

# Cheviot Hills News

Cheviot Hills Home Owners' Association

www.cheviot hills.org

Autumn 2008

Please attend our

## General Meeting In November 2008

We will discuss Light Rail, Traffic  
and the Greening of  
Cheviot Hills

### Expo, the Bigger Picture

The CHHA is now in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the latest go-round on the Exposition Light Rail Project. Our research and subsequent assessment of all things Expo has lead us not only into transportation planning but city planning, development issues, CA Public Utilities Commission, and city, state and federal government funding issues. We have heard from the Exposition Construction

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### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



The months since our last newsletter have witnessed a frenzy of activity on a broad range of community issues. Suffice it to say that your duly elected CHHA Board members have been in the thick of it.

In the last six months the CHHA supported and saw passed a long sought LA City Council anti-McMansion regulation. The board has continued to work vigorously on Expo light

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### EXPO UPDATE

#### Expo says no route has been chosen yet, but...

- Expo Authority spokesperson tells WLA community members that train crossings on the ROW route at Overland, Westwood, Military and Sepulveda would be at street level. LADOT questions that decision based on traffic impacts, school safety and loss of street parking.

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### Traffic Matters

After years of promises and partial progress toward completion, the final promised build-outs for the Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan for Cheviot Hills and adjoining neighborhoods have been constructed. The center median in Motor Avenue adjacent to the Cheviot Hills Recreation Center and parking lot, and two small median islands on Motor at Dunleer

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rail issues. We have engaged APS Security & Patrol to start a 24 hour neighborhood security patrol. Your HOA is developing a tree replacement and greening project and we are working with the City Council office on traffic mitigation and median landscaping issues. We have settled lawsuits with Century City developers that created a generous annuity for our local schools, parks and libraries. We have supported and won an initiative to have the Pico East/Olympic West traffic plan undergo an Environmental Impact Study to determine community impacts. Programs and support of the local police and fire departments continue as well.

Many of these projects are on going and we continue to add others. To do all of this on your behalf we urge you to join, or renew your membership, and encourage your neighbors to do the same. If any of the projects we're working on interest you we hope you will join the effort. If you have neighborhood concerns that need to be addressed please bring them to the board. Working together with the CHHA is the best way to strengthen our sense of community and preserve and protect Cheviot Hills.

The Cheviot Hills Homeowners Association board meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm at the Riddick Center (Overland and Ashby). The public is welcome.

One final note, **Neighbors for Smart Rail**, a coalition of local HOA's, the Greater West Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and concerned residents, is holding their annual Light Rail Forum on the Phase 2 Exposition Light Rail project. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 10, 2008, at Vista Del Mar Child and Family Center, 3200 Motor Avenue at 7:00 p.m.

**Security Patrol Program Starts In Cheviot**

For the last couple of months residents of Cheviot Hills may have noticed the APS Security & Patrol (APS) cars cruising our neighborhood. APS was selected and engaged for a trial period paid for by the CHHA after thorough research by the board and extensive neighborhood feedback. APS was selected based on value for service and the following service advantages:

- ✓ APS has been in business over ten years (Since 1997) and has been servicing the California Country Club Homes Association since 2003.
- ✓ All of APS patrol vehicles are dedicated to the area between Pico Boulevard (N), La Cienega Boulevard (E), National Boulevard (S), and Overland Avenue (W).
- ✓ APS employees must pass background checks from the Federal Bureau of Investigations and California Department of Justice; all employees are licensed, bonded, and insured.
- ✓ APS provides 24 hour services, 365 days a year.
- ✓ APS has an excellent working relationship with our LAPD West LA Station.

The new security patrol program is an association-paid program supported by membership dues and offers the following community benefits:

- ✓ 8 patrols within Cheviot Hills per day; each patrol lasting approximately 30-40 minutes and would cover all the streets in our neighborhood.
- ✓ A sign for your property, indicating that you are covered by the APS patrol service.
- ✓ Access to a 24/7 security response car if an emergency arises at your residence; non-paid members would not be able to

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*Expo, the Bigger Picture Contd. from Page 1*

Authority that it is their intention to run three-coupled, articulated double train cars weighing 225 tons each, at grade (street level) through the entirety of the residential portion of WLA's right-of-way.

The safety hazards of at-grade rail are substantial both to pedestrians and vehicles. They are unconscionable so close to an elementary school, which will suffer the additional environmental impacts of constant warning bells. The train horns will begin to blow, and crossing bells begin to sound at about Rountree in Cheviot Hills as the train prepares to cross Overland Avenue, then Westwood, Military and Sepulveda (and in the reverse direction), as often as every 2-2 1/2 minutes, 22 hours a day. That sequential horn blowing and bell ringing at each of the four crossings all takes place in the less than 3/4 of a mile that bisects and blocks (more than 24 times an hour) the busiest North/South streets in West Los Angeles. The wheel squeal on the curve that wraps the entire portion of the right of way through Cheviot, including the school will be especially problematic. Tailpipe pollution from train-blocked cars lined up will diminish air quality and create driver frustration. Commuters from Century City, Beverly Hills, and Westwood, seeking to avoid the jammed up main arterials struggling to the freeways, will seek smaller neighborhood streets to cut through. With am and pm peak period traffic expected to merge into a single daytime "peak", we have seen Expo's future and it is not pretty.

The CHHA continues its commitment to opposing any at-grade rail on the Expo right-of-way. On August 7, the Westside Neighborhood Council joined our commitment by passing a resolution against at-grade rail. The Greater West Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce joined NFSR and passed a similar resolution supporting grade-separation through West Los Angeles the month before.

Here is an update of our work through Neighbors for Smart Rail in the last 6 months:

- The letters sent last fall by NFSR and local residents to the Federal Transportation Administration noting the deficiencies in Expo's screening of route alternatives, as part of the DEIR, prompted the FTA to send a letter of concern to Expo which resulted in them redoing the screening report. NFSR has requested the actual FTA letter of concern to see what issues were addressed in the revised screening report. We will put it on the CHHA and NFSR website when we get it.

- The FTA response to us also stated that Expo had not submitted an application for New Starts Funding on Phase 2 as of March '08. Local funding needs to be identified first and with MTA that is always problematic. It is, in part, the lack of Federal Funding, as well as Expo's intention to go at-grade regardless of safety risks and neighborhood impacts, that has resulted in the serious student pedestrian and vehicle risks of Phase 1's mostly at-grade design.

- In June, MTA held hearings on whether to sponsor a 1/2 cent sales tax increase to support the funding of Expo Phase 2 and the "subway to the sea". **MTA received over 500 emails from NFSR members on this issue.** NFSR fully supports the subway extension as it won't produce the negative safety, traffic and neighborhood impacts of what County Supervisor Gloria Molina calls "second class" light rail running street level through West and South LA. However, until we get commitments that Expo Phase 2 communities will receive the same guarantees that MTA/Expo has given (and paid for!) to Culver City, "No at-grade rail anywhere in Culver City and no elevated rail in any residential neighborhood," **we cannot support an increase in sales tax.** Other parts of LA County are reluctant to support the tax as well stating that they feel most projects pending are Westside projects. In August the County Board of Supervisors voted not to put the ? sales tax increase on the November ballot and then relented saying that even though the Board doesn't support it, they

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# THE GREENING OF CHEVIOT HILLS

The "greening" of Cheviot Hills will get underway shortly, as the CHHA will be planting trees in the community to replenish the over 1,500 trees which have died over the last 10 years in Cheviot Hills. The trees will be free to the members and planted by tree specialists on the parkway in front of homes. The Magnolia trees, which are indigenous to this area, will have root barriers installed.

With the increase in traffic and noise levels in this community, these new trees, which will only reach maturity in 20 years, are a safeguard against air and noise pollution, and will ensure the unique quality, and beauty of Cheviot Hills in the years to come. GO GREEN! PLANT A TREE!

If you wish to have a tree planted on your parkway, please contact us at [trees@cheviot hills.org](mailto:trees@cheviot hills.org)

Nancy Kattler and Stan Arcater, *Co-Chairs*



*Expo, the Bigger Picture Contd. from Page 3*

didn't want to waste the taxpayer's millions defending MTA's lawsuit to force the proposition to the ballot.

- In late July and early August the City Planning Department held a series of neighborhood planning meetings to get local stakeholder input on envisioning the future of West Los Angeles. It was notable how many people from outside of the proscribed planning department boundaries for WLA showed up to log in on our local issues. The topic of transportation drew pro-Expo advocates from Santa Monica, Westchester and Pico-Robertson; perhaps they didn't read the invitation... Luckily NFSR, Westside Neighborhood Council members, and other neighbors were there to help correct the record. Namely, the planning department map showed only one Expo alignment--the right-of way. They stated that grade separations divide communities (!) and that they felt that most of the community was pro-Expo. Upon closer questioning the planning department moderator said that their info had come from MTA/Expo. No surprise there. By their final meetings, they had corrected and restated the Expo issue to reflect both alignments and the official positions of the local HOA's as reflected by NFSR.

- A California Public Utilities Commission Hearing on the Expo Phase 1 train crossing safety at Foshay Learning Center and Dorsey High School will begin September 2 in downtown Los Angeles. The CPUC had tried to move the hearing from LA to San Francisco, but again, **the pressure of hundreds of letters sent to the CPUC from Phase 1 and Phase 2 neighbors returned the hearing back to LA.** Cheviot Hills resident and attorney Lawrence Heller is representing, pro bono, both NFSR and the CHHA as Interested Parties in the proceedings. LAUSD, led by school board member Marguerite LaMotte and UTLA, co-sponsored, with neighborhood groups and South Los Angeles churches, a protest rally against Expo's at-grade design. Marchers

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*Traffic Matters Contd. from Page 1*

Drive. There is a traffic island where Earlmear, Queensbury and Patricia intersect on the northeast corner of the Beverly Hills Country Club property, at the place where the areas represented by Cheviot Hills Homeowners Association and California Country Club Homes Association meet. There will be other medians and islands constructed in Beverlywood and in the CCCHA area. All of these measures were promised to the neighborhoods years ago, but funding problems and a certain bureaucratic lethargy kept these final constructions from being built until now. Note that the greenery on these islands will be planted by the City and we understand that it is to be maintained by the City thereafter, but this commitment to maintenance has yet to be memorialized. We hope the medians will be attractive and will enhance the look of our neighborhood, as well as serving to channel traffic and to reduce speeding. Proper maintenance of these new medians, and better maintenance by the City of the so-called "bump-outs" along Motor Avenue through Cheviot Hills, is something we all as a community will need to press the City to provide.



The Olympic-Pico Traffic Plan is currently the subject of an Environmental Impact Review that will look at the impact of this plan on the communities through which these two Boulevards run. The Plan, if implemented, would make Pico Boulevard a primarily eastbound street while making Olympic primarily westbound (though one could drive in the other direction on each street, travel in one direction would be favored with light timing and ultimately more traffic lanes in the favored direction), thus in theory moving traffic faster in each direction to alleviate congestion and to reduce travel times to and from Century City and other business districts. CHHA has been skeptical about the supposed benefits of this Plan, which the

Mayor, with the support of Councilman Jack Weiss, tried to impose on the Olympic-Pico communities without analyzing what the impacts of the Plan might be on those communities, including businesses and residents north, south and in the middle of the two boulevards. CHHA is concerned that this Plan will push more, rather than less, cut-through commuter traffic through our neighborhood and that it will be an excuse for the City to permit significant development of large mixed-use combined apartment and business buildings along Pico Boulevard and other business streets, thus materially changing the scale and character of the neighborhoods through which it runs.

Our City Fathers, and Mothers, though not elected with a mandate to increase density in population in our neighborhoods, are doing just that by permitting construction of large apartment complexes on multi-family use lots throughout the Westside and the City at large, thus increasing traffic pressure on our streets without increasing street capacity. Increasing road capacity is supposedly what the Olympic-Pico Plan would do, but it would also do what those who propose it don't seem to say: an increasing traffic speed will increase capacity and an increase in capacity will be used by developers (who are a major and probably the primary source of financial support for political campaigns in our town), to build larger projects to eat up that increased capacity. The MTA's EXPO light rail/trolley line, sold to the public as a traffic reducing device, is in fact a development device because its supposed reductions of street traffic will be translated by City policy into permitting large apartment and mixed used apartment and business developments (which combine the two functions in one building) in neighborhoods adjacent to the EXPO right of way. The result will be more traffic to fill the roads. The Olympic -Pico Plan will be used by developers to support overbuilding with the argument that there is more traffic capacity, so let me build bigger. Our politicians will point

*Traffic Matters Contd. from Page 5*

to the construction and business jobs that the development will allegedly create, and the tax revenue that the City will supposedly receive from the project, and the purported increased transportation capacity provided by EXPO and the Olympic-Pico Plan, and will say that such development is good and a community enhancer rather than a community-killer.

A classic example of the above lets-see-how-big-a-project-we-can-get-the-City-to-let-us-build thinking of developers has been presented to us a few blocks from Cheviot Hills by Casden Properties, which last year bought the cement works property on the block south of Pico Boulevard between Sepulveda and Sawtelle and north of Exposition Boulevard, across the street from the Rancho Park post office. On that block, which is hemmed in by traffic during rush hours as it is, the developer has proposed to build up to 500 apartments, this to be on top of a possible Target retail store and a large grocery store. Would this proposal result in a traffic disaster? Perhaps, but with the EXPO line supposed to pass by the site, and the Olympic-Pico Plan to increase, at least theoretically, local road capacity, one can speculate that this developer, which has a history of proposing large projects that get City approval in due course, might think that it can get special variances to build this project larger and more profitably than it could have without the City's current development-encouraging attitude and all this supposed traffic reduction. Similar mixed-use development projects are being proposed for Motor Avenue in Palms, our adjoining neighborhood to the south, where the argument is that a big mixed use development will enhance the neighborhood, though the development may be in fact out of scale for the neighborhood and may start a transformation of Palms from a relatively low-rise area to a higher-rise and more densely populated area. The developers in Palms will probably look to bus service and the EXPO Line to justify their

increased density requests.

Greg Pulis  
*Traffic Committee Chair*

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call for assistance through this service.

- ✓ An opportunity to fully bundle your existing security system with the neighborhood patrols (*additional fees apply for alarm system monitoring*).

To pay for these services, the association is raising annual membership dues from \$35 to \$70 per year. To put it in perspective, the dues increase means that these services are made available for less than 10¢ per day! If paid memberships increase we will be able to increase the number of cars and daily patrols.

As the trial period ends, APS will distribute lawn signs to paid members so they will be identifiable to the service and to potential intruders. This service is to benefit the entire community and to reduce the number of opportunistic crimes, as well as more serious threats to neighborhood security. It is an added layer of surveillance and not intended to replace individual security systems unless members choose to contact APS directly to arrange for additional private coverage. An APS information card is enclosed in this newsletter but if you have any further questions about the new security patrol service please e-mail [president@cheviot hills.org](mailto:president@cheviot hills.org).

Kevin Hughes, *President*



*Expo, the Bigger Picture Contd. from Page 4*

gathered at the both Dorsey High and Foshay Learning Center on Saturday, August 9 to express their concerns for student safety. Ms. LaMotte is the school board representative for Overland school also and, mindful of the risks to Overland if Expo runs at street level by there, she invited Overland families to join in the march also.

• On a related note, in June, Casdan Properties announced plans to build a **265,000 square feet, 9-story mixed use development** in partnership with MTA on the Pacific Cement factory property at Sepulveda near Pico. Included in the plan are an **at-grade Expo crossing, train station and surface parking lot for 275-300 cars**. The partnership will allow Casdan to utilize 2 acres of MTA right-of-way property to increase the number of planned apartments from 500 to 538. A Target and grocery store with 3 or 4 levels of underground parking are part of the project. Public comments expressed opposition to the overall size, the **7 stories of 1-2 bedroom apartments** the developer envisions for singles and students, plus the increased shopper traffic, especially on nights and weekends. They surmise the promised 20% “affordable” housing will still be too expensive for employees of the project's non-union retailers so workers will be coming in and the residents will be heading out, creating more traffic. Preliminary estimates put the daily car trips at an additional 11,000 plus for the development. Casdan is the developer that built the dense housing complex in the center of Westwood Village that has opened in the last few months.

Finally, the **CHHA and NFSR sponsored an Expo Update Meeting at Vista Del Mar Child and Family Center, on Wednesday September 10, 2008 at 7:00 pm**. We try to keep our NFSR general meetings to a minimum and rely on e-mails, flyers and newsletters for most of our communication. However, as we get closer to the draft environmental impact report on Expo coming out early winter **we will need more hands-on**

**help and financial support for our legal effort.**

Thanks to the many of you who unfailingly send the emails, faxes and letters to the politicians and political boards. It is so important for us to keep up the pressure and continue to make a record of community input on Expo. Please keep responding to the call and get five friends or relatives to do the same. Numbers count.

There is an Expo Light rail update at the regular monthly CHHA board meetings. If you'd like to keep up with all things Expo or have questions, please come.

Colleen Mason Heller  
*CHHA, Light Rail Chair*  
*NFSR, VP*



## MEMBERSHIP

The dues envelope is in the second notice for those who haven't paid the 2008 dues

## POLICE



West Los Angeles has the lowest crime rate of all of LAPD's reporting districts, however, this does not mean that we do not have crime. There have been a number of home invasion robberies perpetrated on older women in West Los Angeles. Our police station is working very hard to solve these crimes. If you are young or old, you should be diligent and be aware of your surroundings and lock your doors and windows whether at home or not.

A large number of crimes in West Los Angeles are thefts from automobiles. This is usually done because someone has left an object of value where it can be seen. Please remember, don't leave valuable items in the car in plain sight.

If you are concerned about anything out of the ordinary going on, call the police station at 310-444-0701 or 310-444-0702. If you notice a car or van that been parked on your street more than 72 hours, call the abandoned vehicle office at 800-222-6366 and provide the person with the street address and the license number, color and make of the car. If you have any other questions regarding parking violations, call 310-312-3500.

It is very important in this day and age to set up a neighborhood watch program and the police are very happy to help. The officer in charge of this area is Mario Gonzales 310-444-0730.

I have been working with the Police Department, Department of Transportation, and the Council Office to change the signage, so there will be no one living in their vans or automobiles from Manning down to national. I will let you know the results of this matter.

Stan Arcater  
*Neighborhood Safety Committee Chair*

## BASELINE MANSIONIZATION ORDINANCE

The Baseline Mansionization Ordinance was passed by the City Council and signed by the mayor. It went into effect on June 29, 2008. The ordinance limits the size of homes being built in many areas of Los Angeles, including Cheviot Hills. For more information please check our website [cheviot hills.org](http://cheviot hills.org)

*Please visit our website:  
[www.cheviot hills.org](http://www.cheviot hills.org)*

*Expo Update Contd. from Page 1*

- 7 Northvale Road neighbors were asked to relinquish property for the construction of a bike path along the Expo ROW. The neighbors declined, asking if eminent domain was a possibility. Not for now answered Expo saying, however, it is a legal option and they have done it before.
- **LAUSD** vows to support grade separation at Overland to protect Overland students just as they have in South Los Angeles.
- **Neighbors for Smart Rail** kicks off fundraising for legal help challenging the Expo Draft Environmental Report due out early '09. CHHA will match contributions from any resident in Cheviot Hills so your contribution gives twice!
- Go to [cheviot hills.org](http://cheviot hills.org) to hear the light rail horns sounding and read more about Expo.

