

# Hillside Federation Newsletter March, 2011



## Mulholland Bridge Realignment



Mulholland Bridge under construction, 1960

The recently proposed realignment of the Mulholland Bridge over the I-405 will drastically alter the look and feel of iconic Mulholland Drive. Instead of the continuous scenic ridgeline alignment, the bridge would be angled to the south, with the east end intersecting with Skirball Center Drive 200-400 feet from the current bridge at a six-lane T-intersection. The widening of Skirball Center Drive would require approximately 33,000 cubic yards of grading and massive retaining walls to support the graded hillside. The effect of this project would be to divide Mulholland Drive into two non-continuous segments on either side of the 405, severing wildlife connectivity and degrading the aesthetic and recreational experience of historic Mulholland. This drastic redesign of

**Agenda**  
**March 2, 2011**  
**7:00 pm**

### **New Location!**

**Pinz Bowling Center, next to Jerry's Deli**  
12655 Ventura Blvd., Studio City 91604  
101 between Coldwater Canyon exit and Laurel  
Canyon Exit

#### I. Introductions

##### Guest Speakers:

- A. March elections - Ron Kaye, LA Clean Sweep
- B. Ads in Parks - Dennis Hathaway, Ban Billboard Blight
- C. Save Franklin Canyon - Ellen Scott

#### II. Approval of February 2, 2011 minutes

#### III. President's Report

- A. Nominating Committee
- B. Treasurer's Report

#### IV. Old Business

- A. Mulholland Bridge realignment update - Mark Stratton
- B. Baseline Hillside Ordinance update

#### V. New Business

#### VI. Adjournment

Next meeting - Wednesday, April 6, 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.*

scenic Mulholland Drive was all done without the public environmental review required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan precludes this type of degradation. The Scenic Plan is a result of decades of collaboration among hillside residents, civic groups, and public agencies to preserve aesthetic, recreational, and biological resources in the corridor. The plan envisions a low-speed parkway running along the spine of the Santa Monica Mountains with parallel hiking and equestrian trails to create a world-class asset for the City of Los Angeles. The proposed realignment is inconsistent with virtually every Specific Plan requirement, policy and guideline.

The Hillside Federation submitted a strong letter to the Mulholland Design Review Board in opposition to Metro's application to realign the Mulholland Bridge. The Federation Board voted unanimously to oppose the project due to the absence of a meaningful public process and a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

At the February 17, 2011 meeting of the Mulholland Design Review Board the case was continued with the following recommendations:

1. That the alignment be accepted as presented but modify the remainder of the design—modify the T-intersection so that Mulholland is a continuous road, or the feeling of a continuous road as opposed to a T-intersection.
2. Retain a design consultant to create an extraordinary design solution to support the Mulholland mission.
3. That the concerns of Conservancy's 2/17/11 letter be addressed and responded to or expanded.

4. That the concerns of Bel Air Sky Crest's 2/15/11 letter be addressed and responded to or expanded.

5. That the concerns of Brentwood Resident's Coalition 2/15/11 letter be addressed and responded to or expanded.

6. Submit all supporting documents requested in a standard Mulholland DRB application.

The Mulholland Design Review Board was formed in 1992 to preserve the bucolic, rural feel of the Mulholland Scenic Parkway. Its members are a talented, concerned group of appointed community representatives.

- Alan Kishbaugh (Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy), Chair, is a writer and community activist. He has sat on the DRB and has chaired it several times, since its inception in 1992. He was Vice-President of the Hillside Federation (1990-1992), and later its President (1992-1995). He is a long-time advocate for the Mulholland Specific Plan.

- Joannie Hoffman (CD 2) serves as Vice Chair. She is the wife of architect Fred Hoffman and works in that office.

- Jack Dawson (CD3 ) is a retired engineer.

- Gene Klow (CD 4 ) is an architect.

- Toni Lewis (CD 11) is an architect.

- Michael Kaufman (CD 5) is an architect.

The Federation represents 200,000 hillside residents, but the City needs to hear from you as well! For more information about the project and its impacts, and to view the Federation's letter as well as other letters in opposition to the project, go to

[www.canyonback.org](http://www.canyonback.org).

Your letters should be addressed to:

Los Angeles City Planning Department  
Mulholland Specific Plan Staff  
6262 Van Nuys Blvd., Suite 351  
Van Nuys, CA 91401

or e-mail [nelson.rodriquez@lacity](mailto:nelson.rodriquez@lacity).

## New Location - Pinz/Jerry's Deli

In an effort to hold Hillside Federation meetings in a more convenient location and to encourage more attendance by our members on the west, we are meeting in a new location in March. The meeting will be held at Pinz Bowling Center, in the same building as Jerry's Deli, 12655 Ventura Blvd. in Studio City.

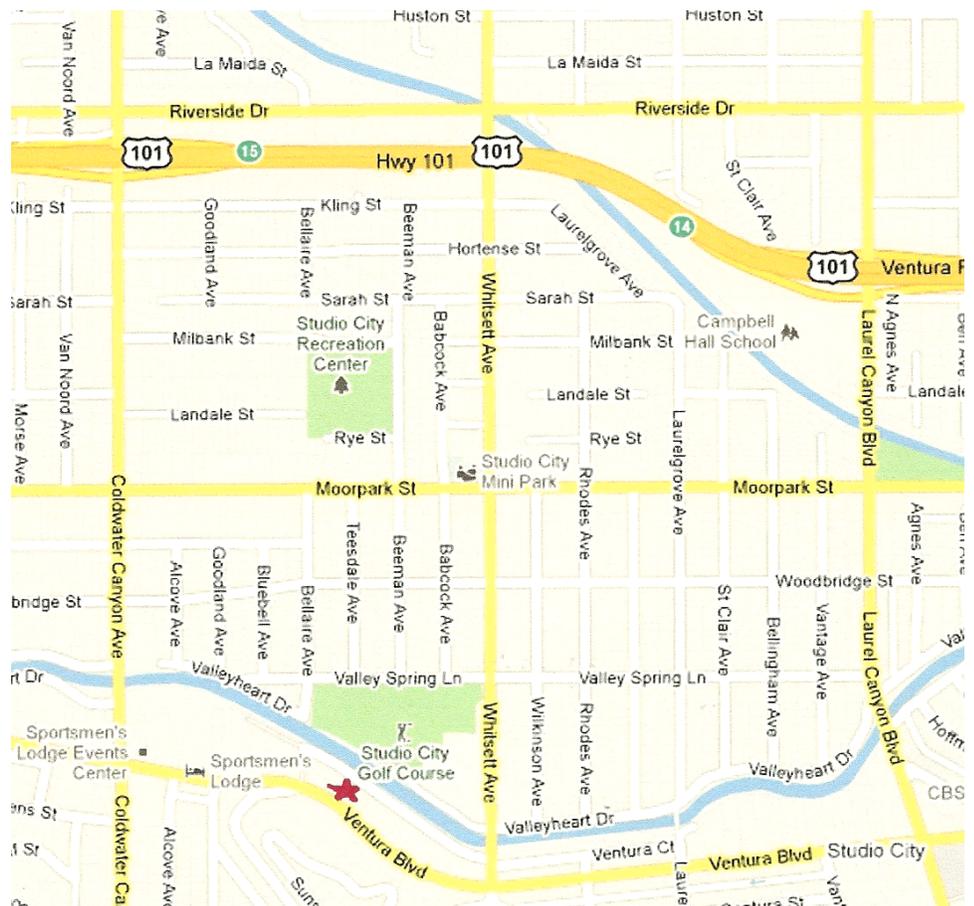
It's easy to find. Take the 101 to either the Coldwater Canyon Ave. or Laurel Canyon Blvd. exit. Go south to Ventura Blvd. From Coldwater it's about 3 blocks east (left) to Fairway Ave. Turn into the driveway past Jerry's. Or from Laurel Canyon go west (right) past Whitsett until the broad curve in the boulevard. Staples is on the right and the parking lot is just beyond Staples. You'll see a large vertical sign that says "BOWL."

There is plenty of free parking with handicapped parking immediately to the left of the door with a large purple awning. There are actually two parking lots; the one to the east of Jerry's Deli is both larger and closer. Take the stairway immediately to your left as you enter the door. Go up one flight of stairs. The meeting room is the first door. To use the elevator, walk to the front desk of the bowling alley; turn left toward the foyer. The elevator is around the red wall on the left. Take the elevator to the second floor and turn right. Walk to the hallway and turn right.

Restrooms are located on the first floor near the entrance and the soda machine.

Come early and eat! Several of us are planning to come early and grab a bite to eat at Jerry's Deli. Why don't you join us?! Or you might choose one of the other restaurants in the area. If you're running late, you can pick up a take-out sandwich at Jerry's Deli and bring it to the meeting. (Due to the contract between Pinz and Jerry's, you may not bring outside food in so no stopping at McDonald's!) There is a soda machine near the entrance and a snack machine at the far end of the building. We will bring some homemade cookies.

If you'd like to bowl, go for it! Patricia Bell Hearst will take on all challengers! Seriously, Pinz would be happy to reserve a lane for you. [www.pinzbowlingcenter.com](http://www.pinzbowlingcenter.com)



## **Coming to a Park Near You! Billboards!?! :(**

Just when you thought Los Angeles had gotten a strong billboard ordinance, along comes someone to circumvent the law. KCET's *So Cal Connected* segment "*Show Me the Money*," which aired February 10, exposed a plan to allow businesses to place signage on fences, benches, roofs, walls, and pools in city parks for a fee. Warner Brothers was set to install signs featuring Yogi Bear in three city parks, including one in Holmby Hills, just before their new Yogi Bear movie was released.

How could that happen when the city has an ordinance that greatly restricts where commercial signage can be placed? KCET investigated, gathered documents, recordings, and correspondence obtained under the California Public Records Act and interviewed key people.

When Barry Sanders, President of the Recreation and Parks Commission, proposed the idea of selling signage space in city parks in October, 2010, the Deputy City Attorney, Arletta Brimsey, informed him that such signage was prohibited in city parks. She added, "...you are sending a message to sign companies and corporate sponsors that for a price, it's okay to violate city law." Sanders persisted, "advise us how to make it legal." Under Sanders' guidance, the Commission approved the deal whereby Warner Brothers would pay \$57,000 to the LA Parks Foundation which would forward \$42,636 to Recreation and Parks. The remaining 27% would be kept by the LA Parks Foundation for administrative fees.

Reporter Brian Rooney pointed out that Sanders wears many hats. In addition to being President of the Recreation and Parks Commission, he is also President of the LA

Parks Foundation, the entity established to accept donations to parks, and a retired attorney from Latham & Watkins, the second largest land use legal firm which does a lot of business with the city. This raises questions of conflict of interest.

It was Latham & Watkins who came up with the idea of calling the commercial signage "government speech" in order to exempt it from the billboard ordinance. According to Sanders, there are "no constraints on what the government can say." The LA Parks Foundation is marketing tax deductible business opportunities to sponsors.

When Sanders' proposal went to City Council, Councilmember Paul Koretz questioned approving something that the City Attorney Office said was illegal. Council rejected the recommendation from the Recreation and Parks Commission.

Dennis Hathaway of Ban Billboard Blight says it isn't over; they'll be back. He will explain the issue to the Hillside Federation and suggest ways to keep advertising out of city parks.

You may view the KCET program on line: [http://www.kcet.org/shows/socal\\_connected/content/environment/show-me-the-money-11021020111.html](http://www.kcet.org/shows/socal_connected/content/environment/show-me-the-money-11021020111.html)

[Editor's note: The LA Parks Foundation is not to be confused with Friends of Griffith Park whose directors spoke at the February meeting.]

### **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

**Draft Minutes  
February 2, 2011**

**I. Call to Order:** President Marian Dodge called the meeting to order at 7:19 pm. Members introduced themselves.

**Guest Speakers: Friends of Griffith Park - Gerry Hans, Sarah Napier**

President of Friends of Griffith Park, Gerry Hans, and Director Sarah Napier brought posters to illustrate the assets, wildlife, flora, activities and threats in Griffith Park. This is a new charitable organization (501(c)(3) status pending) to advocate for and support all of Griffith Park. The organization evolved out of neighborhood councils, homeowner associations, the Sierra Club and Griffith Park Master Plan Working group members who care about the park and want to keep Griffith's dream alive. Marian Dodge is on the Board of Directors. They are working on surveys of mammals, plants, bats, and wildlife corridors. They want to refurbish and maintain the Park Style walls, water fountains and channels that were built in the 1930s by the WPA. They have the full support of Recreation & Parks.

One of the issues facing the park now is the NBC Universal Evolution Plan which proposes widening Forest Lawn Drive through Griffith Park to four lanes. Increased traffic creates more wildlife road kill and restricts access to the LA River. Members discussed various aspects of the NBC Universal project. Marian urged members to submit letters by the deadline this Friday.

**II. Approval of January 5, 2011 minutes:**

The minutes were approved as written.

**III. President's Report**

The Community Alliance for Open Space filed a law suit January 10 over the City Council's decision to build a truck driving school in Lopez Canyon.

Alan Kishbaugh and Jerry Daniel checked the construction near the Barbara Fine Overlook on Mulholland. The construction is mostly hidden by foliage and does not appear to be blocking the view.

Marian would like to expand the Hillside Federation's presence on Facebook. Lois Becker sent her some photos of wildlife she would like to post, but she needs to become an administrator of the account. Joan Luchs did not remember who helped her set up the account. Marian will ask Cara Rule.

Marian repeated the invitation to attend a CD 4 candidate forum hosted by the Los Feliz Improvement Association at the Autry Museum on Feb. 16 at 6:30 pm. Irene Sandler offered that LA Clean Sweep has endorsed Stephen Box who supports the ideas of the people and has been working with a bicycle group.

Marian urged organizations to participate in SurveyLA, a joint project with the city's Office of Historic Preservation and the Getty Museum to identify historic homes in Los Angeles. They seek assistance from local groups to identify architectural homes, homes where famous people lived or where significant organizations were founded. They are holding a series of orientation meetings throughout the city.

The Planning Department is holding meetings on reforming the Development Review Process which would simplify the permitting process. Joan Luchs said it would dilute our codes by permitting projects that comply with the General Plan. Wendy-Sue Rosen said it was important to attend the meeting.

#### **IV. Old Business**

##### **A. Mulholland Bridge reconstruction -**

Mark Stratton

Mark explained that with the widening of the 405 freeway the Mulholland Bridge needs to be modified. This project has multiple agencies involved, Caltrans, Metro and LADOT. The original plan to rebuild the Sunset, Skirball and Mulholland Bridges in place was certified through an EIR in 2008 after a lengthy public process. The plan was to demolish half of each bridge, restripe the remaining half for two-way traffic, rebuild and replace the half of the bridge removed and then repeat the process for the other half of the bridge. Commuters and the institutions in the area of Mulholland were concerned about the narrowing of the bridge during the construction phase causing them traffic delays and requested that Metro consider a temporary bridge during construction so the original bridge could remain open with all lanes operational. Late last year Metro announced that it had found a solution to the problem and would build a completely new, but parallel bridge. However, upon closer review, the newly proposed bridge turned out not to resemble the original bridge in any way. The new bridge would divert Mulholland from its continuous scenic ridgeline roadway ending on the east side at Skirball Center Drive, which would be widened to accommodate additional traffic lanes. The project is a design-build project, which Charley Mims explained means that as they build the project they may find conditions which require them to change the plan as they build. Wendy-Sue Rosen said

that we should not support the realignment without an adequate environmental review because of the potential for significant adverse impacts including: grading, retaining walls, drainage, aesthetic and recreational resources, wildlife connectivity, changes to the Specific Plan boundary and changes to the scenic ridgeline alignment. Lois Becker has been asking unsuccessfully to see the studies from Metro for months. Following a public records request, the documents revealed that the new plan includes 1,400 feet of retaining walls 10 to 15 feet high built into the Skirball Center Drive eastern hillside and massive amounts of grading. There are issues of aesthetics and hauling. Changes such as this without review would establish a dangerous precedent. Wendy-Sue Rosen moved that: The Hillside Federation opposes realignment of the Mulholland Bridge above the I-405 freeway because the project has not been subject to the CEQA-mandated level of environmental review, which is a full EIR, allowing for meaningful public notice, review and comment, and containing a thorough assessment of the potentially significant environmental impacts of realigning the Mulholland Bridge, including the Scenic Highway, Core Trail, and altering the boundary of the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

##### **B. Baseline Hillside Ordinance**

Nickie Miner stated that the BHO is still on the City Attorney's desk. Meanwhile an 80,000-square foot house plus auxiliary houses has been permitted above Tower Lane in CD 5 (Koretz). She is concerned that approval of the BHO is deliberately being

delayed so these mansions can be grandfathered in.

**V. New Business**

A. Possible new locations for HF meetings

The ad hoc committee working on improving attendance has been looking for new meeting locations that would be more centrally located. The Federation used to meet at Tree People where we paid \$50/meeting plus food. They have suggested Pinz Bowling Center in the same building as Jerry’s Deli on Ventura Blvd. between Coldwater and Laurel Canyon. They charge \$75/meeting. Pinz has plenty of free parking and easy handicapped access. People can come early and eat at Jerry’s Deli. The locations were discussed. It was decided to try the Pinz location for the March meeting.

**VI. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Recording Secretary,  
Donna Messinger

**Members Present:**

Bel Air Skycrest	Mark Stratton
	Lois Becker
Benedict Canyon	Nickie Miner
Cahuenga Pass Neigh.	Joan Luchs
Franklin Ave/Hlwd.	Don Andres
Franklin Hills Res.	Charley Mims
Hollywood Heights	Donna Messinger
Hollywoodland HOA	Jeanne Clark
Laurel Canyon	Jim Nelson
Los Feliz Impvmt.	Marian Dodge
Nichols Canyon	Madeline O’Donnell
N. Beverly/Franklin	Robert Levy
Res. of Beverly Glen	Tensie Palmer
	Dan Palmer
Sherman Oaks	Niles Chapman
Studio City Res.	Claudia Freedle
Upper Mandeville	Wendy-Sue Rosen

**Guests Present:**

BABCNC,	Irene Sandler
Bel Air Crest	
Chairman Emeritus	Patricia Bell Hearst
Laurel Canyon,	Monica Weil
BABCNC	

**Web Site**

The Hillside Federation has a new web site, [www.hillsidefederation.org](http://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.

Motions:

If you are planning on making a motion at the meeting, please prepare your motion ahead of time and bring enough copies for all member associations. This will make it easier for the directors to consider the merits of the motion and easier for the secretary to record it.