

Hillside Federation Newsletter January, 2011



NBC Universal Evolution Plan

NBC Universal is proposing to build one of the largest infill real estate developments in Los Angeles history at the junction of the 101 and 134 freeways. The 39,000-page Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was released in November. The project has the potential to have a huge negative impact on traffic in the surrounding areas.

Project description:

The project will develop a 391-acre site at the north end of the Cahuenga Pass. Part of the land is in the City of Los Angeles, part in the County of Los Angeles and involves land swaps. It would create 2.01 million square feet of new commercial development including 500 hotel rooms and related facilities, 2,935 residences, studio facilities, and tourist attractions. The project would require 17 discretionary approvals plus “any additional actions that may be deemed necessary.” The project will have “significant and unavoidable impacts” on air quality, transportation, and solid waste. It will also impact parking, noise, visual resources, light and glare, water resources, population, and climate change. Construction will be phased over a 20-year period.

Agenda

January 5, 2011

7:00 pm

**Special Location - Universal Studios
Gate 3 Studio Commissary
Muddy Waters Drive**

RSVP Required

Presentation - NBC Universal Evolution Project

I. Introductions

II. Approval of November 3, 2010 minutes

III. President's Report

IV. Old Business

A. Bel Air Presbyterian School - Mark Stratton

V. New Business

A. Barbara Fine Mulholland Overlook - Dr. Niles Chapman

VI. Adjournment

Next meeting - Wednesday, February 2, 2011

The mission of the Hillside Federation shall be: To protect the property and the quality of life of the residents of the Santa Monica Mountains and other hillside areas of Los Angeles and its environs, and to encourage and promote those policies and programs which will best preserve the natural topography and wildlife of the mountains and hillsides for the benefit of all the people of Los Angeles.

In addition to the NBC Universal project, there is another massive project across Lankershim Blvd. planned by MTA which will compound the traffic and environmental impacts of the project. The two draft EIRs should be done together.

The inherent flaw in the EIR process is that the report is prepared by the applicant which leaves the potential for the report to be biased and minimize the negative impacts. The city and county took public comment on December 13. There was no model available to show the mass and scale of the project, nor were there any elevation drawings to show how the proposed high rises would compare with the surrounding community.



Summary of public comments:

Pros:

The project will maintain Universal's position as a large movie studio. It will generate 31,000 construction jobs and 12,000 full and part-time jobs after completion. It will provide more housing near shops and the metro. It will provide shuttle services and a bus along Ventura Blvd. LA needs the tourism.

Cons:

The property should not be removed from the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan which was created to assure that land use will have a natural appearance compatible with the Santa Monica Mountains, reduce

excessive lighting, and protect environmentally sensitive areas. Congestion on the 101 will increase cut through traffic in the residential neighborhoods of Laurel Canyon and Hollywoodland.

The site of the project is in an already congested bottleneck. Hemmed in by the Santa Monica Mountains, historic Campo de Cahuenga, the Los Angeles River, and Griffith Park, there is no place for the traffic to go. NBC Universal must pay CalTrans or DOT for traffic mitigations.

Mitigation Measure B-7 proposes the widening of Forest Lawn Dr. which goes through Griffith Park, Historic-Cultural Landmark #942. Any changes in Griffith Park must be approved by the Cultural Heritage Commission. They should not ease the traffic jam they created by funneling traffic through Griffith Park. To do so is a violation of Col. Griffith's intent when he donated the park land to the city to provide an escape valve for the masses from the hustle and bustle of urban life. The project must not disturb the geography of Griffith Park, its wildlife, or the tranquility of its visitors.

If Universal wants to improve its studio, why are they eliminating the Back Lot?

19-story buildings are not compatible with the Studio City community plan.

LA County got the rich commercial tax base while LA City, which must provide all the services, got the lower tax base of the residential area.

It will reduce open space and mature trees.

The mitigations for each phase must be implemented before construction of the next phase may begin.

The noise levels are inaccurate because they were measured when the theme park rides were not operating.

It cuts off bike access to the LA River.

Councilmember Tom LaBonge stated that he wants Universal to be very successful. He will work with them to improve the freeway and build better bridges at Barham.

The DEIR is available for public review at City Hall (room 621), at the North Hollywood Library on Tujunga, at the Hollywood Library on Ivar, the Studio City Library on Moorpark, the Central Library on 5th Street, and the Burbank Library on N. Glenoaks. It is also available online at <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/>. Click on “Environmental” and then on “Draft EIR.”

Public comment is due by February 4 to Jon Foreman, Senior City Planner, Planning Department, 200 N. Spring St, room 601, LA, 90012 or by email to jon.foreman@lacity.org and please copy the Hillside Federation.

Mulholland Scenic Parkway Design Review Board

Meets 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month,
6:30 pm

Marvin Braude Constituents Service Center
6262 Van Nuys Blvd. Van Nuys, CA
1st floor conference room



Desmond McDonald

1959 - 2010

Upper Mandeville Canyon Association



Desmond rescues a snake.

We in Mandeville Canyon have suffered a grievous loss. Desmond McDonald, a life-long Canyon resident, died December 4. Desmond was the UMCA representative to the Hillside Federation for almost 10 years, served as Hillside Federation Vice President and served as a representative on the Benefit Assessment District appointed by the Hillside Federation.

Desmond McDonald embodied Mandeville Canyon. He spent almost all of his 51 years in Upper Mandeville and in that time was witness, participant, supporter and defender of our community in every way possible. He loved Upper Mandeville ... and we loved him. Whenever anyone would ask for help, Desmond responded. Every year he walked the Upper Canyon with the Brush Inspectors to make sure that we were safe and that residents had the information they needed to comply. He met with anyone who needed help with those requirements. In times of fire and flood, Desmond was the first on the scene, to protect the lives and property of

canyon residents. Whether it was sandbagging a neighbor's home, detaining an arsonist until the police arrived, relocating a rattlesnake from a terrified resident's yard to a remote location, Desmond was there, at all hours of day or night. He served as a Vice President of the UMCA Board for approximately 10 years; he co-founded an organization dedicated to preserving access to the public trails above Mandeville Canyon; he fought to protect against development that would destroy the unique nature of Mandeville Canyon; and he did all of this and much more with tremendous intelligence, honor and courage. Desmond was Mandeville Canyon.

Desmond died during an off-road motorcycle race in Mexico. He apparently had a heart attack during the race. Our hearts go out to Julie McDonald, Desmond's spouse.

Web Site

The Hillside Federation has a new web site, www.hillsidefederation.org. It is still a work in progress.

One of the things we want to do is have live links to the web sites of all our member organizations. Please send us the link to your association's web site. In return, we ask that you post a link to the Hillside Federation web site on your web site.

Holiday Party

Hillside Federation members and guests enjoyed a delightful event at the Mulholland Tennis Club on Dec. 8. The crisp clear evening provided beautiful views of the city to complement the wonderful holiday buffet dinner with wine.

Several officials joined us in our celebration. Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky expressed his concern over the NBC Universal development. Councilmember Tom LaBonge was concerned about the increase in traffic that will follow the NBC Universal project. He also invited everyone to attend the celebration Dec. 9 for the acquisition of Cahuenga Peak for Griffith Park. Senior Community Representative Mary Benson represented CD 2's Paul Krekorian. CD 5 was well represented with District Director Joan Pelico, Shawn Bayliss, and Jeff Ebenstein.

The Federation honored the team that worked on the Baseline Hillside Ordinance: Deputy Planning Director Vince Bertoni, Senior City Planner Charlie Rausch, and City Planners Erick Lopez and Jennifer Driver. Federation President Marian Dodge presented each with an engraved paperweight to thank them.



Also honored that evening was the team that acquired the open space at Laurel Canyon and Mulholland Drive: Councilmember Paul Koretz, Santa Monica Mountains

Conservancy Paul Edelman, and activists Anita Sokolsky, Carol Sidlow and Nickie Miner whose whose persistence and creativity made the acquisition possible.



City Attorney Carmen Trutanich brought news about his office. Regarding the supergraphics issue, Councilmember Jan Perry has proposed a one-lot sign zone for Wilshire-Grand. This is the type of exception that got the city's previous billboard regulations declared unconstitutional. Trutanich stated that he is going to stop it in Planning. They are investigating long-term workman's comp cases and attempting to collect the \$60 million debt owed to the City.

Some councilmembers are unhappy with the way his office has been enforcing the laws of the city. The Finance Committee, chaired by Councilmember Parks, is attempting to control the City Attorney's Office by continually cutting its budget. The reduced budget is limiting code enforcement.

His office is working on the removal of the glaring lighting on the bus shelter on Mulholland Dr. The best news of all was regarding the Baseline Hillside Ordinance which has been sitting in his office waiting to be approved as to form so that it can go to City Council for adoption. The BHO should be approved by the end of the year. What a wonderful holiday present for the Federation!

**Federation of Hillside and Canyon
Associations
November 3, 2010
Draft Minutes**

I. Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 PM by President, Marian Dodge. Members introduced themselves. Members discussed old business while waiting for a quorum.

IV. Old Business

A. Widening of 405 Update

Mark Stratton reported that the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting was postponed until Nov. 10. Mark suggested that it probably won't go their way. It looks like they went back and did additional studies showing the ramps need to be moved. Skirball will be the most negatively effected. Now it's going to be a nightmare.

B. Baseline Hillside Ordinance (BHO) update

The Federation sent a letter to the City Attorney asking him to expedite the approval of the BHO. Marian thanked Wendy-Sue Rosen for drafting the letter. Please keep them coming; the more letters, the better! Nickie Miner read on Facebook that City Planner Erick Lopez stated that the BHO will be finished by the end of the year. Wendy added that Councilmember Reyes did not accept the grading motions submitted by Councilmember Koretz. Wendy will send the motions as passed. The grading issues may be handled by Q conditions. A 'Q' condition is a classification wherein a property or properties have "restrictions on property as a result of a zone change, to ensure compatibility with surrounding property."

II. Approval of Minutes

The October 6 minutes were approved as corrected.

III. President's Report

A. Comments

Marian announced that Donna Messinger is the new President of Hollywood Heights Assn.

B. Holiday Party

The party will be at the Mulholland Tennis club: 6:30 on Wednesday, December 8. The price will be \$35 each. The cost of dinner has gone up \$2 from 2008, and we're trying to keep other costs down. Charley Mims and Dan Palmer have an 'in' on wine; anyone who wants to share the cost with them can see them. The guests of honor are the team that put together the Hillside Ordinance: Erick Lopez, Jennifer Driver, Charlie Rausch and Vince Bertoni and the team that succeeded in the acquisition of the land at Laurel Canyon and Mulholland: Paul Koretz, Paul Edelman, and Anita Sokolsky.

There's been a little glitch in the land acquisition – the city cannot find the deeds to the property. It will take them approximately 2 weeks to find them.

V. New Business

A. Pilot Program for the homeless - Nickie Miner

Nickie alerted the Federation to a pilot program: "Homelessness Ends At Leo" – "Streets to Home" which would allow the homeless to park their vehicles in the Leo Baeck Temple parking lot across from the Getty at night. They would have contracts that the homeless people sign. The requirements are they have to have a driver's license, insurance, leave at 8:00 am and return at 8:00 pm. The agency would seek permanent low cost housing for them. There are programs of this sort in Eugene, Oregon and Santa Barbara.

Nickie is concerned about who will monitor the homeless, safety, and sanitation. Councilman Rosendahl seems to be trying to move the homeless out of CD 11 to CD 5.

Charley Mims was concerned about those homeless who have mental health issues.

B. Curtis School: Wendy-Sue Rosen

The Curtis School on Mulholland Drive has a new project which involves removing the ridgeline by removing 200,000 cubic yards of dirt. The school states that they are not planning to increase enrollment. It's an old school located in a bowl and a great neighbor. However, since the Mulholland Corridor is already saturated, they should be required to do a full EIR, not the Mitigated Negative Declaration they are recommending. Besides the aesthetic changes, the project will impact an active wildlife area that includes mountain lions. Joan Luchs pointed out that at the Federation holiday party in 2008, Councilman Rosendahl promised that he would work on a master plan for the Mulholland Institutional Corridor. The project must also go to the Mulholland Design Review Board.

Charley Mims moved that any development project in the Mulholland Institutional Corridor have an EIR unless and/or until a master plan is adopted by the city for the Mulholland Institutional Corridor. The motion passed unanimously.

C. NBC Universal Evolution Plan EIR Case No. ENV.-2007-0254 - Joan Luchs

Joan just received in today's mail the announcement for the draft EIR for the NBC Universal Evolution Plan. The project includes approximately 7 million square feet addition, including 2 million square feet of new commercial space, 500 hotel rooms and related facilities, and 2937 dwelling units. One part of the project calls for the removal of a portion of the project site from the Mulholland Scenic Corridor. They will also develop the SE corner of Barham and Cahuenga. The DEIR is available online: ENV-2007-0254.

Charley Mims moved that we oppose removing land from the Mulholland Scenic Corridor, in relation to the NBC Universal Evolution plan. The motion passed.

Charley Mims also moved that we oppose the NBC Universal Evolution plan as presently proposed. The motion passed unanimously.

We need to write a short letter now in order to meet the deadline for public comment. Joan suggested that we invite Tom Smith of Universal to make a presentation in January.

Mark Stratton commented that this past issue is an excellent example of why we need to be able to bring new issues to the Federation the day of the meeting and why we need an Emergency Committee in the event we don't have a quorum for voting on urgent issues. This issue had a deadline of December 13, and we have no meeting scheduled until January.

Mark also suggested that we need to find a place further west for our meetings as the drive is too far. Perhaps the Sportsman's Lodge or something near Ventura Blvd. and Laurel Canyon.

VI. Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Recording Secretary,

Donna Messinger

Members Present:

Bel Air Skycrest	Mark Stratton
	Lois Becker
Benedict Canyon	Nickie Miner
Cahuenga Pass Neigh	Joan Luchs
Franklin Hills R A.	Charley Mims
Hollywood Heights	Donna Messinger
Laurel Canyon	Cassandra Barrère
Los Feliz Improv.	Marian Dodge
Nichols Canyon	Madeline O'Donnell
Res. of Beverly Glen	Dan Palmer
Sherman Oaks	Niles Chapman
Upper Mandeville	Wendy-Sue Rosen