



Voters Organized Toward Empowerment
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Minutes accumulated by Denny Schneider

VALLEY VOTE REPORT: April 18, 2016 MEETING

Galpin Ford - 2nd Floor Meeting Room, 15555 Roscoe Boulevard, North Hills, CA 91343

Valley Vote meetings are held the third Monday of each month to address critical public policy issues impacting the San Fernando Valley.

President Joe Vitti encouraged all to become either a Board member or an Executive Board member. For details of how to become an active Valley Vote volunteer or to see the dozens of position statements addressing numerous key issues, visit the Valley Vote website: www.ValleyVOTE.org. This meeting was supposed to feature LA City Councilmember Felipe Fuentes, but he became ill on the day of the event and has been rescheduled to the next meeting on May 16. Despite his absence the meeting was packed with information from LADWP Project Manager Yoshiko Tsunehara who spoke about local grey water projects and from our board members' status reports made on numerous topics of community interest. All are described below.

LADWP Project Manager Yoshiko Tsunehara - Water Recycling



Ms. Tsunehara previously reported to Valley VOTE about the Grand Water recycling project to take 30,000 acre-feet per year of water from the Tillman Reclamation Plant which, after additional treatments, will be spread into the east Valley spreading grounds to become part of the ground water supply for future use. This project has progressed through planning with an environmental report due in mid-May with a 60 day comment period.

Until LA develops much greater storage capacity and/or new sources of potable water such as seawater desalination plants "gray water" (processed water that has not met all drinking water standards) which is substituted in non-potable uses thereby increasing the availability for drinkable water uses, we will continue to have water availability concerns.

Use of this type of processed water is limited by the cost of creating a second set of distribution pipelines and by the amount of water these collection/treatment plants produce. Although not always cheaper than the imported river water gray water creates a stable, reliable supplemental source. As the amount of water is limited by plant locations, LA is also looking to neighbors such as Burbank for North Hollywood and Los Virgenes for West Valley who have their own treatment plants where water may be available for LA use. This is a win-win as the discharged water may case even greater treatment costs due to regulatory restrictions.

Examples of current recycled water is watering of grounds within Griffith Park, several Valley golf courses including Hansen Dam, cooling towers at power generating stations, and more. Recycled water is generally limited to large users that can be serviced by the separate water pipeline supply with basically treated waste and runoff water.

Ms. Tsunehara made us aware of a new Woodland Hills Recycling project to collect and process non-potable "gray water" which can then be distributed for uses where fully drinkable water can be saved for other important uses. This five mile pipeline project is in the pre-design stage nearing construction. This is officially a Las Virgenes led project. Go to their water district for detail documentation. 500 acre-feet

per year of potable water will be saved by LA with this project. The LA pipeline distribution project is hoped to start in 2017 to be finished in 2019.

There will be many more of these projects coming. This is part of the total objectives of the Urban Water Management Plan which can be found in the LADWP.com website.

Questions about watering medians with trucks were raised. This has not started. LADWP is working with Bureau of Street Services on this.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Don't Nail the Job Coffin - Vic Viereck

Due to already being one of, if not the highest taxed states in the country, businesses (employers) are leaving California for other states. That means jobs are leaving California. Just recently (among others) the State of California and the City of Los Angeles mandated a minimum wage pathway to \$15.00 an hour (with later increases approved). The new minimum wage, plus related payroll taxes and workers compensation insurance will be pricing even more employees out of work.

Especially now, what California does not need is another increase in expensive taxes and expensive taxes. But some people are promoting split-roll taxation, changing Proposition 13. They supposedly just want to only increase property tax on commercial property. While the check for property tax comes from the commercial property owner, through what's called a triple net lease, the commercial tenant (large and small) reimburses the property owner. But for the commercial tenants to cover that cost, they need to do one or more things. Those include raising prices to us (the customers), reducing employment, and/or if possible, reduce other costs. If the tax cost price increases, job cuts, and other cost cutting fail to cover the cost increases, businesses will close. For many, especially after the minimum wage, the SPLIT ROLL will become another Nail in the Job Coffin.

The only advantage it might create is all the vacated housing and available water supply as people leave California. Since 1979 Proposition 13 has spared many Californians from losing their homes and jobs. It has been a blessing to California's economy.

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Adult Use Marijuana Legalization Initiative – David De Voss

Twenty-three states now permit medical marijuana. Four of them allow recreational marijuana sales. California may become the fifth state to legalize pot if the Adult Use of Marijuana Act scheduled for next November's ballot is approved.

The state initiative is being bankrolled by Napster founder and former Facebook president Sean Parker, who donated more than \$1 million to the \$2.25 million already raised. George Soros has contributed \$500,000. Progressive Insurance kicked in \$250,000. The NAACP is even backing the initiative.

The Adult Use of Marijuana Act will allow any one 21 or older to possess and use an ounce of marijuana. Cultivation, distribution and sale will be regulated. A 15% tax will be levied on all retail sales.

With interest in the Senate race almost nil and little enthusiasm for any of the presidential candidates, the marijuana initiative is expected to draw most press attention and campaign cash. Political pundits in Sacramento estimate that between \$425 million and a half billion dollars will be spent on the campaign.

Opponents hoped to derail the initiative by insisting marijuana cultivation would waste water. But the Mendocino Cannabis Policy Council disproved that notion by showing that an eighth of an ounce of marijuana takes 1.9 gallons of water to produce. That's less than the amount needed to produce a head of broccoli and about the same as required to grow one almond.

What will the Adult Use of Marijuana Act's approval mean? Let's look at Washington State where one Seattle pot store has \$1.4 million a month in sales. There are 223 marijuana stores in Washington that collectively sell products worth \$260 million. Last year, they paid \$65 million in taxes.

There are nearly 450 marijuana dispensaries in LA County. Imagine if everyone were paying a 15% sales tax. We could improve the LA River. Turn the Orange busway into a mass transit rail line and begin work

on the Van Nuys to Westwood subway. For individual investors, the sky is the limit. Several venture capitalists believe Big Marijuana will eclipse Big Tobacco and create more millionaires than Microsoft. David De Voss eastwestnewsserv@aol.com

Veterans Affairs Ernie Hilger

The Draft Master Plan for the West Los Angeles (WLA) Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) campus has been approved.

The US House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Committee unanimously passed H.R. 3484 on Feb.19, 2016 reaffirming and codifying the Veteran Centric Policy at the West Los Angeles VA. Details can be The Federal Register Notice on Feb. 19, 2016.

The bill responds to over 1000 public comments received in response to the Preliminary Draft Master plan that the VA published on October 22, 2015 in a "Request for Comment".

An integral part of the H.R. 3484 bill includes the Formation of the West Los Angeles (WLA) Community Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB) Greater Los Angeles (GLA) now in process: there will be a steering committee made up of between 10 -12 individuals who will develop a charter, put forth names of individuals that are knowledgeable in the subject matter and committed to making it work as the board chairperson, co-chair(s) and general members of the board.

The VA envisions the development of supportive housing on campus pursuant to legislation Congress recently introduced in both houses. VA has a phased development plan of 1,200 supportive housing units on the campus.

The estimated schedule for completion of the first phase is: "Specifically, after legislative enactment, the proposed timeline involves developing 490 units within the first 30 months, 280 additional units within 4 to 5 years, and 430 additional units within 6 to 10 years—all totaling 1,200 units."

The goal will be to strategically locate units designated for those underserved populations, in a manner to provide convenient access to the pertinent care and services that they will need, in a safe setting and environment.

Along with development of those units would be Veteran focused supportive service leases, geared towards Veteran Health and wellness, nutrition and spiritual wellness, education, vocational training, skills building, peer activities, socialization, and physical recreation, assistance with legal issues and federal benefits, volunteerism, family support services, child care services, and transportation.

Regarding the issue of helping active - duty service members to transition to Veteran status, VA plans to offer and provide transition services in the southwest corner of the VA campus, near the U.S. Army Reserve Center and Army National Guard Recruiter facilities adjacent to the GLA campus.

Ernie Hilger erniehilger@hotmail.com

Airport Report Denny Schneider, Alliance for a Regional Solution to Airport Congestion, ARSAC

It's now Thanksgiving EVERY day at LAX. That is, everyone is thankful for getting to their flight after fighting enormous traffic delays whether arriving from the 405 or either direction of Sepulveda Blvd.

There are numerous projects being approved for LAX costing \$Billions with the objective of making it more convenient to access the airport or improve the terminals. I'll leave it to the travelling public to decide if Los Angeles is being successful. Saturday past I had to make four visits into LAX. Not once did it take less than ten minutes from the LAX entrances of either the 96th Street bridge or Century Boulevard to get to Terminal 1.

Kudos to the LAWAPD traffic officers who are working to make the best of a bad situation. Their new mandate is to politely welcoming visitors. This has become increasingly difficult when patience is short from the long backups to get to the terminal curbside. These officers are directing traffic into the two curbside lanes bringing some order to the massive chaos. The officers reported to me that they are working to ensure that vehicles safely depart and embark their vehicles by stopping traffic to allow the vehicles to exit the drop off areas. I asked how well the new Transportation Network Vehicles (TNC)

were integrating into the flow. The LAWA officer's answer was, "there's still many growing pains and opportunities for improvement. We have many more vehicles than this area was designed for."

The majority of traffic still arrives by car. LA Controller Ron Galperin has accumulated many statistics about LAX in his website http://airports.controlpanel.la/traffic_transportation/. It tells you that 75,960 vehicles and 5560 shuttles entered the Central Terminal Area daily in 2015 and we know that number is increasing! (That's over 27 million vehicles for the almost 75 million annual passengers.)

LAWA has concentrated shuttles from the hotels and rental car companies, but you can see that many still enter LAX. In a Westchester Neighbors Association meeting last month which featured LAWA PD and LAPD there were numerous complaints of commercial vehicles waiting in the surrounding community and local business parking lots.

The airport recommends arriving one to two hours ahead for domestic flights. If you are planning a trip and leaving during the day or evening other than late night I'd recommend the two hours. Denny Schneider, WWW.Regionalsolution.org Denny@WeLiveFree.com [310 641-4199](tel:3106414199)

Sound Off!

Valley Vote's has added a public comment period to its monthly meeting. Coming toward the end of the meeting, Sound Off! will give members and guests an opportunity to briefly voice their opinions and concerns in brief two-minute presentations. Members attending our meeting will have the opportunity to discuss their concerns.

The press and public are invited to attend the next meeting of Valley VOTE is Monday, May 16, 2016 at Galpin Ford.

----- Valley VOTE Mission Statement

Valley VOTE is a diverse coalition of San Fernando Valley residents, business people, educators, community activists, and organizations, committed to exploring and fostering the implementation of programs that empower the people of the San Fernando Valley and the City of Los Angeles, to improve local governance, education and public participation on policy matters. We meet monthly to address key policy issues and hear reports from our standing committee chairs. For additional information about Valley VOTE, for an upcoming meeting agenda, or for previous meeting reports and press releases, we encourage you to go to the Valley VOTE website.