

# Santa Monica Canyon News

Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association - Founded 1947

Winter 2007

## California Incline Closure Expected to Create Months of Canyon Traffic Havoc

Last Spring, representatives of the City of Santa Monica briefed the SMCCA board on their plans for the California Incline. The Incline is deteriorating and needs to be rebuilt. This major reconstruction will require closure of the incline to traffic for a projected 10 to 11 months.

Your board had many questions regarding the project impact and possible mitigation measures. Santa Monica staff listened, took notes and indicated answers would be forthcoming in the Environmental documents. They had no answers. We learned they had not contacted our L.A. City Traffic Engineer.

In consultation with the Pacific Palisades Community Council, we prepared a comprehensive list of questions that we sent to Santa Monica and to Councilman Bill Rosendahl. Santa Monica appears to have defined the project as narrowly as possible, when traffic impacts from our canyon to Malibu and beyond could reasonably be expected and must be considered.

We were not comforted to learn that the Santa Monica project engineer retired soon after we met with him. The new engineer is referring our requests for information to an outreach consultant. The project start

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### Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association

P.O. Box 3441  
Santa Monica, CA  
90408-3441  
email:  
info@smcca.org  
www.smcca.org

## Diversion Upgrade Promises Year Around Cleaner Beach

The Santa Monica Canyon drainage area is large. It extends from Will Rogers State Beach to the top of Mandeville Canyon. It includes the Riviera Country Club, Rivas Canyon, Will Rogers State Park, as well as parts of the Pacific Palisades, Santa Monica and Brentwood. Hundreds of septic tanks. Houses. Two gas stations. The runoff comes down the Rustic Creek and Santa Monica Canyon channels. Beach water quality has been abysmal. We routinely record some of the worst readings in Southern California.

Your association has been monitoring water quality at our beach for several years and advocating measures to improve water quality to the highest possible standard. Last June, the City installed additional pumps and a larger diversion structure in the channel next to the Golden Bull restaurant. The water flow is diverted to a trash well in the middle of West Channel Road and pumped to the sewer line near Chautauqua. The screens in the well get clogged with leaves and debris that

fall directly into the channels or into catch basins at the curb. The well must be vacuumed out frequently.

As a direct result of the improvements, beach water readings during this past summer went from the usual "F," as measured by Heal the Bay's report card to an "A." Unfortunately, the diversion stopped around November 1 and water quality returned to "F." This is because the diversion projects are turned off in the "rainy" season.

The position of SMCCA is that the City should divert the storm water year around on all dry days. The City has been ordered by the state to implement the year around diversion practice by July 1, 2009. We are urging the City to do it sooner. Year around diversion requires another substantial upgrade to the diversion system. The City has initiated an upgrade project, now in the pre-design stage. Project manager Kendrick Okuda of the

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**[Calif. Incline Project - continued from first page]**

date has now been delayed to October 27, 2008. Their consultants are preparing an Environmental Impact Report [EIR] and a traffic study. A public hearing / workshop on the EIR is tentatively scheduled for April 18, 2007. The time and location have not been announced. There is no website to go to for information. Santa Monica is not publishing status reports.

**Issues raised by SMCCA.** We have asked that Santa Monica do the following:

- Require around-the-clock construction effort [24/7] by the contractor with bonus for early completion and substantial penalties for preventable delays, such as was done with the Santa Monica Freeway reconstruction after the earthquake damage in the vicinity of La Cienega Blvd.
- Provide enhanced signage to direct traffic away from Santa Monica Canyon, including signs in Santa Monica, at a minimum on the following Streets at Ocean Ave, and elsewhere, as appropriate: California, Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica Blvd., (SR-2), Colorado, Broadway, and Arizona directing traffic with arrows toward the pier/ramp to PCH with text: "All Beach Traffic" and "Construction Detour / California Incline Closed." Signs on PCH approaching Santa Monica should similarly direct traffic toward the pier/ramp/Lincoln Blvd. off-ramp, and NOT Santa Monica Canyon.
- Develop a contingency plan to be implemented should Entrada Drive traffic back up to San Vicente Blvd. to divert traffic at 26<sup>th</sup> Street and other alternatives as identified by a thorough traffic study and implemented using programmable message boards, temporary signals, manual traffic control personnel or other necessary and appropriate measures.
- Design the new incline to permit Right turns to reduce U-turns by tourists and visitors who realize they have passed the last opportunity to turn toward the City of Santa Monica.

**More information.** When final information is available regarding timing and location of the EIR workshop/hearing we will post the information on our web site, [www.smcca.org](http://www.smcca.org), and contact our email membership list.

Meanwhile, the Santa Monica contact person is Vikki Zale at 310.822.2010.

**[Beach Cleanup - continued from first page]**

Bureau of Engineering provided us the following status report:

**Proposed Upgrade includes:**

- Telemetry to implement remote controlled operation of the project.
- Installation of a second well to screen debris and permit clean-out of one well, without stopping the diversion.
- Installation of 3 new larger pumps to replace 2 existing smaller pumps to accommodate additional flow and provide redundancy.
- Back-up generator to continue pumping in the event of a power failure.

**Mandatory completion date:** July 1, 2009

**Current initiatives:**

- The City is investigating sources of water in the "pond" adjacent to PCH, including drainage sources and possible water table issues.
- The Bureau of Engineering is investigating possible locations for the second well.
- Any needed increase in sewer line capacity also is under investigation.

**MY CANYON**

And then I crossed from shore to shore  
Escaping memory

To a wild canyon,

My house set on a riverbed,  
A stepping-stone through  
Fauve-painted flowers of singular drama.  
I live among echoing shells  
And midnight Japanese mountains  
Crystal air, skies of the clearest, bluest eye.

The ever-present, ever-watchful sun  
Peeks through shutters, footpaths, branches,  
A magic lantern catching shifts of light and shadow  
Throwing them against the canyon walls,  
Creeping images of ecstasy and sorrow  
Then sears the neon swells of its descent.

Sometimes desert winds explode into the sea,  
Their molten rage smashes the sapphire wall.  
Waves collide spewing backward-blowing foam.  
Sometimes wind-driven salts and pregnant storms  
Chisel the cliffs into fragile shapes and cause  
The brittle palms to bow with reverence to the East  
Engraving cut-outs in the barren, darkening sky.

-----Lisa Macready

# WHERE, HOW AND WHY TO RECYCLE AND PROPERLY DISPOSE OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS AND OTHER HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

**E-Waste** (Electronic Waste) is the popular, informal name for unwanted electronic products, such as computers, TV's, VCR's, stereos, copiers, fax machines, telephones and many other common electronic products. Recent changes in State law also now classify household batteries (alkaline and rechargeable batteries), fluorescent tubes and bulbs, and mercury thermometers and switches, as household hazardous waste items.

**Do Not Dispose of ANY of these Products in Regular Trash Bins. It is environmentally hazardous and ILLEGAL!**

**Chemicals.** Much of your regular trash goes to landfills and these products contain toxic substances, such as acids, mercury, chemicals, and heavy metals, which can contaminate soil and seep into ground water. It is illegal to dispose of these items and other household chemicals in your trash, storm drains or sewers with a minimum fine of \$5,000 per day per violation up to \$100,000 per day per violation or imprisonment.

How to Safely and Legally Dispose of Such Products:

1. Some of these unwanted products, such as computers, TV's, and other electronic items can be reused or refurbished. Nonprofit, charitable organizations such as **L.A. Shares, Goodwill Industries, the Salvation Army** and **St. Vincent de Paul** may accept electronic products that are in good working condition or that may only need minor repairs in order to be reused. Contact these organizations directly for more information.
2. Some retail stores, such as Busy Bee Hardware at 1521 Santa Monica Blvd., provide free drop off containers for batteries and fluorescent tubes and bulbs. State law requires all cell phone retailers to take back your old cell phone for recycling at no charge. The City of Los Angeles is working with local retailers to provide more convenient drop off locations for these and other household hazardous waste items.
3. In addition, the City provides other options to dispose of these products in a safe and legal way. These options include permanent

collection facilities and mobile collection events, as follows:

- a. Solvents, Automotives, Flammables, and Electronics (S.A.F.E.) Collection Centers. These S.A.F.E. Centers are permanent collection sites throughout the City. Those nearest to Santa Monica Canyon are located at:

**Playa del Rey:  
HYPERION TREATMENT PLANT  
S.A.F.E. CENTER**

7660 West Imperial Highway, Gate B  
Playa Del Rey, CA 90293

*Hours of Operation:*

Saturdays and Sundays

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

**West Los Angeles:  
UCLA S.A.F.E. CENTER**

550 Charles E. Young Dr. West  
Los Angeles, CA 90095

*Hours of Operation:*

Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays  
8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

*\* Will accept electronic waste on  
Saturday only.*

For more information on these S.A.F.E. Centers, including holiday closures, the quantities and types of household hazardous materials that will be accepted, and additional S.A.F.E. Collection Centers, please refer to the Community Link to S.A.F.E. Collection Centers at [www.smcca.org](http://www.smcca.org)

- b. Mobile Collection Events: Watch for periodic mobile collection events, where residents can drop off e-waste and other household hazardous waste items. For the schedule of collection events, call either 1-800-98-TOXIC or click the Community Link to Hazardous Waste Mobile Collection Events on our web site: [www.smcca.org](http://www.smcca.org).

If you have any questions not answered above or by the website, you can email Neil Guglielmo of the Bureau of Sanitation at [neil.guglielmo@lacity.org](mailto:neil.guglielmo@lacity.org)

## CITY GETS SERIOUS ABOUT TREE PROTECTION

The City of Los Angeles' first attempt at protecting its native trees was in response to the declining Oak population. In 1982 the City enacted an "Oak Tree Protection Ordinance."

In November 2005, the City Planning Commission proposed an ordinance to amend the existing one, which protected only certain Oaks. This motion resulted in the City expanding its native tree protection efforts by amending two Los Angeles Municipal Code Sections in April of 2006. The ordinance is enforced by the Urban Forestry Division [UFD], contact info, below.

The adopted amendments [Ordinance No. 177404] include the following specifics:

- A Protected Tree is any of the following Southern California native tree species, which measures four inches or more in cumulative diameter, four and one-half feet above the ground level at the base of the tree:
  - (a) Oak tree including Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) and California Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), or any other tree of the oak genus indigenous to California but excluding the Scrub Oak (*Quercus dumosa*).
  - (b) Southern California black Walnut (*Juglans californica*)
  - (c) Western Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*)
  - (d) California Bay (*Umbellularia californica*)
- Trees on any lot size are protected
- Protected trees which exist on properties for which building permits are being applied for must be noted on the application.
- Protected trees may only be removed after review by the City's advisory committee subject to specified circumstances.
- May require protected trees of lesser size to be planted as replacements for removed trees.
- Any work above or below ground within five feet of a protected tree's drip line should not be performed until after UFD is consulted.

For further information contact the City of Los Angeles Urban Forestry Division; (213) 847-3077 or 311 or click on the Community Link to Urban Forestry Division on our web site: [www.smcca.org](http://www.smcca.org).

## CITY PLANS NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER STUDY FOR CANYON AREAS

Three years ago, SMCCA surveyed Canyon residents to find out how they were feeling about residential development in the area. At the time, 99.8% of the respondents were most concerned about the scale of the new homes and the loss of greenscape.

The growth trend has continued unabated, and many residents/homeowners say they feel powerless to curb the development. The rustic beauty and green-space that attracted us to this unique area is rapidly disappearing. Although the City has new restrictions on tree removal, enforcement is sporadic and requires that neighbors be vigilant.

The Los Angeles City Planning Department has been conducting neighborhood character study workshops throughout the city in an attempt to tackle the issue of mansionization — coming up with new formulas reducing home-to-lot ratios, requiring second story articulation, new setbacks, and lower allowable overall heights — in order to decrease the impact on adjacent homes. We applaud the City for tackling this issue, but it is years too late.

Unfortunately for those of us living in the Santa Monica Canyon, our entire neighborhood is considered a "Hillside" zoned area, and the City has not begun to address the issue as it applies to "hillside" development. It will be harder to come up with rules because the ratio of buildable area is so inconsistent. It could be years before we see new codes on the books. The SMCCA has contacted the City Planning Department and Councilman Rosendahl's office to ensure that we are involved in the early stages of the City's hillside study.

In the meantime, here are some suggestions for residents facing the prospect of new construction in their area:

### Prior to Construction:

1. Residents should never feel pressured to sign off on proposed building variances. There is usually a very good reason why the rule the variance seeks to change is in place. It is your responsibility to protect your property value and find out exactly what you are being asked to sign off on. Ask to see complete plans. Consult with other affected neighbors. Attend the variance hearing.

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## [Neighborhood Character, cont'd.]

2. Express your concerns regarding loss of greenscape and ask to see what the owner's plans are for planting, landscaping and tree replacement. Hopefully, all parties can be polite and civil regarding this issue.

### **During Construction:**

At our board meetings, some of the most frequently heard complaints regarding construction are:

1. The 6-day workweek. Saturday construction is permitted, but may create poor community relations.
  2. Dumpsters sitting for months on community streets, in addition to being an eyesore, take up precious parking spaces. Placing large debris containers onsite — instead of on-street — should be required. If that is impossible, debris should be kept in smaller containers onsite, and removed regularly.
  3. Due to substandard hillside streets with limited parking, workers should be encouraged to park offsite and shuttle in.
  4. Traffic flaggers should be used to safely move traffic past building sites when builders are receiving deliveries of material or heavy equipment, or are in any other way obstructing the traffic lane.
  5. Workers should not play radios or amplified music on site. Volume is always an issue when there are no walls
  6. There should be daily clean-up and proper disposal of trash / dirt from the street. Not finding loose nails until they are protruding from your tires is not a satisfactory solution.
  7. Workers should not sit, lean or loiter on neighboring properties.
  8. Landscaping should be as important a consideration to the owner as the dwelling itself.
  9. Equipment, lumber or construction fencing should never be allowed to extend beyond property lines into the street during or after the day's work. This is a vital public safety issue.
- Judging by the turnout and lively discussion, it was clear to those of us who attended the City Planning Department workshops that these issues have reached a point of critical mass. The City understands it must deal with them, but so must we.

As a community, we should consider what we would like to see happen, and, taking the long view, possibly develop our own "Palisades Specific Plan & Design Review Board" in order to protect our unique community before it's too late.

To get involved, please note your interest on the enclosed dues envelope and return it to us.

## **YOU CAN'T BEAT CITY HALL**

*by Tony Veschio, President Emeritus*

Boy — Whoever said that never met the members of the "SMCCA!"

Back in 1964, L. A. County and the City of Santa Monica came up with a flawed idea to extend the Santa Monica Freeway six miles, North from Santa Monica along our pristine beaches 4,000 feet off shore over the ocean with what they called the "causeway."

This would have had a catastrophic effect on our coastline. This "great" plan would require over 97 million cubic yards of rock, taken from our Santa Monica Mountain parkland (causing a great loss to our parkland and wildlife), and placed in the ocean to build this landfill road.

This landfill road would eliminate our beaches, leaving our shore a stagnate lake. No surf; no marine life; no safe area for children to play, only a new view of a freeway.

The estimated cost of \$100 million was so prohibitive it would be financed by the oil companies, thus opening docks for offshore drilling.

How did "David fight Goliath?"

The SMCCA formed committees. Just like running an election. We needed funding and support. We collected over 5,000 signatures from surfers alone. Soon we had 50,000 signatures of support that were sent to the City of Santa Monica to deliver to the hearings in Sacramento.

We quickly gathered and delivered 50,000 more names. Being so close to Hollywood and having so many celebrities living in our area, we decided to produce a movie and have a "premiere" at the Sand & Sea Club on the beach, with the large flood lights, many celebrities, in order to raise funds and awareness of the threat to our beach.

James Arness, star of *Matt Dillon*, which at the time was the most watched television series, agreed to donate his time and energy to star in our movie, "Riding the Surf" on his surf board. What a sight!

The SMCCA worked over two years to defeat this ill-conceived idea.

That was nearly 45 years ago. We still have our natural beach with SMCCA as strong and dedicated as ever.

Other highlights of the Association's 60 year history, each one with a unique story of its own, include:

- Stopped oil drilling in SM Canyon...
- Found a benefactor and donated "Rustic Canyon Park" to the City of Los Angeles, primarily for the use of children. Advocated for construction of swimming pool.
- Had two traffic lights installed
- Worked to preserve the Canyon School House as an historical monument.

To current resident, or

Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association  
P.O. Box 3441  
Santa Monica, CA 90408-3441

### ***Prop K Update -- Progress Promised . . . Again***

The 2002 Rustic Canyon Prop K project has been funded from the LA City Park District assessment property tax line item. Key components include improvements to the irrigation system at Rustic Canyon Park, landscaping, entry courtyard repairs, fencing, building repairs and other improvements. Two of 15 items have been completed at what many in the community believe is an excessive cost. These are the handicap-ramp and ADA bathroom modifications.

The City Engineer has promised to bring back to the local community oversight board [LVNOC] a detailed cost estimate for the remaining items. At that time the LVNOC is to prioritize these items and the completion of work is to commence as permitted by available funding. . With Councilman Rosendahl's support, an additional \$300,000 has been added to restore some of the funds used for the two ADA items and lost to administrative charges. Of course, total funding needs will not be known until the long awaited cost estimates are received. We have been promised the estimates this month.

For more information on the long history of this project, check our website, [www.smcca.org](http://www.smcca.org) under *Community Pages / more*.

Scheduled meetings on this issue will be announced by flyer at the park, on our website and by notification to the SMCCA membership email list.

### ***Annual Meeting to be Held May 8***

The Association Annual Meeting will be held May 8, 2007 at Rustic Canyon Recreation Center. Please save the date.

### ***2007 Dues Now Payable***

The SMCCA is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization. Your dues and contributions help keep your association strong. Yearly membership is only \$10 per person, a modest price for supporting your community. Please send your payment to SMCCA at PO Box 3441, Santa Monica, CA 90408-3441. Additional contributions are welcome and greatly appreciated. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

If you would like to participate on the board or in any other capacity or if you have areas of interest, please tell us in your reply. Also, please include an email address so we can send you notices and electronic newsletters. You also have the option of receiving LAPD Crime Reports and Alerts. Please let us know if you desire this additional email information.

Our mail and email lists are not shared with anyone.

### ***Important Phone Numbers--***

<b>Graffiti Report</b>	<b>3-1-1</b>
<b>Illegal Leaf Blowers</b>	<b>1.800.996.2489</b>
<b>Illegally Parked Vehicles</b>	<b>1.213.485.4184</b>
<b>Pothole Repair</b>	<b>1.800.996.2489</b>

*If you are unable to contact 3-1-1 from your home phone, please let us know so we can notify the City's 3-1-1 coordinator. email: [info@smcca.org](mailto:info@smcca.org).*

### ***Newsletter Staff--***

Lisa Bittan	Marilyn Wexler
Elizabeth Bradshaw	Diane Wolfberg
Elizabeth Macready	George Wolfberg
Tony Veschio	