

# TPOA

## NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2007  
VOL. 44 NO. 1



*Dave Garfinkle TPOA President*

In the last newsletter we included a survey to elicit a feeling of what subjects are important to our members. The results of the survey are interesting from several aspects. The immediate impression is that the subjects we are perusing are the same subjects of interest to the community. All respondents felt that the preservation of current single family residential neighborhoods is important; over 75 percent felt similarly about mansionization, traffic flow and commercial development on Ventura, Building and Safety code enforcement and almost all other issues raised. Let me make a few general comments.

**Response:** We had a response rate of just under 10 percent, about average for this kind of survey. Still, I had hoped for more. I realize people are busy, but the small response may mean that community betterment efforts may be shaped by a minority of the community view. We saw the same limited response to the recent Tarzana Neighborhood Council (TNC) election: only 158 stakeholders (which includes all residents and business people in Tarzana) voted for your representatives on this important city chartered board. We need to try harder to reach people; efforts are underway. Among other measures, TNC is exploring allowing absentee voting. Any other suggestions are welcome.

**Clarity and Specificity:** The wording in some of the survey questions was not as clear as it should have been. Many people did not know what a "Q condition" is (understandable). It is a set of specific requirements the city attaches when it grants a zone change for a property. A couple of other questions could be interpreted in more than one way, such as: does "very important" mean you strongly support speed humps or strongly oppose them? We'll do better next time.

**We missed some issues:** Special thanks to those people who added issues we had not covered, such as street repair, the need for neighborhood parks, protection of residential neighborhoods from non-residential uses, increased policing, and trash related topics. In the meantime, we will continue to address the issues, both the everyday ones, such as potholes, and those with long term effect on the community, such as mansionization and commercial development.

**WEDNESDAY - MARCH 28**

**SAVE THIS DATE FOR**

**2007 ANNUAL TOWN HALL  
MEETING**

**6:15 P.M.**

**EL CABALLERO COUNTRY CLUB**

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**TARZANA PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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CA, 91357

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## **BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE**

**Second Monday of each month  
Except July and August  
7:30 P.M. at THE TARZANA  
COMMUNITY  
& CULTURAL CENTER  
19130 Ventura Blvd., Tarzana  
CA. 91356**

## **COMING EVENTS**

Mayor's Day of Service, April 28th and April 29th

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa invites you to participate in the Mayor's Day of Service. Over 50,000 volunteers are expected to come together to participate in community-based projects on sites throughout the City of Los Angeles. You can take part by creating a project for volunteers to join (the Mayor's office has the ability to partially fund some projects). Contact Sarah Bell at (213) 978-1589.

### **March 31s': Council District 3 - Beautification Day**

Efforts this time around will focus on Canoga Park, Reseda and Winnetka. If you are interested in participating, call Councilman Zine's office at (818) 756-8848.

### **Wednesday, March 21a - Mansionization hearing**

Meeting will be held in the Marvin Braude Bldg., 6262 Van Nuys Blvd., Room 1A. From 5:00 to 6:00 pm, the Planning Department will conduct an Open House regarding proposed Code Amendments concerning mansionization of single family residentially-zoned lots throughout the City, excluding lots in identified Hillside Areas and the Coastal Zone. Attendance at this Open House is particularly important, as it will provide an opportunity to review handouts that explain the specific proposal in detail. The proposed project addresses reducing the allowable house size (from a FAR of 3:1 to 1:1), massing of a residence and creation of a Single-Story Height District for single-family residential zones. Note that the current proposal would not affect hillside areas (essentially everything south of Ventura Blvd.) and provides no additional limitations on large lots.

The Hearing will begin at 6:30 pm. All testimony and written comments received before April 7 will be considered for inclusion in a report for the City Planning Commission at a later date. Written communications should be addressed to Erick Lopez, City Planning Department, 200 N. Spring Street, Room 621, Los Angeles, CA 90012, and should include City Planning Case Number CPC-2007-0106-CA. If you challenge this matter in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues raised at the public hearing or in written correspondence on the matter delivered to this agency at or prior to the public hearing.

### **Starting March 14, CERT Training**

An 8-week training class (Wednesdays 7 — 9:30 pm at the Tarzana Community Center for the Community Emergency Response Team is offered at no charge. The classes help prepare members of the community to assist in emergencies with basic medical aid, put out small fires, and provide intelligence and assistance to first responders. For more information contact Paul Lawler at (818) 881-4900

**ANNUAL TOWN HALL MEETING  
"MIXED USE PROJECTS"  
Wednesday, March 28**

TPOA is teaming with the Tarzana Neighborhood Council and the Tarzana Improvement Association, manager of our local Business Improvement District, for this year's Annual Town Hall Meeting on the subject of Mixed Use Projects.

Mixed use projects combine commercial and residential uses in the same development. The One Colorado block on Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena and the new Del Mar Station on Del Mar Boulevard, also in Pasadena, are typical examples. Following our short formal meeting, Emily Gabel-Luddy, Associate Zoning Administrator/Urban Design, and Councilmen Dennis Zine and Ed Reyes will discuss the concept and its implications for Los Angeles. There will be a short question and answer session following their presentation.

After a short break, there will be detailed presentations on two potential mixed use projects in Tarzana. Bryan Gordon of Pacific Equities will discuss the proposed Phase 2 of the Brown Center, a 200,000 square foot mixed use project on Ventura Boulevard, and Joe Bernstein will discuss the Tarzana Neighborhood Council's vision for "Tarzana Crossing", a proposed transit village at the intersection of Reseda Blvd. and the Orange Line.

Take advantage of this unique opportunity to understand how the City of Los Angeles feels about this exciting land use concept, to hear long awaited details proposed for the Brown Center Phase 2, and to share in the vision of Tarzana Crossing.

Tarzana Town Hall meetings are a critical method of providing information to the community and receiving community feedback. They are always well attended — approximately 300 people were at last year's event. Refreshments will be served from 6:15 p.m. following by a brief business meeting at 7:15 p.m. Town Hall will start at 7:30 p.m.

**IMPROVING TRAFFIC SAFETY**

In our recent survey, three quarters of respondents felt that speed humps were important and responded strongly both for and against. Questions have been raised at various times about the cost, effectiveness and safety of the speed humps. In response to questions by TPOA and the Tarzana Neighborhood Council, Gloria Jeff, General Manager of the LA Department of Transportation, provided the following information.

The cost for one speed hump is approximately \$2,120; for two, \$3,720; for three, \$5,310. Most street segments have three humps. They are considered the most cost-effective speed reduction measure. The goal is to lower the speed to within 5 mph of the speed limit. Speed humps do have an effect on emergency vehicles (fire, police, ambulance), but the delay caused by the humps is relatively insignificant because emergency vehicles travel only for short distances on local residential streets. If a neighborhood becomes inundated with speed humps, there may be concern about a cumulative effect on emergency response times. LADOT is not aware of any lawsuits filed against the City for vehicle damage related to speed humps.

**YOLANDA TUNNEL CLOSURE**

Homeowners of Tarzana north of the Yolanda pedestrian tunnel appealed to the Tarzana Neighborhood Council to have it gated and locked at night, citing crime and graffiti as reasons. TNC agreed to the nighttime closure if a contract acceptable to the city could be arranged.

This was the subject of discussion at the TPOA February meeting at which it was noted that our position has been to keep the tunnels open on a 24/7 basis because they provide important access to schools, the post office, stores, library, churches, restaurants and other conveniences south of the freeway. It is nevertheless recognized that improvement in their maintenance, such as better lighting, cleanliness and overall safety are important issues. To that end we will work with the Council Office to identify solutions.

# MANSIONIZATION

The LA City Planning Department defines mansionization of single family residential areas as new construction or additions on residentially zoned lots that are out-of-scale with the surrounding neighborhood, but which comply with the current City zoning regulations. We've all seen examples. As the land value increases, there is a tendency particularly for spec builders, to upsize the building to increase the total value of the property. The problem is widespread, not just in Tarzana or the Valley, but in much of the city and in cities across the country. Current regulations are totally inadequate; for non-hillside and waterfront properties the code currently allows, by right, the building floor area to be as much as three times the buildable area of the lot (the lot size minus front, rear and side yard setbacks; this is referred to as Floor Area Ratio or FAR of 3:1) On a typical 5000 square foot R1 lot, for instance, you could build a three story, 45 feet high house with up to 7020 square feet of floor space. On a typical 17,500 square foot RA lot, that house could grow to almost 40,000 square feet! The complex issue here is balancing the rights of the property owners, who acquired the property under those existing conditions, versus the invasion of privacy of neighbors (large, multi-story houses overlooking neighboring property) and the disruption of the look and feel of an established community.

There have been various piecemeal approaches to the problem. The Valley Village Homeowner's Association has proposed an amendment to their specific plan to reduce the maximum house size to the lot buildable area and require second story setbacks. The Valley Glen Neighborhood Association has proposed limiting houses to 40 percent of the lot size. The Sherman Oaks Homeowner's Association recently formed a committee to study the matter. Sunland-Tujunga actually has an ordinance restricting homes to 2400 square feet or 40 percent of the lot size, whichever is larger. Burbank and Glendale have similar ordinances.

The City Planning Department is working on the problem and has scheduled Public Hearings on March 21 and March 29 (see Coming Events, page 2) based on the motion by Councilman LaBonge (passed by the

council) to have the City Planning and Building and Safety Departments "prepare an ordinance amending the LAMC to establish the appropriate size of single family homes in the flat and hillside areas." The Planning Department's preliminary proposal for non-hillside and waterfront properties is to reduce the FAR from 3:1 to 1:1 and include a 25% floor area bonus for setbacks above the first story. On a 5000 square foot R1 lot the maximum house size would be reduced from 7020 to 2470 square feet for a single story house or 3088 square feet for a multi-story house with the setback bonus.

The Planning Department effort is a move in the right direction, **but it has two serious flaws. The first: it ignores hillside areas. Essential), everything south of Ventura Blvd. is shown as hillside on the Planning Department maps. The second: it reflects an R1 mindset and ignores the serious problem of mansionization on larger lots. That 17,500 square foot RA lot could still have a 14,000 square foot single story house or a multistory house of over 17,000 square feet using the setback bonus. Large lot and hillside properties are the overwhelming majority in Tarzana.**

Another parameter apparently not considered is the distinction between existing neighborhoods and a substantial new development. **Our concern is that the City will feel that it has responded to the problem with this proposed ordinance which t'oes not fully address the Council motion and certainly does not address the concerns of Tarzana.**

The TPOA Board unanimously passed a motion at our February meeting to study the issue and come up with an approach. The Tarzana Neighborhood Council also supported the idea and suggested eliciting community thought on the subject. The enclosed survey seeks to better define the feelings of Tarzana residents on the issue. We intend to define an approach, based on community response, and communicate that approach to the City Planning Department and Councilman Zine. Please respond quickly by mail or e-mail at [drgarfinkle@sbcglobal.net](mailto:drgarfinkle@sbcglobal.net) . We will keep you informed.

Let us know how you feel and be sure to make your feelings known at the Public Hearing on March 21 (Marvin Braude Building, 6262 Van Nuys Blvd., Room 1A, Open House at 5:00 pm: Hearing at 6:30.

**TARZANA DEVELOPMENT**

**Condo Conversions.....**

There is both an up and a down side to condo conversions which are multiplying at a rapid pace. The "down" side is the displacement of, usually, long time tenants in rent controlled buildings. On the "up" side the increase in number of units and modernization involved is welcomed in our fast growing communities. However, there is strong pressure from tenant's rights groups to increase the amount of tenant relocation assistance payments and also to place an annual cap on the number of condo conversions. In response to these reactions, the City is currently studying possible changes to the existing ordinance for condo conversions. Here are some examples in Tarzana.

**5239-5305 Lindley Ave. and 19546**

**Clark Street:** These three rent-controlled buildings containing 108 units were approved for demolition and 129 condominiums are planned to be constructed to replace them.

**5544 Yolanda Ave. -** This apartment building, consisting of 24 units, was approved for conversion into condominiums, and the owners of the building at 18144 Burbank Blvd. have made application to the City to convert 20 units into condominiums. A City hearing has not yet been scheduled for this last project.

**Subdivisions.....**

**5135 Avenida Oriente -** An application has been filed to subdivide this property into 7 lots for 7 single family homes. A city hearing has not been scheduled for this case.

**5706 Calvin Avenue -** An application was submitted to subdivide one lot into two. The plans show that one lot does not meet the 20,000 square foot requirement for lots in the Melody Acres area and the Tarzana Neighborhood Council voted to oppose the lot split. A city hearing is still pending for this case.

**Subdivisions.....continued**

**5650 Melvin Ave. & 5929 Melvin Ave.**

The owners of both these properties are requesting to subdivide their single lots into two lots. All the lots will have a minimum of 20,000 square feet, and therefore conform to the Encino - Tarzana Community Plan. The Tarzana Neighborhood Council voted to support these applications. City hearings are pending.

**Other Cases.....**

19326 Topham Street - An application has been submitted requesting the right to construct a 30 unit apartment building (3 stories) on this site. Since the property is currently zoned RA (residential agricultural), the owner needs a zone change to R3. The project is tentatively planned to be presented at the May 21, 2007 meeting of the Tarzana Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee.

**5356 Crebs Ave. —** The owner of this property is requesting a variance from the City to allow a fence/hedge and gate that is approximately 8 feet, 9 inches. The City ordinance states that the maximum height for a fence in the front yard of an R-1 property (minimum 5,000 square feet) should be only 42 inches.

This case was presented at the February meeting of the Tarzana Neighborhood Council. The Council opposed the request because of safety concerns and that the height of the gate/fence changes the character of the existing neighborhood.

**5530 Donna Ave. —** Two appeals were heard on January 11, 2007 for this case. As you may recall, the applicants are requesting a conditional use permit to allow construction of an approximately 11,000 sq.ft. Hindu Meditation Center and accessory structure. Your organization, Tarzana Property Owners Association, appealed, in addition to an appeal by Concerned Residents. Both groups felt that this intense use would burden the neighborhood because of the lack of available parking. The South Valley Area Planning Commission heard this case and voted to reduce the number of yearly events from 40 to 15 per year. The applicant must also show proof of off-site parking for these events to the satisfaction of the City Planning Department.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

### TARZANA EMERGENCY RESOURCE NETWORK

Two recent meetings brought home the advisability of preparing for a major emergency in our area. The first was the December 9th TERN (Tarzana Emergency Resource Network) launch presentation at the Tarzana Community and Cultural Center organized by Adam Silverman of the Tarzana Neighborhood Council. Approximately 100 people heard Ellis Stanley, General Manager of the City Emergency Preparedness Department, give an excellent presentation. Emergency preparedness kits with information brochures from the Red Cross, FEMA and the Office of Emergency Preparedness, and emergency flashlights were distributed. If you have not received a kit, contact Adam Silverman at adam@bhfinancial.com or Lisa Cerda at wordifier@aol.com . A point to note: The Tarzana Community Center will provide emergency response training on eight Wednesday evenings starting March 14. (See accompanying article)

The second meeting was in January, sponsored by the Reseda Neighborhood Council; another informative and chilling presentation of the potential for the overdue "big- one" earthquake. Excellent preparedness material was available. The terrible images of Katrina and the suffering of the Katrina victims are still with us. A major disaster in the Los Angeles area could be even worse. Anyone who has been on the freeway during rush hour (now actually most of the day) realizes that area-wide evacuation simply is not possible. A major earthquake would knock out the freeways and many other roads, making incoming relief efforts extremely difficult as well. We need to be prepared to survive on our own for several days. An excellent brochure "Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country" is available online (for downloading, viewing online, or ordering hard copies) at [www.earthquakecountry.info](http://www.earthquakecountry.info) . The website also features an excellent video and links to other information sources.

**JOIN TPOA  
AT \$15 PER YEAR  
IT'S THE BEST BUY IN TOWN**

## CRIME REDUCTION

### TARZANA EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING BEGINS

The Tarzana Community and Cultural Center has been selected by the newly merged Woodland Hills/Tarzana Chambers of Commerce as the site for emergency preparedness training classes. The first class is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, March 14 from 7:00 to 9:30 pm. Classes will be conducted by Los Angeles Fire Department CERT Training Specialists and are free to all persons over the age of 18. **To attend, call Paul Lawler at (818) 881-2800.**

**CERT** (Community Emergency Response Team) is not a new concept. It evolved in September of 1985 after a Los Angeles City investigation team was sent to Mexico City following an earthquake there that registered a magnitude 8.1 on the Richter scale and killed more than 10,000 people. The lessons learned there translated into a plan to train volunteers to help themselves and others and become an adjunct to government response.

In the **CERT** training, citizens learn such skills as putting out small fires, treating the three medical killers by opening airways, controlling bleeding and treating for shock and searching for rescue victims safely.

### POLICE USE OF VIDEO CAMERAS

The Police Department has been very successful in reducing crime in high crime areas using video camera surveillance. Cameras can provide up to 24/7 coverage of an area with monitoring at the police station. Officers can be quickly dispatched to scenes of criminal activity, often arriving while the crime is in progress. MacArthur Park is an excellent example: the area's notorious drug trafficking and prostitution have been greatly reduced, returning the park to its intended use as a community and family recreation area. Potential Tarzana activities include monitoring of the tunnels under the freeway, businesses with a history of problems, and problems with transients. The Tarzana Neighborhood Council is requesting that Councilman Dennis Zine allocate \$20,000 earmarked for use by the Tarzana NC be applied toward the purchase of a portable video camera system for the West Valley LAPD.

**TARZANA DEVELOPMENT**

.....continued

**Facade remodels on Ventura Blvd.**

The Tarzana Improvement Association tells us that a number of property owners are planning or are in the process of remodeling their properties. At 19509 Ventura Blvd., the work has already begun. At 18547 Ventura Blvd. (corner of Wilbur & Ventura), the plans were recently submitted to the City. Plans also were submitted for 19439 Ventura Blvd., which will house a new Starbucks. We applaud these upgrades.

**PLANNING BASICS & INFORMATION**

The City of Los Angeles provides a wealth of information on their website. Go to [www.lacity.org/pln](http://www.lacity.org/pln) which is the City Planning Departments web site. Click on zoning information and next, Zimas. You then put in the address. A map and property record will appear with everything from lot size to last sale. It also provides links to the tax assessor's office and the Building & Safety Department's web site where you can check if a permit was issued by the City. Many of you have used this site. If you haven't, give it a try.

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**Dear members:**

**The Membership Application below is for you to share with neighbors and friends who are not now members of the Association so that they too may enjoy the benefit of direct representation with City and Count Departments and Officials, assistance with homeowner related problems and informative newsletters. We hope you and they will attend Board meetings when you have time available and share your opinions.**

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**As a Tarzana property owner, you are invited to join the Tarzana Property Owners Association, Inc. Please mail this membership application and your check for the annual dues of \$15.00 to**

**TARZANA PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.  
P.O. Box 571448, Tarzana, CA 91357**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY & ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_