



# WHHO Newsletter

## October, 2023

Woodland Hills Homeowners Organization

P.O. Box 6368, Woodland Hills, CA 91365 | [www.whho.com](http://www.whho.com)

### **Wednesday Night:**

**Meet the new “*Blue Line of Defense*” who will be defending your family, your home and your neighborhood.**

The WHHO is pleased to announce that newly appointed Senior Lead Officer Brittney Gutierrez for the East Woodland Hills sector will join SLO Jose Fernandez who currently oversees the West Woodland Hills sector as the guests at Wednesday night’s WHHO General Community meeting.

This will be Officer Gutierrez’s first opportunity to interact with Woodland Hills homeowners and residents and discuss their major concerns. She and SLO Fernandez will also offer what the LAPD is doing on a number of fronts, including the outbreaks of group-looting, homeless issues and other pressing neighborhood policing matters.

### **WHHO General Meeting**

**This Wednesday, October 25,  
7:30 PM- 9:00 PM**

**Webinar Virtual Meeting – Register to attend by going to [www.whho.com](http://www.whho.com)**

The WHHO’s Webinar meeting begins at 7:30 P.M. Wednesday night, and you must register at [www.whho.com](http://www.whho.com) in order to attend.



**A changing of the guard for the LAPD leaders who are guarding your family, and community.**

For years, Sean Densi and Brent Rygh valiantly served as monumental police icons and anchors in Woodland Hills neighborhoods for the LA’s Topanga Division. Woodland Hills communities knew they could always count them on for swift action, clear explanations and truthful answers.

When SLO Rygh retired, Officer Jose Fernandez stepped into his slot and has overseen the Western section of Woodland Hills. Now, the Eastern Sector of Woodland Hills will welcome a new SLO as Sean Densi moves to another sector in the West Valley: SLO Brittney Gutierrez.

Both officers will join the WHHO on Wednesday evening starting at 7:30 P.M. to introduce and re-introduce themselves, and provide a community update on what is happening in our community, and discuss what we need to be concerned about.

“The WHHO believes that this is an important presentation for the community,” WHHO President John Walker stated. “There have been a lot of things happening in the West Valley that are important for homeowners, residents and businesses to know about first-hand. Having our new Senior Lead Officer Brittney Gutierrez introduce herself and share her thoughts on overseeing the east Woodland Hills sector is vital for the community and for the LAPD to be aware of each other’s expectations.



*SLO Brittney R Gutierrez*

Walker added that the WHHO is looking forward to having SLO Jose Fernandez proffer his observations and insights about things that are impacting the West Valley.

“In the past, the community had relied on SLO Sean Densi to present news about the Topanga Division, and to generally answer questions about West

Valley police issues,” Walker continued. “But having both SLO officers at our discussion will give all areas of our community the opportunity to ask specific questions, note problems and get clarification on what the LAPD can—and cannot—do.”

### **SLOs are the main connection between your neighborhood and the LAPD**

The SLO program was established in the late 1970s, and received a renewed focus after the 1991 riots as a cornerstone of “one of the most ambitious attempts at police reform ever attempted in an American city,” according to Harvard University. The program continues to strengthen with support from City Hall. Neighborhood SLOs are often referred to as the ‘mini-Chiefs of Police’ for their designated neighborhoods.

SLO Gutierrez, with eight years’ experience in the LAPD, has a strong background in patrol, gang unit, community relations, volunteer and reserve program, Community Police Advisory Board (CPAB), certified instructor for driving and arrest and control. She completed level one and level two of academy instructor certification and assisted with Topanga youth programs.

She comes from a family of Police Officers and always wanted to follow suit with serving the community. At the Topanga Station, she has headed of all the volunteer programs. The Topanga Station has one of the most active volunteer programs in the City with over 80 active volunteers for both the station and special patrols. Gutierrez has also led the Topanga Community Police Advisory Board for 5 years, focusing on critical quality of life issues such as safety, crime, and homelessness in the West Valley.

In her new role, SLO Gutierrez has stated that she plans to expand the number and scope of Neighborhood Watch Meetings, host “Get to Know the Block Captain” and “National Night Out” events, and also actively participates in Neighborhood Council and related community

meetings. For any specific issues or meeting announcements, you can reach out to SLO Gutierrez directly. She will also be posting on NextDoor.



*SLO Jose Fernandez*

Officer Jose Fernandez joined the LAPD in 2008 and became the Senior Lead Officer for the western sector of Woodland Hills after SLO Brent Rygh retired. Wednesday’s WHHO meeting will allow SLO Fernandez to discuss some of the key issues impacting that area, including homeless issues, the preponderance of RVs and trucks on main thoroughfares, and the growing number of home break-ins that are being reported.

“Since safety is always a key concern in the western sector of Woodland Hills, we’ll count on SLO Fernandez to discuss how the LAPD is prepared to protect both Jewish and Muslim religious centers that call the area home during this time of mid-east crisis,” Walker noted. “And if he wants to stick his toe into murkier waters, we might even ask for his insights on the consequences of the “no bail”

doctrine and its effect on the LAPD’s moral and enforcement abilities.”

Wednesday’s WHHO Zoom meeting starts at 7:30 PM and is open to both WHHO members and the general public. To attend, you can register to access the Zoom meeting or to call-in by phone, by registering at [www.whho.com](http://www.whho.com). The access code to take part in the night’s discussion will be provided.

## **Mayor threw out rules forbidding towering “Affordable” apartments in single family residential neighborhoods. City Council says, “Not so fast!!!”**

Earlier this year, LA Mayor Karen Bass decided that the answer to all her and the City’s homeless and unaffordable residential real estate problems was to simply jettison all of the rules and regulations governing development in single family residential neighborhoods that prevented seven-story, eight-story and even taller apartments to be built next to or near single-family houses.

She apparently thought that by clearing away a century and a half of zoning codes, and removing all the safety rails and long-stranding building limitations that originally established most of the Residential and Residential-Agricultural (RA-1) neighborhoods in the Valley, she would open every neighborhood in the City to the “joys” of having towering low-income apartment complexes become a panacea to decades of inept City, County and State Shelter mismanagement.

So Mayor Bass signed an Executive Order—Executive Directive 1-- to fast-track housing to allow for eight apartment complexes up to 80 feet tall to be built next to homes in five single-family neighborhoods across the San Fernando Valley.

The directive was meant to speed approval of 100-percent affordable housing and homeless shelters



without public hearings, environmental studies and nods from either the city’s Planning Commission or City Council. It was the perfect example of good intentions leading to horrible consequences since the neither the Mayor, nor her staff of advisors, not the City Planning Department bothered to parse any of the potential consequences of that action.



**Don't Let This Happen In Your Neighborhood**

The City of Los Angeles is out to end single-family neighborhoods

*Part of a flyer being distributed by United Neighbors, a group of concerned homeowners and area residents rallying communities to write the Mayor and City Councilpersons to remove R1 zoning from the Housing Element and Community Plan Updates because we have an abundance of zoning capacity, there is no need to allow apartments into single-family neighborhoods.*

In June, somebody in City Hall actually woke up and saw the huge problems ahead, and convinced the Mayor to “revise” her Executive decree, saying that such projects couldn’t be built on single-family streets, long protected from developers of large apartment buildings.

But, before the Mayor’s “revision,” developers had quickly filed to build developers filed for eight ED1 apartment projects across the Valley—many of which are in Councilman Bob Blumenfield’s district.

“Under ED-1 the City has no discretion over ED1 projects, meaning they are automatically approved if they meet some basic criteria,” Blumenfield says. “Unlike the regular approval process, they have no public hearings, are not appealable, are not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and therefore are not subject to lawsuits.”

He explained that long after the Mayor’s order, the Planning Department realized that it did not explicitly say it was meant only to be applied to areas zoned for apartments. “Given the City’s housing crisis, it made sense to streamline building approval procedures in areas that are already zoned for multi-family. But, it makes no sense in areas where such large buildings would stick out like a sore thumb among all of the single family homes,” the Councilman emphasized.

So, everything is back the way it should be for our Residential and Residential-Agricultural neighborhoods, right?

Well, no. A handful of developers took advantage of the ambiguity in ED1 and quickly submitted large affordable housing projects in single family areas. And even though the Mayor’s office has, appropriately, made it clear that her intent was not for the ED1 streamlining to be used in these areas, the developers are pressing on with legal actions and a variety of other avenues.

Councilman Blumenfield explained that while the Mayor has now ensured that ED1 explicitly does not apply in single family neighborhoods, eight projects were submitted before she clarified her order, and Three developers have objected and appealed the City’s decision to follow the intent of the law.

“Unfortunately, the brunt of the impact of these eight projects would be in our community (CD-3). This is a real problem and I want to be clear about what is happening, and what my office is doing to help ensure that our neighborhood voices are not silenced,” Blumenfield emphasized.

Here’s the legal problem—and it’s a doozy. In July, after Bass revised her directive, the Planning Department told a developer its application no longer qualified for the ED1 track. The developer appealed, saying whatever rules existed when it filed the application should apply.

Guess what????!! The state Department of Housing & Community Development agreed with the developer, telling city officials the developer has “vesting rights” because its application fell before the revised order. And then, the City Council’s Planning & Land Use Management Committee sided with Uncommon Developers, and sent its case to the City Council, which voted 8-5 to uphold the decision.

Councilman Blumenfield then introduced a motion to the full City Council to deny the developer’s appeal, which failed. (Even though Blumenfield said the Mayor’s order would impact “all of those neighbors, all of those folks who can’t necessarily speak for themselves, who live next door, whose property value is going to get cut in half--they’re going to have a big shadow over their place when that was not the intent of ED1.”

Uh-oh!!!! That lack of oversight and insight by Mayor Bass and the brain-dead Planning Department could set legal precedent that could impact every neighborhood in the City a, take years to fight its way through the various courts and possibly eventually wind up destroying every neighborhood and community in Los Angeles if unscrupulous developers (pardon the redundancy) decide the lot next to yours looks like a good place to throw up an 8-story, low-income apartment.

“Fear of litigation shouldn’t be a reason to approve projects with incomplete applications, and that are not a good fit in a community,” Blumenfield said. “And to be clear - I am in favor of ED1 to speed the building of apartments in areas already zoned for apartment buildings. I cannot support seven- story buildings being approved in single family neighborhoods without public hearings and input.”

The state Department of Housing & Community Development believes the developers now have vesting rights to complete their projects. The city’s Planning Department disagrees.

A representative of the City Attorney’s Office told the City Council that it considered the state’s opinion “persuasive at most, not binding” should the issue come up in court.

Well, we all know what legal eagles the City’s Attorneys are, don’t we?

## State Invents Another Way to Destroy Single Family Neighborhoods: Turn ADU’s into Condos!

Remember the old pitch for building a “Mother-in-Law” cottage in back of your single family residence? “Keep Mom close in her later years” Or, use it as in-between quarters for your kids who have graduated college, but aren’t yet earning enough to pay for an apartment on their own. Or turn it into quarters for visitors. Or maybe even turn it into a quiet office out of the main house.



*A typical yet stylish Adult Living Unit—ADU—that was originally intended as a “granny flat.”*

Well, it seems those ideas aren’t good enough for our representatives up in Sacramento. They’ve come up with another idea to help destroy long established single family neighborhoods: Let’s single family home owners to add density in a neighborhood (without requiring any additional parking or other

vital necessities), but let’s pass a State law that encourages them to transform those ADU Rentals into condo for sale!!!!

The law is AB 1033, and it allows for the sale of ADUs as condominiums--resulting in the establishment of a ‘homeowners association’ on existing single-family home lots. The Sacramento lawmakers maintain that cities will have the option to “opt in” to participate in AB1033, and homeowners will be required to form a Homeowners Association to manage common areas on the lot – such as the driveway, pool, yard, etc.

It should be noted that the State already passed laws that allow two ADUs to be built on a single family home lot—one a full-size ADU and the second, a “Junior” ADU.

In Woodland Hills we are encountering developers seeking to exploit new zoning flexibility in our cherished single family neighborhoods. In 2022, California saw the issuance of 23,000+ ADU permits, with 7,000+ granted within the City of Los Angeles alone. Up until last week, ADUs could only be rented (or inhabited free by a related family member), but on October 16<sup>th</sup>, Gov. Newsom signed AB1033, allowing ADUs to be sold, further impacting the landscape of single family homes in California.

As reported by Planetizen, “Despite the high cost of ADU construction—the average unit runs roughly \$300,000—“a study from the NYU Furman Center found that ADUs are being built not in the wealthiest neighborhoods, but more often in low- to middle-income areas, and often in places with relatively good access to jobs.”

According to study author Christopher Elmendorf, “That’s consistent with the theory that this is a viable form of development in places that you may not’ otherwise be able to easily build.” David Garcia, policy director for the Turner Center for Housing Innovation at the University of California at Berkeley, says the speed at which Californians are

applying for ADU permits signals “a pent-up demand from homeowners to want to do more with their land.” He should have also added that more and more developers are out-bidding families for homes set on larger pieces of land where they can easily chop up the parcel, add several ADUs and turn one former single family home into a mini-community of six to eight living places.

Because AB1033 allows for the sale of ADUs as condominiums, it results in the establishment of a ‘homeowners association’ on existing single-family home lots. That means much greater density and prohibits neighbors from claiming the zoning rights as a traditional single family neighborhood. And while cities will have the option to “opt in” to participate in AB1033 and homeowners will be required to form a Homeowners Association to manage common areas on the lot (such as the driveway, pool, yard, etc.), AB 1033 leaves neighborhoods powerless to preserve the feel an existing lifestyle of the area in which they chose to reside.

Given the demand for ADU construction in Los Angeles, we fully expect Los Angeles to opt-in to AB1033. The WHHO will keep you updated on any further developments regarding this matter.

## **Garbage is going to get a lot more expensive in Los Angeles—Maybe 40% or more!**



Know how people throughout the City love to trash LA’s city services? Well, they’re going to have a lot



more to grouse about. That’s because the City plans on raising almost \$200 million through the issuance of Solid Waste Resources Revenue Bonds. And to do that, the Bureau of Sanitation is considering a major increase in our Solid Waste Resource Fees. In fact, preliminary reports estimate our waste pick-up costs will rise by at least 40%.

Right now, the City’s Solid Waste Resources fee is \$36.32 for a single family residence, and it stands at \$24.33 small multi-family dwelling that have four or fewer units. Of course your bill will show double that amount because garbage fees (the City prefers “Waste Resource Fees”) are billed bimonthly.

Overall, those fees produce an annual revenue of \$285 million from 735,000 households. Those funds are then used for the daily collection of 5,800 tons of refuse, organics, and recyclables, using a fleet of 720 vehicles to lift those black, green and blue bins.

So, what does the City plan to spend all the new revenues on? Primarily to purchase 385 new and replacement vehicles that are “environmentally friendly,” as well as related waste handling equipment in order to modernize the aging fleet. (We’ve been told by reliable sources that the sanitation vehicle fleet was underfunded and neglected for years by former Mayor Eric Garcetti and the appointed Board of Public Works.)

According to Sanitation Department sources, there hasn’t been a sanitation fee increase since Antonio Villaraigosa was Mayor in 2009 when he tripled fees over a three year period.

One key reason for the increases are the increased costs due to the implementation of the State-mandated goal to divert 75% of methane causing organic waste from landfills.

There are also increased labor costs coming from the new labor agreements that are currently being negotiated with the City’s civilian workers. The estimated cost, including benefits, will reach \$30 to \$40 million a year by the third year. In the past year, the City’s General Fund provided \$61 million to cover pension costs, employee benefits (healthcare) and other indirect costs.

So, to bottom-line it, it appears that Sanitation will be asking for an increase in the range of \$115 million to \$130 million, representing increases of 40% to 45%—resulting in a monthly rate of more than \$50. Which means with a 40% increase, our annual trash bill will increase from \$435 a year (\$36.22 per month) to around \$610 a year (\$51 a month) depleting your wallet by an additional \$175 for the year.

**A heart-felt “Thanks” to a special friend who has watched over our neighborhoods for 15 years: Thank you Sean Densi.**



In Woodland Hills, “LA Police Officer” meant Sean Densi. So did the word “Trust.” And “Care.” And “Vigilance.” And “Friend.”

Since 2008, when Sean Densi was selected as the first Senior Lead Officer when the LAPD opened its Topanga Division in the West Valley, he has been an ever-present force in not only policing our community, but in making our area a safer, smarter and more caring section of Los Angeles.

SLO Densi—or Sean, as everyone knows him, is transitioning to a new post in West Hills where he is switching posts with new SLO Brittney Gutierrez as he finishes out the rest of his career. And although we won’t see him driving the streets of the eastern section of Woodland Hills, it is comforting to know that he won’t be too far away in West Hills, and will still be out of the Topanga Station and available to





Please trust our advertisers for the service you can count on. And be sure to tell them you saw their add here.




**FRANKLIN'S  
HARDWARE**  
FAMILY OWNED SINCE 1952

(818) 347-6800 • Fax: (818) 347-6801  
Email: ftvhdw@aol.com  
21936 Ventura Boulevard at Topanga Canyon  
Woodland Hills, CA 91364

[www.franklinshardware.com](http://www.franklinshardware.com)



**Paul R Lawler, LUTCF**  
Insurance Agent  
Paul Lawler Insurance Services  
6351 OWENSMOUTH AVE STE 104  
WOODLAND HILLS, CA 91367  
Tel 818.222.8222  
Fax 818.222.8223  
PLAWLER@FARMERSAGENT.COM  
0734445



32 LANES \* COMPUTER SCORING  
BILLIARDS \* ARCADE \* PRO SHOP  
LANE 33 BAR & GRILL  
VILLAGE CAFÉ  
BANQUET FACILITIES

*(Newly Renovated)*

**JOIN OUR BOWLING FAMILY**  
Junior Leagues  
Senior Leagues  
Open Bowling

**Live Music - Karaoke  
Comedy- Billiards  
Dancing and More!**

**WINNETKA BOWL**  
20122 Vanowen St., Winnetka, CA 91306  
818-340-5190 [www.winnetkabowl.net](http://www.winnetkabowl.net)



**JAMES L. HEIMLER** - License No. C15525  
ARCHITECT - Principal - AIA -LEED - AP  
(818) 343-5393  
FAX (818) 343-5815

**JAMES HEIMLER, ARCHITECT, INC.**  
LEED ACCREDITED - SUSTAINABLE DESIGN  
RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, INSTITUTIONAL, AND INDUSTRIAL

21051 Warner Center Ln., Ste 220      www.jhai-architect.com  
Woodland Hills, CA 91367      e-mail: jhai@jhai-architect.com

WEST VALLEY-WARNER CENTER  
SINCE 1948



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**Community & Commerce**

**Important Conversations**  
Co-existing during tremendous growth!

- Homeowners fuel Local Commerce!
- Local businesses employ our family members & our neighbors.
- Your Voices direct the quality of life in our community.

COMMUNITY  
COMMERCE

Amplify Your Voice. Participate in Community.  
Join Now 818-347-4737 [www.woodlandhillsc.net](http://www.woodlandhillsc.net)