

# Hillside Federation Newsletter February 2018



## SB 5 – The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018

The Trust for Public Land was among the honored guests at the Hillside Federation’s annual holiday party in December. This month join Tori Kjer and Becky Bremser of TPL for a discussion of SB 5, an important bond measure passed into law in the fall. The measure still must be approved by California voters at the June 5, 2018 statewide primary.

If approved by voters in June, SB 5 will authorize \$4B in bonds to finance drought, water, parks, climate, coastal protection, and outdoor access. \$725M of SB 5 funds will be available for construction of parks in low-

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income and park-poor communities, a hugely important part of the measure that will help achieve the goal of putting a quality park or open green space within a 10-minute walk of all urban residents.

Jill Stewart joins us to discuss population growth and mapping tools, and we will have several presentations, including a Berggruen Institute update (see p. 2), and several important hillside-related policy discussions.

### Agenda

February 7, 2018

7:00 pm

Pinz Bowling Center, 2nd Floor  
12655 Ventura Blvd., Studio City

#### I. Call to Order

##### Guests:

- A. Tori Kjer & Becky Bremser  
Trust for Public Land  
Discussion of California’s SB 5
- B. Jill Stewart – population growth & mapping tools
- C. Walt Young - MRCA’s Enhanced Fire & Safety Services

#### II. Approval of minutes

#### III. Officers’ Reports

- A. President’s Report – Charley Mims
- B. Treasurer’s Report – Don Andres

#### IV. Old Business

- A. Berggruen Institute – Wendy-Sue Rosen
- B. Mulholland Institutional Corridor Master Traffic Plan – Lois Becker/Mark Stratton

#### IV. New Business

- A. Museums in Residential Areas – Mary Margaret Robinson
- B. Density Increases in Very High Fire Severity Zone areas – Wendy-Sue Rosen

#### VI. Adjournment

Next meeting  
March 7, 2018  
7:00 p.m.

Pinz Bowling Center, 2nd Floor

**Hillside Federation mission:** *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.*

## Berggruen Institute Community Forum Held in January



HF President Charley Mims presides over the Berggruen Institute Community Forum. (Photo: Thomas Howard.)

More than 500 interested community members attended a community forum regarding the Berggruen Institute project, proposed for a former residential project site and related open space on approximately 450 acres located in the hills between the Getty Center and Mountaingate communities on the west side of the Sepulveda Pass. The private forum, held at the Skirball Center on January 21, 2018, was hosted by a number of westside homeowners associations and other community groups. The panel was moderated by Hillside President Charley Mims. Panelists included three representatives of the Berggruen Institute including one of its architects, Wendy-Sue Rosen (Brentwood Residents Coalition), attorney Tom Freeman (Canyon Back Alliance), Eric Edmunds (President, Save Our Mountains, Inc. and Chair of the Sierra Club Santa Monica Mtns. Taskforce), Michael Leslie (President, Brentwood Hills Homeowners Assoc.), John Binder (President, Upper Mandeville Canyon Assoc.), Teri Redman Kahn (Brentwood Community Council's environmental representative), and Travis Longcore, Ph.D. (USC Asst. Prof. of Architecture, Spatial Sciences, and Biological Sciences). A number of local elected officials or their representatives were present, including Councilmember Mike Bonin (CD-11, the council district in which the proposed project is located), a deputy from County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl's office, and a field representative for Mayor Garcetti.

Berggruen Institute representatives began the forum by describing the Institute's mission and presenting details of the project in its currently proposed form. Primary project features include the main glass-walled institute building to be located at a prominent overlook on the site, a scholar village, and chairman's residence. According to the Environmental Assessment Form submitted to the City of Los Angeles, the current proposal also includes several cottages and a pavilion to be located on a ridge to the west of the primary structures.

Community speakers then summarized their many concerns about the project, including significant impacts to the site's open space and trails, which connect the site to the "Big Wild" region of the Santa Monica Mountains. On-site trails and open space are protected by recorded

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*Berggruen Community Forum - continued*

easements won in litigation against the previous site owner by several of the community groups represented on the panel.

Other community panelists discussed their grave concerns about fire safety, due to the project's location entirely within the designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and noting that the project site is on a landfill that continues to generate significant methane gas. In addition, community members are concerned about additional traffic within the already overburdened I-405 transportation corridor (the I-405 currently has 300,000 daily car trips, expected to increase to 450,000 daily trips over the next decade). Finally, concerns include that the design of the project will harm wildlife due to loss of habitat and mobility.

The meeting finished with a brief opportunity for questions from the audience, comprised mainly of additional questions to the Berggruen Institute representatives regarding community concerns.

For more information, the Los Angeles Times published an August 2017 article on the project's preliminary designs, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yb768omy>. Community group Protect Our Wildlands has an information page at:

<https://www.protectourwildlands.org>.

Please stay tuned for updates.

**Bringing an Issue to the Federation**

If your organization would like to bring an issue to the attention of the Federation, please complete a Request for Action form (available at [www.hillsidefederation.org](http://www.hillsidefederation.org)) and send it to [RFA@hillsidefederation.org](mailto:RFA@hillsidefederation.org) along with supporting documents no later than 10 days prior to the meeting. This will help you organize your presentation while providing the necessary information to allow the Federation to consider your organization's request.

**2018 Meeting Dates**

The Hillside Federation's schedule of meetings for the rest of 2018 is below (all on Wednesdays at our usual location above Pinz, except the annual holiday party):

March 7

April 4

May 2

June 6

July 18

*No August Meeting*

September 5

October 3

November 7

Annual Party – December 13

**Hollywood Sign Comprehensive Strategies Report Released**

A report commissioned by Councilmember David Ryu (CD4) was released in mid-January addressing potential suggestions to improve access, safety, and mobility around the Griffith Park and Hollywood Sign areas. The report from Dixon Resources Unlimited is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybjt8osw>.

An LA Times article about the report notes that it includes many potential solutions such as electric shuttles or an aerial tram, as well as other possible neighborhood controls to regulate visitors. The article is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yeh2fede>.

Councilmember Ryu's statement about the report notes the Hollywood Sign is known worldwide, but does not have proper access. "It's like having the Statue of Liberty without a visitor's center, viewing platform, or even a sign telling you how to get to it."

## **MISSION CANYON TRAILHEAD PROJECT**

**by Lois Becker, Bel Air Skycrest Property Owners Association**

Los Angeles County and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) held two well-attended community meetings on January 31 and February 3, making public their plan for a “passive” park in Mission Canyon. Mission Canyon is closely bordered by the Bel Air Skycrest and Bel Air Knolls communities on the north, and Mountaingate to the south. As described by MRCA's Gabriella Garry, the project aims to open 500 acres of open space west of the 405 freeway for hiking and low impact recreational uses, connecting it to Canyonback Trail and the larger trail network of Mandeville, Sullivan, and Rustic Canyons, as well as to Topanga State Park and the “Big Wild” to the west.

The County and City purchased Mission Canyon for use as a landfill in the late 50s—early 60s under a Joint Powers Agreement. The agreement included a promise that when landfill operations were completed the property would be repurposed as parkland. The main canyon was never filled, but subsidiary Canyons 1, 2 and 3 (the canyons nearest to Bel Air Skycrest and Bel Air Knolls) were active landfills through the mid-60s when nearby homes were first built. Landfill operations moved farther from residences and schools until landfill activity was discontinued around 1980. Over the years repeated attempts were made to re-open the landfills, but the community prevailed in its objections and the landfills were never re-opened. The Joint Powers Agreement was amended in 2005 to officially end use of the landfill. Methane will continue to be monitored (and flared) for years to come, but Sanitation Engineer Ethan Laden assured meeting-goers that methane levels do not raise a public health concern.

In 2014-15 MRCA funding allowed park planning to begin in earnest. Community members have been told the project has “a way to go” and is “not a done deal.” Should the project *not* go forward, Supervisor Kuehl’s office has assured stakeholders the property will not be sold, at least not on her watch. The County has the right to sell or lease Mission Canyon to a third party, however, as almost happened in 1990, when the same property was part of a land swap proposal by a developer with plans to build 500 luxury homes in nearby Mandeville Canyon with an access road through Mission Canyon. Properly mitigated, the Mission Canyon Trailhead offers a way to preserve the land as open space and protect it from far more impactful development that could occur if it were sold or leased.

A primary entrance and 105-space parking lot are proposed at the site of the County’s Sanitation/CalTrans parking area off Sepulveda. A secondary entrance with a 50-space lot is proposed on Mulholland at the west end of the Mulholland Institutional Corridor. Some Bel Air Skycrest and Bel Air Knolls homes back directly onto the proposed trail area, as does the Westland School and property belonging to the Bel Air Presbyterian Church. The County and MRCA will try to mitigate stakeholder concerns, which include: the location of proposed entrances, increased traffic in already highly congested areas, increased fire hazards, security, enforcement, maintenance, and dog-walking (professional and otherwise) in the area.

The project timeline continues with a CEQA Public Comment Period during March & April, aiming for CEQA review to be complete this summer. If a project EIR is certified by the County Board of Supervisors, construction documents and the permit process would continue following approval and into 2019. Stay tuned for project updates.

## **Master Traffic Study for Mullholland Drive and Sepulveda Boulevard**

**by Mark Stratton, Hillside Federation Vice President**

The single biggest threat to open space along the Mulholland Scenic Parkway is overdevelopment and traffic in and around the Institutional Corridor. In the 1960s, when the state contemplated putting a four-lane highway across the crest of the Santa Monica Mountains, the City moved to prevent this by designating Mulholland Drive, a rustic two-lane country road, as a “Scenic Parkway.” The idea was to protect the low-density open space and residential character of the hillsides. But the area of Mulholland closest to Sepulveda already had a church, a temple, and a small private school. And in the 20 years it took to hammer out the details of the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan, adopted by the City in May, 1992, nine more schools sprouted up on residentially zoned land along Mulholland, and the church and temple both grew substantially.

In the end, a deal was reached to carve out a two-mile stretch of the Scenic Parkway from Roscomare Road on the east of the I-405 to the Bel Air Skycrest community west of the I-405 as a designated “Institutional Corridor.” The institutions were controlled by conditional use permits, supposedly to ensure compatibility with the surrounding residential neighborhoods. A Master Plan for the area was promised but never materialized. As a result of no master plan vision for the area, growth has been rampant and enforcement lax. Over time, 100 students has grown to 4,000, with attendant faculty and staff. Meanwhile, another institutional corridor grew up perpendicular to Mulholland on Sepulveda Boulevard, home to the Skirball Cultural Center, the Getty Center, and the Leo Baeck Temple and School. This adjacent institutional development on Sepulveda has brought with it similar problems.

In 2006, the Hillside Federation adopted a policy in favor of requiring a Master Plan for private institutions along the Mulholland Institutional Corridor before any further development within the Institutional Corridor could be approved. Former Councilmember Bill Rosendahl (CD11) promised such a plan during his tenure. Council District 5 suggested a Traffic Demand Management Program for the area, which also never came into being. Lacking these promised measures, in 2010 the Hillside Federation voted to support the community’s request for full EIRs for all projects in the Institutional Corridor, and has followed up with numerous letters since.

New major projects in the area include the proposed Berggruen Institute project and the Mission Canyon open space park and trailhead (see p. 4), both with primary access off Sepulveda. Older institutions continue to expand. Coincident with the disruptive I-405 Widening Project, clever commuters began gaming the transportation system by jumping off I-405 and the 101 freeways and onto winding hillside streets using smart phone apps such as “Waze” in order to avoid the busy freeway interchange. Individual neighborhoods now work with LADOT to impose piecemeal solutions that seem merely to push traffic from one community to another.

Communities are calling for a moratorium on development on these two institutional corridors, until there can be a comprehensive traffic evaluation and plan. What began as an attempt to protect this section of the Santa Monica Mountains has given rise to major problems that can only be solved with the cooperation of Council Districts 4 (Ryu), 5 (Koretz), and 11 (Bonin). With many member neighborhoods located along these institutional corridors the Hillside Federation has an important and continuing role to play.

**Hillside Federation  
January 3, 2018  
Draft Minutes**

**I. Call to Order**

President Charley Mims called the meeting to order at 7:16 pm. Members and guests introduced themselves.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

The November minutes were approved as written.

**III. Officers' Reports**

A. President's Report - Charley Mims

Charley took a quick survey about changing the date of the January meeting to the 2nd Wednesday of the month to avoid the holidays. The first Wednesday seems to work best.

Update on the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance (ADU): the city made many unnecessary changes without public outreach. Mitch Meltzer prepared an ordinance comparison chart. The current proposal allows a large ADU if the house is large. Meltzer proposes 1200 sq. ft. or less with 0 sq. ft. in hillsides. The ordinance changes are stalled in council.

Members discussed ways to honor our fire departments after recent fires. The Executive Committee will look into various options.

B. Treasurer's Report - Don Andres.

The Holiday Party was very successful with almost 100 attending including numerous State, County, and City representatives. The Federation members approved the 2017 year-end report.

**IV. Old Business**

A. Berggruen Institute - Mark Stratton

Mark distributed flyers for the January 21 community forum regarding the Berggruen Institute proposal which would be located entirely within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone with project proponents and community stakeholders. Charley will moderate. The agenda will have presentations by the Berggruen Institute and the community, followed by a Q&A. Everyone was urged to attend.

B. Laurel Canyon land purchase – Jamie Hall

Jamie shared several articles from the LA Times archives showing long-time collaboration with the Federation. It took 26 months to raise the funds. \$15,000 from Ryu, \$1M from SMMC. Takeaway: when we work together, we can achieve great things. Don Andres commented that the only way to protect open space is to buy it and

give it to MRCA or the City of LA. Charley suggested looking for other properties that neighborhood communities might buy before they are threatened with development.

**V. New Business**

A. Protected Tree Ordinance - Linda Whitford

Linda Whitford and Maureen Levinson, former VP of Bel Air Association, asked the Federation to write a letter supporting CMs Koretz and Bonin's motion to strengthen the Protected Tree Ordinance (PTO). The current ordinance has a loophole that allows a tree to be removed to make way for "reasonable development." Some developers are cutting down trees before the tree inspector comes on the property. Urban Forestry is to meet with stakeholders to come up with ideas. The addition of native plants such as toyon and elderberry to the protected tree list will be addressed with the revision of ordinance. Trees of a certain size should be included because of the wildlife habitat they provide.

Charley made suggestions: 1) include a HF rep on the PTO revision task force, 2) add more native trees to list, 3) have projects designed around the trees, and 4) stronger enforcement. Jamie Hall suggested requiring an analysis of alternatives and noted that the city needs professional planners in forestry

**MOTION:** George Abrahams moved that the Hillside Federation support the strengthening of the Protected Tree Ordinance. The motion passed.

Linda requested that individual organizations write letters of support as well.

B. Sunset Blvd. Traffic Survey - Charley Mims

Communities west of the I-405 in and around Sunset Boulevard have requested a traffic survey. The survey will monitor traffic in real time with drones. The survey will be partially funded through private donations. CM Bonin (CD 11) may also make a donation, and needs a 501(c)(3) organization to act as a pass-through.

**MOTION:** Mary Ledding moved that the Hillside Federation act as pass-through conduit for the private/public collaboration of funding for the Sunset Blvd. Traffic Study. The motion passed. The President appointed Wendy-Sue Rosen to act as the Hillside Federation's representative for the study.

**Announcements**

Don Andres - The Trust for Public Land will speak in February on SB 5 (The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal



Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018) a bond measure to support clean water, natural resources, and parks.

## Mountain Lion P-23 Killed in Malibu

### VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Marian Dodge,  
Acting Secretary

### Members in Attendance:

Bel Air Hills Assn	Robin Greenberg
	Steve Twining
Bel Air Skycrest POA	Mark Stratton
Brentwood Hills	Thomas Howard
Canyon Back Alliance	Lois Becker
Franklin/Hlwd Bl West	Don Andres
	Yvonne Hessler
Franklin Hills Res Assn	Charley Mims
Hollywood Dell Civic	Mary Ledding
Hollywoodland HA	George Abrahams
Kagel Canyon Civic	Kit Paull
Laurel Canyon Assn	Jamie Hall
Los Feliz Impvmt Assn	Marian Dodge
Nichols Canyon Assn	Julie Kremkus
Oak Forest Canyon	Bruce Hollihan
Oaks HOA	Bob Young
Save Coldwater Canyon!	Heidi Mackay
Sherman Oaks HOA	Jay Weitzler
Studio City Residents	Claudia Freedle
Upper Nichols Canyon	Joan Cashel

### Guests:

Mike Brown  
Linda Whitford  
Maureen Levinson  
Connie Levy

The Hillside Federation is saddened to report that mountain lion P-23 was found dead recently off to the side of Malibu Canyon Road near Pepperdine University in Malibu, apparently struck and killed by a vehicle. P-23 was 5 1/2 years old, and had been followed by National Park Service rangers and wildlife researchers for virtually her entire life. Ranger Kate Kuykendall noted that P-23's death is the 18th known case of a mountain lion being struck and killed in the Santa Monica Mountains wildlife study area since NPS started studying large mammals in the area in 2002. P-23 had three litters of kittens, the youngest of which are now a year old and expected to survive (one is un-numbered, and the other is identified and tagged as P-54).

An image of P-23 dragging a deer off Mulholland Highway went viral in 2013. As with other lion deaths, a necropsy will be performed to determine whether P-23 was exposed to anti-coagulant rodenticides.

Articles about P-23's life and death are available from KPCC (at <https://tinyurl.com/y7b62ewf>) and the LA Times (at <https://tinyurl.com/ycvsyjt>).

The Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations, Inc. P.O. Box 27404 Los Angeles, CA 90027 <a href="mailto:president@hillsidefederation.org">president@hillsidefederation.org</a> <a href="http://www.hillsidefederation.org">www.hillsidefederation.org</a>	<b>ORGANIZATIONS</b>		
	Beachwood Canyon	Holmby Hills HOA	Sunset Hills HOA
<b>PRESIDENT</b> Charley Mims	Bel-Air Hills Association	Kagel Canyon Civic Assn.	Tarzana Property Owners Assn.
<b>CHAIRMAN</b> Marian Dodge	Bel Air Knolls Property Owners	Lake Hollywood HOA	Torreyson Flynn Assn.
<b>VICE PRESIDENTS</b> Mark Stratton	Bel Air Skycrest Property Owners	Laurel Canyon Assn.	Upper Mandeville Canyon
John Given	Benedict Canyon Association	Los Feliz Improvement Assn.	Upper Nichols Canyon
<b>TREASURER</b> Don Andres	Brentwood Hills Homeowners	Mt. Olympus Property Owners	Whitley Heights Civic Assn.
<b>SECRETARY</b> Stephen Benson	Brentwood Residents Coalition	Mt. Washington Homeowners	<b>CHAIRPERSONS EMERITUS</b> Shirley Cohen
	Cahuenga Pass Property Owners	Nichols Canyon Assn.	Jerome C. Daniel
	Canyon Back Alliance	N. Beverly Dr/Franklin Canyon	Patricia Bell Hearst
	CASM-SFV	Oak Forest Canyon Assn.	Alan Kishbaugh
	Crests Neighborhood Assn.	Oaks Homeowners Assn.	Steve Twining
	Doheny-Sunset Plaza NA	Outpost Estates Homeowners	<b>CHAIRPERSONS IN MEMORIAM</b> Brian Moore
	Franklin Ave./Hollywood Bl. W.	Residents of Beverly Glen	Gordon Murley
	Franklin Hills Residents Assn.	Save Coldwater Canyon!	Polly Ward
	Highlands Owners Assn.	Shadow Hills Property Owners	
	Hollywood Dell Civic Assn.	Sherman Oaks HO Assn.	
	Hollywood Heights Assn.	Silver Lake Heritage Trust	
	Hollywoodland Homeowners	Studio City Residents Assn.	