

TPOA

NEWSLETTER

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Dave Garfinkle TPOA President

There seems to be considerable confusion about the Mansionization Ordinance and what, if anything, people can do if they have concerns about provisions of the ordinance. While there are lots of details and the material so far may be somewhat confusing, let me attempt to better describe the situation. There are three stages to the City's effort to control the incursion of oversize houses into established neighborhoods.

The first stage was the Baseline Mansionization

Ordinance, unanimously passed by the City Council and signed by the Mayor, which went into effect on June 29, 2008. It affects all single family residential property north of Ventura Blvd. It limits the maximum size of homes as a function of the zone and lot size. See page 6 of the **Summer 2008 TPOA Newsletter** for a summary of the provisions. Of particular interest to Tarzana residents, the by-right limit on house size on RI lots is 50% of the lot area; on RA lots it gets more complicated: 25% of the lot size for lots of 20,000 square feet or less, and the greater of 5000 sq ft or 20 % of the lot size for larger lots. In other words, the house size limit for a 17,500 sq ft RA lot is $(17,500 \times 0.25) = 4250$ sq ft; for a 22,000 sq ft lot it is 5000 square feet, since $22,000 \times 0.2 = 4400$ is less than 5000; for a 30,000 sq ft lot the limit would be $(30,000 \times 0.2) = 6000$ sq ft.

Those numbers are the basic provision. A 20% bonus is permitted for articulation or for homes which meet the Certified green standard. Those numbers do not include the first 400 sq feet of garage size, 400 sq. ft. of detached accessory buildings, and 250 sq. ft. of porches, patios, and breeze-ways with a solid roof open on at least 2 sides. In addition, the Planning Department can administratively grant a 10% bonus to the permitted house size without the normal variance and public hearing process. So, **the maximum size of an articulated home on a 20,000 sq ft RA lot, including garage, porches and accessory buildings, could be as high as 7650 sq ft.** There are some restrictions on attic height (7 ft.) and ceiling height (14 ft).

The second stage, underway now, is an ordinance to better define the hillside area.

The Ventura Blvd boundary was initially established as a matter of convenience as detailed topographic maps were not available. As part of the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance, the Planning Department was tasked to use the currently available detailed maps to more accurately define the boundary between hillside and flatland. In Tarzana, the proposed boundary line is somewhat convoluted, but, going west to east, basically follows Wells to Topeka, with a dip south around Vanalden, then follows a line drawn approximately connecting Brewster to Tarzana.

To see the proposed map go to www.lacity.org, scroll down the Departments and Bureaus table to Planning, then choose Plans and Ordinances on the left side of the screen, then Proposed Ordinances, then choose Hillside Areas Definition Amendment, then Proposed Hillside Area Boundary Only.

..... **continued on page 4**

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**Second Monday of each month
except July and August
7:30 PM
at**

**TARZANA COMMUNITY &
CULTURAL CENTER
19130 Ventura Blvd.
Tarzana, 91356**

COYOTES IN TARZANA

..... Jeff Shulman

Under cover of twilight a coyote jumped over our backyard fence violently killing our dog Crosby in November of 2008. My family sat quietly inside as the attack occurred within minutes of letting the dog in the back yard. Needless to say, it was heartbreaking for our family.

As we investigated the coyote problem, we found many neighbors with small, unprotected dogs in their back yards. We were also surprised to find out how common pet attacks are occurring and on a more frequent basis in Tarzana. We need to harden our target for coyotes just like Neighborhood Watch hardened the target for crime. One house at a time. Prevention is the key.

Coyotes are not protected animals. However, Animal Services has a policy of not killing coyotes because that encourages their growth, with fewer coyotes contending for the same food supply. LA Department of Animal Services tells us that they are "very territorial, smart, cunning, quick and hungry." They can easily jump over a six foot fence. The type of coyotes we have are called "Urban Coyotes". They adapt very easily.

Recommendations:

The Southern California Veterinary Medical Association recommends bringing pets inside at night, as most attacks occur at night although many attacks are now reported in the early evening hours; bring pet food inside at night; remove fallen fruit from trees and store trash in containers with tight lids. If you see a coyote stalking your pet, yell and throw rocks at the coyote and take your pet inside. Coyote attacks can also take place while walking your dog. It is recommended that you carry a stick, bat or whistle and keep your dog on a short leash. Be aware at all times and do not assume a coyote is not lurking nearby. We can not let the coyotes roam our neighborhoods without letting them know they are unwelcome. Chase them away at all costs.

The LA County Department of Animal Care and Control notes that backyard brush provides habitat for coyote prey and should be cleared; coyotes would rather dig under a fence than jump over it, so fences should have an "apron" buried at least four to six inches, extending out 20 inches and securely attached to the fence.

Report coyote sightings to the West Valley Animal Care Control Center at 888-452-7381. You may also report sightings to Jeff Shulman at 818-708-0030. Please include the specific date, time, location and number of coyotes. The Center's website:

http://www.laanimalservices.com/aboutani_wildlife.htm

contains extensive information about wildlife in our urban area.

WE CAN GET TRAFFIC MOVING IN LOS ANGELES!

**Commonsense Solutions to our Traffic
...Hilary Norton, Executive Director, Fixing Angelenos Stuck in Traffic (FAST,)**

You know the issue... We all know the issue... It's TRAFFIC! It keeps us from our families, increases pollution and fuel consumption and raises our stress level. Plainly, it is destroying our quality of life.

What you may not know is that a new non-profit public private partnership is working to address this issue and get Los Angeles moving again. Our group is called FAST - Fixing Angelenos Stuck in Traffic, and our website at www.FASTLA.org is a new network of people like you who want to see traffic improve as soon as possible. Please visit this site, join us, give us your input and tell others to join as well!

FAST was created to implement recommendations from a study by RAND entitled, "Moving Los Angeles: Short-Term Policy Options for Improving Transportation." The Tarzana Property Owners Association had a presentation by RAND's Dr. Paul Sorensen, at the 2008 Annual Town Hall Forum on Transportation, at which he discussed the 13 separate, yet integrated "best practice" recommendations that can improve traffic in the short term in Los Angeles County.

FAST's immediate goal is to build a diverse, inclusive coalition of homeowners associations, neighborhood councils, civic groups, educational institutions, transit organizations, elected officials, business associations, labor unions, and residents of Los Angeles County to review and support RAND's recommendations and other best practices to solve traffic in the short term. FAST's coalition will also highlight other short-term transit solutions such as those proposed through UCLA, USC, Metro CalTRANS, the individual cities making up Los Angeles County, and most importantly, the common sense solutions that come from the on-going input we receive from our community and neighborhood partners.

The long term vision for FAST is that it will become a coalition of 2 million members who can be activated to advocate for Los Angeles' fair share

of transportation funding for commonsense traffic solutions that can make a difference in our quality of life when these proposals compete for state and national funding in an era of severe budget shortfalls.

The most critical task facing FAST is seeking input from those who are affected by traffic the most - ordinary Angelenos who are increasingly bearing traffic's burden. FAST is meeting with grassroots community organizations throughout LA County to seek input and discuss solutions that are unique to each neighborhood. On April 13, FAST executive director, Hilary Norton, will be meeting with the Tarzana Property Owners Association executive board to provide a briefing on FAST's activities, solicit input from the board, and begin building a relationship for the future of our mutual efforts to address traffic in the Tarzana area and beyond.

FAST is moving quickly to address the critical needs of Los Angeles and advocating on behalf of commonsense solutions that will make a difference in our quality of life. FAST's robust and interactive website - www.FASTLA.org - is designed to educate residents about proposed traffic solutions, gather input, and serve as a vehicle to build the database of 2 million Los Angeles county advocates. Please take a few moments to visit that website, learn more about the solutions that are being proposed and sign up to be an advocate for getting traffic moving.

TPOA neither endorses nor opposes the FAST effort; this article is provided simply as a follow-up to Dr. Sorensen's presentation.

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President's Message continued

Since there are no streets indicated, you may have to compare the proposed boundary to a Thomas Guide, to tell the boundary individual lot by individual lot. The City Planning Commission unanimously passed the proposed ordinance and it will be heard before the Planning and Land Management Committee and then the full City Council.

The third stage, still in early planning, will be to develop a Hillside Mansionization Ordinance.

Indications at this point are that the maximum by-right permitted home size will follow the provisions of the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance, but will include additional limits based on the lot slope. Again taking the 20,000 sq ft RA lot as an example, the thinking in the Planning Department appears to be that the same 5000 ft basic maximum home size (not counting bonuses, variances, garages, attic height, et al) would apply to all lots with 15% or less slope. For slopes between 15 and 30%, the size would decrease to 4000 sq ft; to 3000 sq ft for 15-30% slopes; 2000 sq ft for 45-60% slopes; and 1500 sq ft for 60-100% slopes.

If you disagree with the provisions of any of the three stages, several options are available to you:

Residential Floor Area District (RFAD).

This provision allows a neighborhood to establish more restrictive or less restrictive home size ratios than nominal for the particular zone. This provision empowers local neighborhoods and addresses the often voiced objective concerning the difficulty of a "one size fits all" ordinance for an area as diverse as Los Angeles. While a number of ways to implement the RSAD are called out, it basically requires 75% agreement by the residents in the specified area. RFAD are in the process for areas in Studio City and Valley Village; there has been some discussion of a RFAD for Melody Acres.

- Zone Change.** As an example, the RA zone is more restrictive in terms of permitted home size than the RE zones. Using the 20,000 square foot lot, **the by-right maximum size of the home on an RE lot would be 7000 sq ft** (10,150 sq ft counting bonuses, variances, garages, attic height,

et al) vs **the 5000 sq ft allowed on an RA lot** (7650 counting bonuses, variances, garages, attic height, et al). **That's a by-right difference of 40%.** There are a number of other distinctions between the RA and RE, including permitted front fence height (6 ft for RA, 3.5 for RE), minimum lot width (70 ft for RA, 80 for RE), accessory living quarters (20,000 sq ft lot required in RE), and animal keeping (small animals and horses are ok for RE, but no other large animals). An area of Brentwood made this change; there is some discussion of rezoning the Tarzana RA lots south of Ventura to RE.

Hillside/Flatland Boundary. This ordinance is in process. Objections can be raised at the upcoming PLUM and City Council hearings. No hearing dates have yet been set.

Hillside Mansionization Ordinance. As this ordinance is still in the formation stage, comments can be sent to the Planning Department (erick.lopez@lacity.org) and comments can be made at upcoming City Council hearings (no dates set).

As a result of a TPOA Board vote and the overwhelming response to our survey early in the process, TPOA supported the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance and has taken a preliminary stance in support of the Hillside Mansionization Ordinance. We have taken no position to date on the hillside boundary, RA to RE zone change, or specific RFADs. Our objective is to ensure the dissemination of accurate, unbiased information to allow informed choice. To further that aim, TPOA plans to hold an information session in the near future at a time and place to be announced.



PROPOSED NEW SIGN ORDINANCE

The City Planning Department has drafted a new ordinance to better control signs in the City. After several hearings the City Planning Commission passed the proposed ordinance on March 26th. The ordinance must now go to the City Council Planning and Land Use Management Committee and then to the full City Council.

The proposed ordinance has a number of excellent provisions including elimination of all new off-site signs, limits to the size of signs including billboards, prohibition of digital signs and supergraphics except in special Sign Districts, limits to signage in residential areas, increased notification of stakeholders, and substantial fines for violations of the ordinance.

Unfortunately, as noted in testimony before the City Planning Commission, it still has a number of serious flaws which make it hard to accept in its present form by the general public and caused a no vote on acceptance by three of the CPC members. The Tarzana Property Owners Association is urging that the City modify the proposed ordinance and implement sffKree part approach.

Part One, Pass the Baseline Ordinance.

Implement the baseline proposed ordinance, which contains everything except the controversial Sign Districts and Comprehensive Sign Program, in the form passed by the Commission at the March 26 hearing. The changes added at that hearing include wider public notification, limits to roof signs, and limitations on discretionary actions by the Planning Department without public hearings.

Part Two, Defer Consideration of the Comprehensive Sign Program.

This provision would allow signs larger than the baseline provisions for any commercial site with greater than 100,000 sq ft of floor space and five acre parcel size. These size requirements are well within the current size of most "big box" stores and strip malls. The overwhelming response of the public, and those of several Commission members, was there appeared no justification for exceptions for larger developments. Larger developments would have longer street footages and thus be allowed larger signs than would be the

case for small developments. The potential blighting and safety issues would remain the same. Comments made about the need for special consideration due to the current economic situation are disingenuous. How can you justify a permanent entitlement for a temporary situation? Such an exemption is arbitrary and would essentially emasculate any sign ordinance. Commissioner Michael Woo suggested reexamining the situation in a year to see if such a provision makes sense, is practical, and easily accomplished. Passing it now and reexamining it next year has the potential for massive proliferation of oversized signs during that time. In addition, it is much harder to remove an unwanted provision than it is to later add a beneficial provision. Finally, those signs permitted during the year would have permanent status.

Part Three, Defer Consideration of Sign Districts.

Essentially all of the public comments have strongly opposed the proposed provisions regarding creation of special Sign Districts. Federal Judge Audrey Collins has ruled that the current definition of sign districts is not compelling and does not sufficiently estabKsh alsasSfof allowing exemptions in specified areas from the provisions of the general sign ordinance. While the City has appealed that ruling to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, their response is not expected for at least another year. The City must at least await the ruling of the Court of Appeals and craft any special sign district parameters based on that ruling. As that may take some time, particularly if there is further appeal to the Supreme Court, the current moratorium on any provisions for contemplated sign districts should be extended until the final adjudication of the issue.

A better solution might simply be to eliminate all consideration of exemptions for special designated areas (sign districts) as there does not appear to be any overriding reason to create such special districts. At the very least, the City must craft a set of specific parameters to define a Sign District that is likely to withstand further court challenges. The crafting of such a set of parameters must include input from citizen groups, including the neighborhood councils and established homeowner groups.

The latest version of the proposed ordinance does require elimination of at least as much existing conforming signage as proposed new signs in the district; requires "compatibility with the neighborhood"; and limits sign districts to Regional Centers, Regional Commercial Areas, and the Downtown Center (currently 21 areas of the City). It further requires public hearings for proposed Sign Districts, although notification would only be required to property owners within 500 feet of the project, not to local homeowner organizations and neighborhood councils. Additional critical items that must be addressed include better notification of proposed Sign Districts, greater reduction in existing signage in exchange for exceptions to the general Sign Ordinance requirements and better restrictions of the impingement of any signs on neighboring communities.

What needs to be done. We need to urge the Planning and Land Use Management Committee of the City Council and the full City Council to adopt a thorough and thoughtful approach to the proposed sign ordinance: **immediately pass a baseline ordinance incorporating the current proposed provisions, defer consideration of Sign Districts, until legally permissible and acceptable provisions are defined, and defer any consideration of Comprehensive Sign Program unless and until the need becomes apparent after review of the effectiveness of the baseline ordinance.** Go to lacity.org to obtain the e-mail and regular mail addresses of Councilmembers.

TRANSPORTATION REPORT

..... **Max Flehinger**

A Tarzana resident has asked for a caution sign "Through street ahead" on s/b Wilbur at Linnet in order to prevent accidents at that intersection. The TNC Transportation Committee is looking into this.

The DOT has rejected a request for "No parking for unhitched trailers" signs on Crebs, between Ventura and Linnet, on the grounds that Crebs is a local street. They have not yet acted on the TNC's request for similar signs on Oxnard and on Philiprim.

The TNC Transportation Committee has discussed a request for a truck loading zone on Ventura Blvd., immediately east of Yolanda. This would replace at least one parking meter. Committee members will speak with owners of the stores and restaurant involved.

A Tarzana resident has requested an action to alleviate the difficult left turn from w/b Collins to s/b Wilbur (at Tarzana Elementary School) in the morning rush hour, as well as the "unsafe" turn from n/b Wilbur to n/b "little Wilbur" at any time of the day. He will consult with the residents of the blocks involved to determine what action they would like the DOT to take (eg., one-way traffic on "little Wilbur," "No left turn from w/b Collins to s/b Wilbur from 7-9 A.M., etc.) and report back to the TNC Transportation Committee at its next meeting.

The TNC Transportation Committee is looking into purchasing two speed read-out signs to be used in Tarzana — if Councilman Zinc's office will pay one-half of the cost.

The TNC Transportation Committee was asked by

the urgent traffic/transportation issues in Tarzana are. The committee concluded, unanimously, that the overriding issue in Tarzana is the restricted traffic flow on Reseda Blvd., between Ventura and Hatteras. This was conveyed to Mr. Rios.

A stakeholder has requested a "smart" crosswalk on Tampa at Hatteras, stating that pedestrians crossing Tampa there are in danger. The Transportation Committee is looking into the change in conditions at that intersection since the last time a similar request was made and rejected by the LADOT.

The DOT has not yet responded to the committee's request for some means to make crossing Clark Street, between the Gelson's and Longs/Vons parking lots safer for pedestrians.

If you would like consideration given to any element of traffic/transportation in Tarzana, please address your inquiry to TPOA, P. O. Box 571448, Tarzana, CA 91357.

PLANNING AND ZONING ISSUES

..... Kathy Delle Donne

In the last newsletter, I wrote that many projects that were approved have not begun construction. This continues to be the case in the first few months of 2009. Even the number of requests for other types of actions, such as zone variances, is less than in prior years.

Zoning applications. The following applications are waiting for a public hearing to be held by the City of Los Angeles:

5429 Lindley Avenue : Temple Judea is

requesting-

1. A conditional use to allow the expansion of an existing religious institution, including religious education;
2. A zone variance to allow 228 parking spaces in lieu of the 327 required by code;
3. A zone variance to allow a roof structure of 9 feet over the specified height limit for the zone in lieu of the 5 feet over allowed by Code;
4. Removal of a building line established by

The Temple plans to demolish the sanctuary and social hall building and replace them with a new two-story building for the same uses, add six classrooms and second story office space to existing religious school building and add an underground level of parking below existing surface parking with new surface parking at grade. The Temple worked with the adjacent neighbors and agreed to a list of conditions, such as the planting and maintenance of landscaping and a new wall along the rear of the property, the construction staging will be on site, not on Lindley Ave. and construction parking will be on site or at a remote location.

The Tarzana Neighborhood Council supports this project with the added conditions.

18831 Topham Street: The owner is requesting a zone variance to convert this single family home with thirteen bedrooms into a senior facility that will house 26 residents. This facility is currently licensed to care for 6 residents. This number is the maximum allowed by state law. Any number over this, the owner must comply with local ordinances and obtain the necessary entitlements.

There are many problems with this application, such as limited parking for autos and vans, an inadequate circulation plan and a reduced passageway to entrance which may cause safety problems, especially in emergencies. The Tarzana Neighborhood Council opposed the application for 26 residents because it is too intense for this neighborhood.

18603 Topham Street: The owner is requesting both a zone variance and a conditional use permit to continue to operate this dog kennel within 500 feet of a residential zone. Only the conditional use permit request has been presented to the Neighborhood Council. A zone variance request was only recently filed by the applicant. The Neighborhood Council will review the full application in the next few months.

19259 Casa Place: The owner is requesting an eight to ten foot fence along the front and side yards of the property. Tarzana Neighborhood Council recommends that this request be denied because it would set a precedent for an over-height fence in a RA area, plus it is out of character with this neighborhood. The neighbors are strongly opposed.

19300 Ventura Blvd: There are two parts to the property owner's application - a project permit compliance and a conditional use permit. The project permit compliance which does not normally require a public hearing can be done fairly quickly. In this case, approval of the project permit application would allow the property owner to go to the Building & Safety Dept. and pull the expansion permits. If the permit compliance is done simultaneously with the conditional use permit, there could be almost a year's wait. This would not only be a burden to the property owner, but also, be a continued eyesore in the community. For the **project permit compliance, the applicant is requesting** to add 2915 sq. ft. to the former bank building. The property owner plans to move their commodities trading firm from Encino to Tarzana. They plan to redo the facade of the building to a more modern look.

The second request is a conditional use permit to allow a deviation from the stated hours of 7am to 11pm for a commercial corner business to 24 hours/ 6 days excluding Saturday. According to the owner the business deals with countries throughout the world, therefore they must have telephonic and

Planning and Zoning..... continued
and computer coverage 24 hours per day. Most of the business is conducted by phone with minimal walk-in customers. The Tarzana Neighborhood Council voted to support both requests and asked that the City Planning Dept. approve the project permit compliance as quickly as possible so that the applicant can obtain the required building permits to begin the expansion.

TNC and TPOA

If you are wondering why applicants now present their projects at meetings of the Neighborhood Council rather than at TPOA meetings as was done in the past, the main reason is that there is better notification to the community. The Neighborhood Council has funding to send out emails and notice those residents who live within 500 feet of a project if that project will be reviewed by the Council. This allows the neighbors of a project an opportunity to give their input before a public hearing is held. Surprisingly, we have found that many issues can be worked out before the public hearing is held by the City of LA.

Another reason is the expense for consultants. Most consultants charge for attending community meetings so there can be substantial costs for the applicant/owner before they even begin their project. In this economy, we try to be fair to those applicants who want to develop projects or start businesses within our community. Currently, four members of the TPOA Board are on the Land Use Committee of the Council. They are able to review the projects and bring back to the full TPOA Board all the information regarding the project. This has worked well for both organizations.

In the next newsletter, I will write about Tarzana's first historic cultural monument application. As they say "stay tuned."

Please remember that you are welcome to contact me on any land use issue for Tarzana. You may contact me at kdelledonne@tarzananc.org or 818-345-9166.