

New Logo HERE!
See "Contest" on Page 3

WESTWOOD GARDENS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Summer 2008

Westwood Gardens Civic Association, Inc.

Neighbors working together to maintain and improve our community.

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Please contact us with your thoughts and ideas!

→ NOTE OUR NEW PO BOX

PO Box 642001
Los Angeles, CA 90064

Phone 310-422-5401

**Check our updated
website and sign up
for our email blast at**

www.westwoodgardens.net

Board Meetings are in Room B of the Westside Pavilion (theatre side) at 7:30 pm on the 3rd Wed. of the month. Please call or email to confirm the location or if you want to be on the agenda. All are welcome.

Dues of \$15 collected annually on a calendar year basis.

Expo Line Phase 2 – No Grade Separations

As of June 2008, the alternatives that we will see in the Draft EIR/EIS this Fall are No Build, Transportation Systems Management (buses and signals), Light Rail on the Exposition Right-of Way (ROW) from Culver City to Sawtelle Blvd., and Light Rail using Venice and Sepulveda between these points. The Phase 2 project would extend the light rail currently being constructed west of Downtown further west from Culver City to Santa Monica.

On June 9, the Expo Authority held a community meeting to present the grade separation recommendations for each of the light rail alternatives, defining them further before full EIR analysis. They are proposing at-grade crossings at Overland, Westwood, Military, and Sepulveda for the ROW alignment and at-grade crossings of Charnock and Sepulveda (turning onto the ROW) for the Venice/Sepulveda alignment, although the National station and crossing is proposed as elevated. The crossings of Barrington/Olympic and Centinela/Exposition to the west of our area are also proposed at-grade.

Their current grade crossing analysis does not support a grade separation at Overland. The at-grade crossings are meeting the MTA's grade crossing criteria by the proposal of adding a traffic lane or two in the vicinity of the crossing, thereby reducing the number of cars per lane and hence the congestion. The additional lanes would come from narrowing the parkways and restricting parking between 7 am and 7 pm in various locations. There would also be restrictions on turns that would cross the tracks. The proposed parking lot between Westwood and Overland has been redesigned to include parking on both sides of the tracks with a right in/right out only traffic pattern. A copy of the entire presentation can be found by going to http://buildexpo.org/phase2_overview.php and clicking on "presentation". Their graphics showing the proposals for Westwood and Overland, of most concern to us, are on pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter with our annotations and comments to clarify.

The anticipated effects of each alternative will be presented in a Draft EIR/EIS due out in Fall 2008. Clearly we have concerns about traffic circulation, parking loss, neighborhood intrusion, and other issues. The Board is opposed to using the ROW route through our area and will keep you apprised of the opportunities for public comment.

On a related note, Casden (a developer) has purchased the 4 acre concrete plant at Sepulveda & Expo (including WLA Building Supply) and is proposing a huge retail/residential mixed use multistory project. Please see the Land Use article on page 3.

ANNUAL MEETING - HOLD THE DATE
October 5, 2008
5-7 pm

Congratulations and thank you to our new board members and officers!

2008 Board Officers: Drew DeAscentis, President; Marilyn Tusher, Vice-Pres; Lorie Alexander, Secretary; Peggy Sturm, Treasurer

Additional Members: Roger Papet, Dolly Trogman, Karina Wiesenthal, Gerry Del Sol, Michael Haddad, Jenny Lentz, Jason Rund, Debbie Oh, Annette Mercer, Roseann Bacca, & Lori Jackson

How can you help? Consider becoming a block captain for Neighborhood Watch (see below), volunteer to deliver newsletters, attend the annual meeting, and, of course, pay your dues if you haven't already.

Neighborhood Watch and Safety Tips

The Neighborhood Watch program is an effective tool to fight crime. The active participation of good neighbors in cooperation with the LAPD can reduce the incidence and fear of crime in your neighborhood. There don't have to be numerous meetings, and you don't have to take any personal risks to prevent crime. The WGCA Board can help you start a program for your block. The first step is to exchange names and phone numbers, and have a block captain to keep it updated for all to have when necessary. The LAPD will gladly come to your initial meeting to assist in organization and discuss crime concerns specific to your area. Getting to know your neighbors and their cars is a great benefit in recognizing who is normally a resident on your street. The more residents and blocks that are involved, the stronger and safer our entire neighborhood will be. Forming or joining a Neighborhood Watch program will also help retain the value of your home - as you will have been an important part in creating and keeping a safe environment. Call 310-422-5401 if you would like more information.

Safety Tips – Automobiles - Always lock your car, even if only for a few moments. Use the alarm systems or club. **Never, ever, ever** leave anything of value inside your car, including the glove box, or trunk. Electronics, phones, I-pods, gps equipment, cameras, sporting goods, gift bags, etc. are popular with criminals.

"Follow home" crimes do happen in our area. When shopping, be aware of your surroundings and others in the vicinity and don't flaunt or advertise your purchases. Report all crime at once - no matter how

insignificant. The police need to know and accurate statistics help to keep officers in our division.

Alleys - Have adequate lighting at the back of your property including motion detectors. Know your neighbors across the alley and their cars. A secure lock on gates and garages, and substantial fencing also helps.

Homes - Be a good neighbor, know your neighbors, and watch out for each other's property while on vacation or in case of illness. Pick up flyers, newspapers or even mail and store trash cans if need be.

Distraction burglars are citywide, and can claim to be from a city service like the DWP. If you did not make a call for service, and someone comes, get their name and department. Lock your door. Then call the number in the telephone book to verify their presence, not a number they may give you. If you still feel suspicious or uncomfortable, call the LAPD. Look to see if there is an official service truck. Call a neighbor to come over. Be sure to lock your doors if you go out in your yard with a service person, in case they have an accomplice who may go into your home.

For any suspicious activity, call 911 with an accurate description of the suspects and their vehicle including license plate. OR if it's not an emergency, go to www.alertcommunity.com. This allows citizens to document suspicious activity quickly, easily, and anonymously. The database is accessed only by the LAPD. Our area has a new Senior Lead Officer, Rashad Sharif. He can be reached at 310-444-0735 or 27162@lapd.lacity.org.

Land Use & Roadway Updates

- The Overland Bridge widening project is now scheduled to start construction in May 2009. A proposed restriping of Overland Ave. between National and Pico is still under review.
- The Pico East/ Olympic West preferential flow proposal has been sent back to the City for an environmental review following a successful lawsuit by area homeowners and businesses.
- In Century City, Westfield's New Century plan for increased retail, a condominium tower, and offices has passed the DEIR stage and an FEIR is being prepared. Another condo tower, SunCal's Green Blade at 10000 Santa Monica, is starting the environmental review process.
- Illegal billboards, supergraphic signs, and other signage issues are being tracked by the WGCA. We may see more street furniture with advertising in our area.
- A mixed use development is in the works for the Shoe Pavilion property at National and Sepulveda.
- The old welfare building at Pico and Veteran is to be senior housing (not at market rate), built and operated by Menorah Housing, a non profit organization. They will also have their office in the building but there will be no retail.
- The Westside Tavern at the Landmark Theatre is planning to open in Fall 2008.
- At a meeting on May 28 Howard Katz of Casden presented the concept for a new mixed use development at Sepulveda, Pico, and Exposition: underground parking, a Target Store and a market on 2 levels (265,000 sq. ft.), and then 5-7 stories of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments (up to 500 units) in 4 buildings on top of the commercial space. The buildings would surround an open courtyard but the details of the proposed site plan and its relationship with the MTA right-of-way are still being worked out. Concerns of traffic, scale, air quality, access, fit with the area, and land use were among many raised. Casden is at the beginning of a long process, with an early completion date of 2014. Mr. Katz plans on keeping the community updated and revising the project concept as environmental studies are completed.

Announcing The WGCA Logo Contest !!

The WGCA is having a contest to find the best logo for our association. The winning entry will receive a fabulous Westfield Gift Certificate, to be awarded at the annual meeting on Sunday, October 5th. The contest is open to all ages but can only be submitted from paid households of the Westwood Gardens Civic Association. (If you haven't paid your \$15 dues, you can always submit it with your entry.) Credit and recognition will be given and will also appear on the WGCA web site.

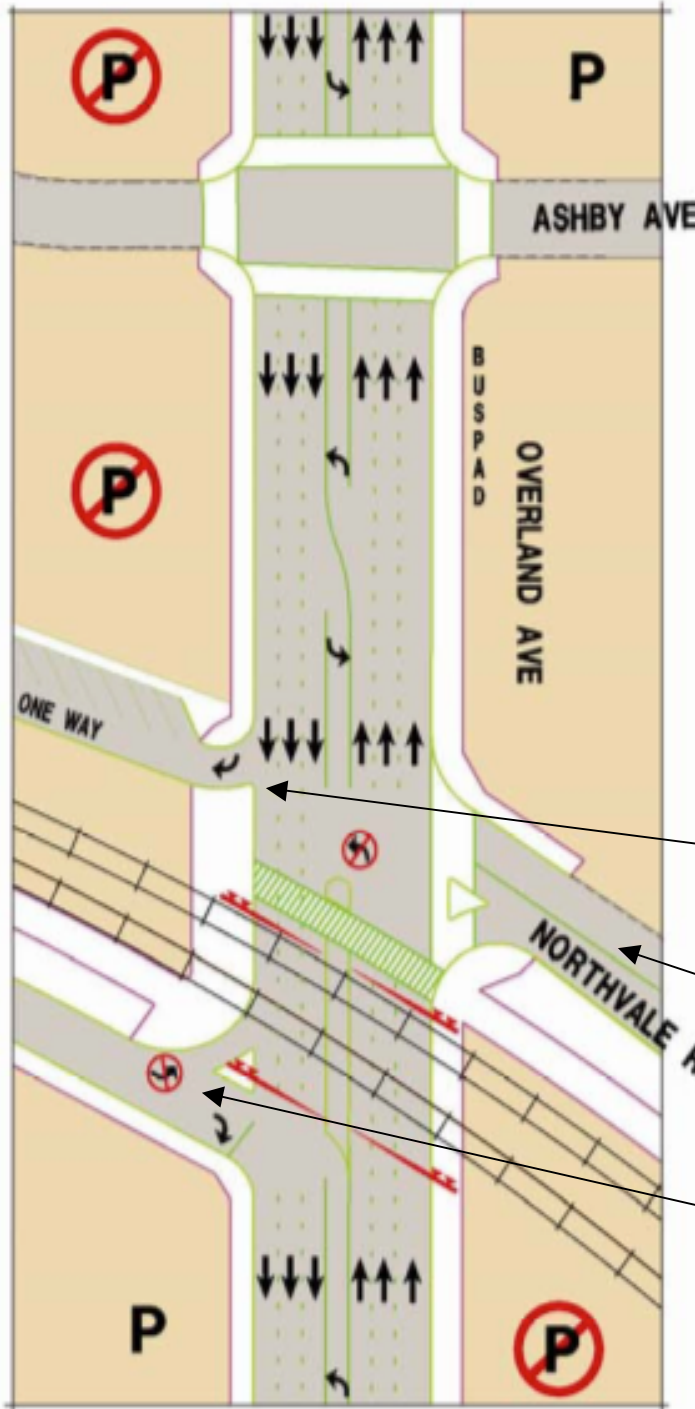
The logo can be as simple as one line or as complex as the Mona Lisa! It can be either black & white or color, although the color logo will need to work well for black and white printing.

The logo will be used as a brand and visual icon for the WGCA letterhead, correspondence, newsletters, signs, etc! Ideally it should be something one would see on letterhead. Think of something that represents the neighborhood to you. Or, use the WGCA letters in some creative form. Simplicity goes a long way!

To enter, submit a high quality paper copy or CD via traditional mail (note our new PO box address) or email your entry to westwoodgardens@gmail.com in .jpeg format. Visit the website, www.westwoodgardens.net for official rules and the prize information. The deadline is September 1st 2008. Make sure you include your name, address and phone number with each entry. You can also include a few words about your inspiration or how the logo relates to our neighborhood.

Exposition Light Rail PROPOSED OVERLAND AT-GRADE CROSSING

source: Expo Authority 6/9/08
(add'l graphics, notes, & questions by WGCA)

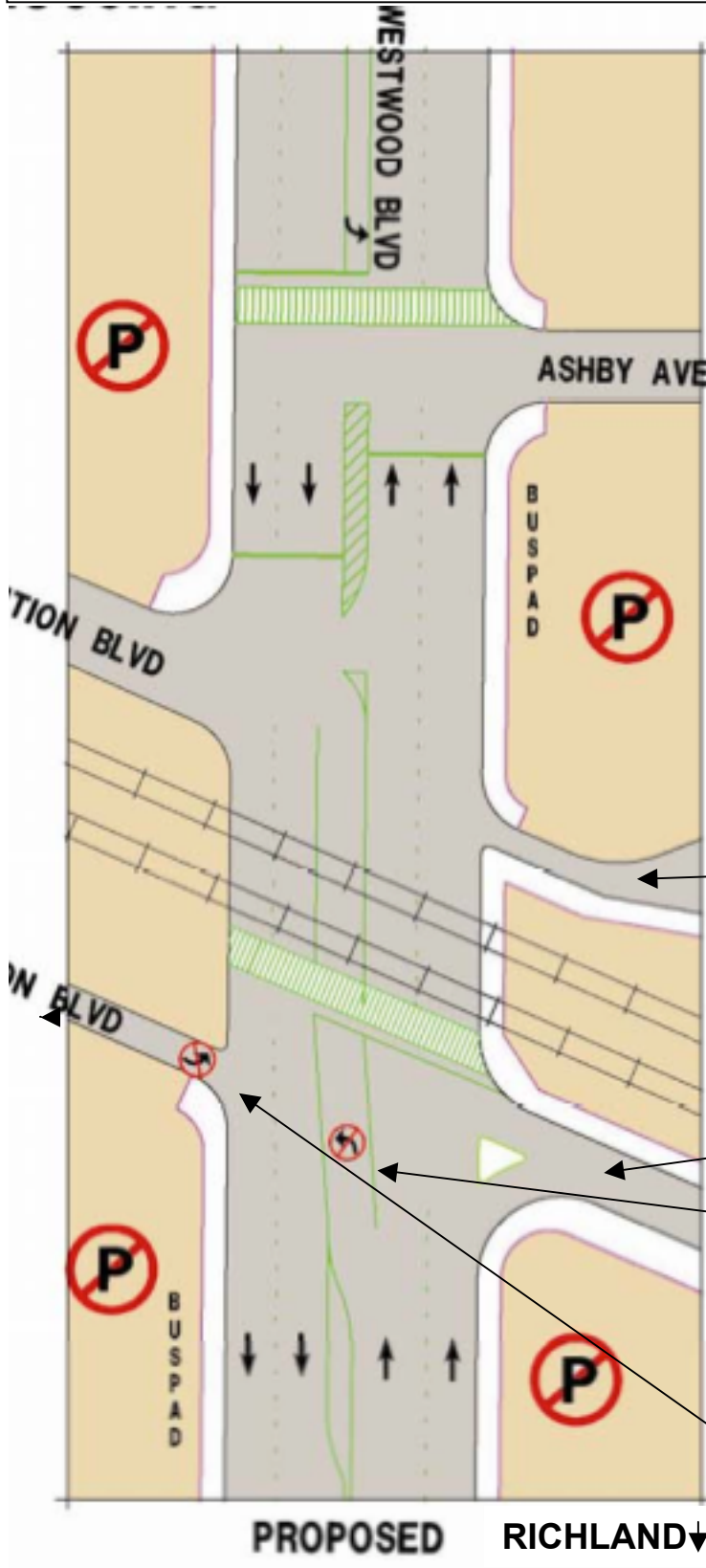


PROPOSED

- Add one northbound and one southbound thru lane from Coventry to Cushdon (goes from 2 lanes to 3) by restriping and moving the curb 2 feet. [lose trees and greenway??].
- Prohibit on street parking on the west side of Overland from ROW to Cushdon–7am to 7pm and on the eastside of Overland from ROW to Coventry –7am to 7pm [on the approaches to tracks].
- Permit on street parking on the east side of Overland from Ashby to Ayres – 7am to 7pm and on the west side of Overland from ROW to Coventry –7am to 7pm .
- Entrance to parking lot north of tracks – only accessible from southbound Overland.
- Westbound Northvale cannot turn left onto southbound Overland.
- Pedestrian crossing at tracks.
- Eastbound Expo Blvd cannot turn left onto northbound Overland (right turn only). Northbound Overland can continue to turn left into Expo Blvd. [Unclear whether southbound Overland can turn right into Expo].

Exposition Light Rail PROPOSED WESTWOOD AT-GRADE CROSSING

source: Expo Authority 6/9/08
(add'l graphics, notes, & questions by WGCA)



- Provide 2 northbound lanes from Richland to 100' north of Ashby (one now).
- Retain 2 southbound lanes from Pico to Richland (as now)
- Undertake street reconstruction from Richland to 100' north of Ashby within the public ROW (track construction, etc.).
- Provide 10 ft sidewalks along east and west sides (existing are 5-6 feet) [lose trees and greenway??].
- Prohibit on street parking on the east and west from Richland to 700' north of Ashby.
- Bikepath not shown.
- Parking lot exit ?
- Pedestrian crossing moved north of Ashby and new crossing installed south of tracks.
- Crossing gates not shown?
- Parking lot entrance?
- Northbound Westwood cannot turn left onto Expo Blvd South roadway, heading west. Unclear whether southbound Westwood can turn onto westbound Expo Blvd. south roadway.
- Expo Blvd South roadway eastbound cannot turn left onto Westwood northbound.

DWP Rate Changes Coming

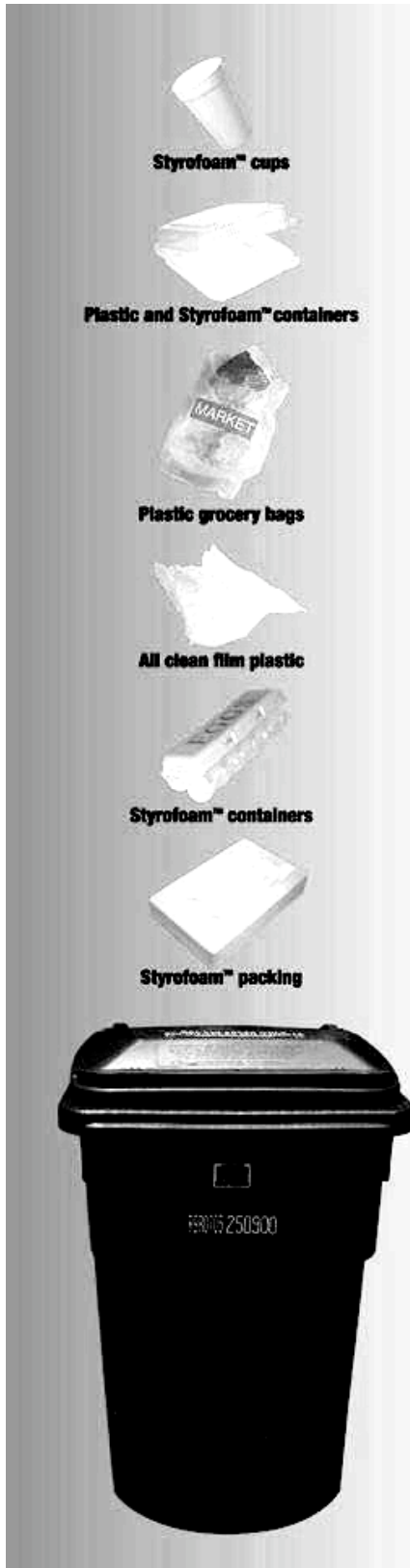
Over the next year and a half, water and electrical rates are going up over 25%. One reason is that base rates are going up: The power rate increases are approximately 2.9% in May 2008, 2.9% on July 1, 2008, and 2.7% on July 1, 2009. The average residential customer using 500 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per month will see increases on their bill of \$1.75 per month beginning in May 2008, and additional increases of \$1.75 per month on July 1, 2008, and July 1, 2009. Altogether the base power rates will increase 9%, an average of \$5.25 per month by the end of 2009. For water service, the rate increases for the average customer will be about 3.1%, or about \$1 per month, beginning July 1, 2008, and again on July 1, 2009.

On top of the basic rate increase, the DWP has also restructured the electric rates effective July 1, 2008. West side residents (zone 1 – where the average summer temperature is 80F or less) will be tiered differently from the zone 2 residents where the average summer temperature is above 80F. DWP customers in zone 1 will be charged the lowest rate per kWh up to 350 kWh per month and a second rate and third rate for greater usage. DWP customers in zone 2 will be charged the lowest rate per kWh up to 500 kWh per month (with higher rates for greater usage).

The new summertime (June – September) tiered rates may mean significantly higher bills for many Westside residents, depending on their power usage. Hardest hit will be those in single family homes with air conditioning and old refrigerators. Low income residents (annual income \$29,000 or less) are eligible for a free new refrigerator and rebates. If you are disabled and depend on electricity to maintain quality of life you might be eligible for some rebates as well. The new power rate ordinance increases the provision for payment assistance for low-income customers from an average discount of 15% to 20%. The Lifeline subsidy will also increase to maintain an average discount of about 30% to offset the new increases. DWP offers many rebates for energy efficient appliances as well. More information is available on rebates and rate increases at www.ladwp.com or by calling the DWP.

Trash collection rates (the “Solid Resources Fee” on your DWP bill) may also be changing. Under a new proposal, starting September 1, 2008, a single family house would be paying \$10.32 more per month to cover the full and actual costs of solid waste collection, transfer, recycling, recovery of waste resources, and disposal for the city of LA. It may also include services for managing household hazardous waste and e-waste. A hearing on this proposal is scheduled for July 29 at 10 am at City Hall, Room 340.

**Congratulations to
Overland ES,
now a California
Distinguished School !!**



THE BIG BLUE BIN!

We've Got Good News!

Here are some new items that now go in your blues:

- All clean plastics numbered ♻️ 1 through ♻️ 7
- Clean Styrofoam™ cups and food containers and Styrofoam™ packing materials
– NO packing peanuts
- Plastic grocery bags, dry cleaning bags and plastic hangers

Just in case past flyers were missed...

Here is the rest of the Blue Bin list:

- Clean newspapers, junk mail, envelopes, magazines, catalogs, phonebooks, paper bags, cardboard, cereal boxes, frozen food boxes, mixed paper, colored paper, etc.
- Clean empty metal cans (tin, steel, aluminum), aerosol cans, empty paint cans, aluminum (foil and trays), metal hangers
- Clean and empty plastic bottles, jars and lids, plastic pots, dairy tubs (butter, yogurt)
– NO clothing or textile items
– NO hoses
- Clean and empty glass bottles and jars
– NO window glass or ceramics
– NO batteries
– NO electronics
– NO fluorescent lights

WGCA's BEING GREEN NEWS

Did you know we can recycle more than we are?? And that "clean" doesn't mean scrubbed and sterile, just not oily and full of gunk??

The contents of the Blue Bin are sorted before they are sold so it's better to put in an item that is in question than to toss it into the Black Bin which goes to the landfill.

Reduce your use
Reuse your stuff
Recycle all you can.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES



SANITATION
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS

**For more information,
call (800) 773-2489**

As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and, upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure access to its programs, services and activities.

CLIP & SAVE – Phone #'s

EMERGENCY - 911

311 – Any City Service

(potholes, disposal requests, graffiti, DWP, street lights, tree trimming, etc.)

- Fire Dispatch 310-473-1155
- Station 92, (Pico) 310-840-2192
- Paramedics 310-473-1157
- LAPD Non-emerg. 310-444-0701 or 877-275-5273
- SLO Sharif 310-444-0735
- Overland ES 310-838-7308
- Library 310-838-2157
- Palms Rec Center 310-838-3838
- Westside Pavilion 310-474-5940
- SM Airport Noise 310-458-8692
- Council District 5 310-289-0353
- WGCA (Debbie Oh) 310-422-5401

WNC News

Because the City will be taking over the running of Neighborhood Council elections citywide, the WNC will not have elections in 2008 and Gerry Del Sol will be our area’s representative until 2010. For agendas, minutes, committee activities, and a trove of other information go to the WNC website: www.wncla.org or call 310-474-2326.

President’s Column

“Dad, you should make a recipe !!!” – Neighbors Connecting

Truer words were never spoken. My son was referring to my famous Guacamole. I do have a few good tried and true recipes, some which were handed down in my family over many years. “Why not share them with the neighborhood?” he chimes again. So in the spirit of 21st century information sharing, brotherhood and loveI’ve done just that. Your web site, www.westwoodgardens.net has been revamped! This is **our site** for **our neighbors**. Specific to our neighborhood. It continues to bring you all the pressing issues of the day but more than that; we want it to be a hub for our neighborhood. A place we can all share with each other what we know. The newly revamped web site will offer helpful hints, recommendations for favorite restaurants, shops, services, and even recipes. Anything and everything that enriches our lives. Your neighborhood is like your extended family. You’ve probably known the folks on your street for many years. Sharing tips on gardening, finance, and neighborhood traffic. Why not expand that concept and share with all your neighbors in Westwood Gardens? Visit the site and see what’s new. While you’re there, navigate to the “contact us” page and give a recommendation or two. You can add your first name and street if you like or remain anonymous. We’ll post it on the site for every resident to benefit. If you have a link you would like to share, let us know that too. Links to other sites are one of the great things about the web. The more neighbors share, the more fun it is for everyone. There are helpful links like sigalert.com and healthbay.org as well as information on all the issues Expo Light Rail, SB1818, Crime Reports, Billboards, and the Santa Monica Airport. As well as city info, 311, recycling, a list of our current elected officials and much, much more. Not to mention a really easy and tasty Guacamole recipe just waiting to be made. There are no pop-ups or ads of any kind. It exists, as does the Westwood Gardens Civic Association, to benefit and work for our neighborhood! See you there. Don’t have a computer? Drop a note to the PO Box and we’ll send you what we can.

~ Drew DeAscentis