea. But it raises the question: does it come at too high a cost?

One of the best things about community policing is the trust and goodwill that comes with local police officers becoming familiar faces within a community. So, when a nonviolent call comes in, what would be

best -- sending out people who are trained, but strangers to the neighborhood, or sending out a local officer whose word is respected? There are good arguments to be made in favor of both.

But one of the problems with the new program is that it would probably take funds from an LAPD budget that doesn't look like it will be increased in the coming year. In fact it will probably incur financial cuts. If these new unarmed crisis responders come at the price of having layoffs among the officers we know and trust, then would this program really make sense to our homeowners and business owners?

We appreciate that Councilman Blumenfield is weighing well-intentioned solutions. He cites the program's success in the community of Eugene, OR, claiming it's saved their police time and resources. But Eugene, OR is not a sprawling metropolis like Los Angeles, and many of its problems are vastly different. Would the crisis responder program work on such a large scale? We don't know, and the Councilman hasn't shared a lot of the details needed to accurately answer questions about how the program might be implemented in our community. It's understood that systemic change is probably needed to fix some of the problems that have come to light, and our community would probably be open to changes, as long as they are reasonable and don't negatively impact our neighborhoods and lifestyles.

Part of that process entails balancing community policing with this new kind of "expert policing" to make sure nothing is lost in the transition, because there are a lot of grey areas: Where do you draw the line at unarmed response? What happens if a "routine" dispute suddenly escalates? How will the roles of neighborhood the police officer be affected? Will the lines be clear and, if not, who will make those judgment calls?

It is not prudent to dismiss the idea of unarmed crisis responders outright. But we need a lot more information, and we also need honest and accurate answers to our questions: How can a pilot program from a town of 170,000 be scaled up to accommodate

a city of 4 million? How can we be sure it won't divert funds away from crime-fighting resources at a time when crime's been on the rise?

We'll need facts, and we'll want reassurances that this plan has been thought through thoroughly and that it won't be a waste of taxpayer money or results in higher crime rates. We'd also like to hear how you—our homeowners—feel.

We encourage you to learn more about Councilman Blumenfield's proposal, so please visit his website: <https://blumenfield.lacity.org/blog>.

The WHHO needs You.

The Woodland Hills Homeowners Organization holds forums on critical issues impacting your home, your lifestyle, and this community.

It is only \$25 a year for an *entire household* to belong, and your membership goes helps cover Zoom meeting expenses, as well as for taxes, insurance and other legally required fees. There are no paid positions on the WHHO. So, please become an official WHHO member today. You'll find an Application on our web site, www.whho.com. We look forward to having you part of our family.

WHHO Officers & Directors for 2020:

President: John Walker - (818) 719-9181
 Vice-President: Dennis DiBiase - (818) 346-9567
 Vice-President: Marty Lipkin - (818) 999-4340
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