



The Municipal League of Beverly Hills

Since 1962 - The Residents' Voice

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2016

Why your Board Opposes Measure HH: **IT'S MORE ABOUT A SKYSCRAPER THAN A GARDEN!** *Follow the Money...*

IT'S NOT ABOUT THE GARDEN: Even if Measure HH loses, we still get the garden called for in the 2008 plan: "4.5 acres of new ground level open space..." including "**a 1.3 acre ... public garden.**"⁽¹⁾ The 2016 plan identifies "**1.7 acres** of open space as private garden, generally open to the public..." The aggressively advertised "Open Space and Garden Initiative" adds **a mere 0.4 acres of garden to the old plan.** Why would a developer spend over \$5 million simply to give the City a slightly larger garden than promised in 2008?

IT IS ABOUT THE SKYSCRAPER: The skyscraper would yield many millions in additional developer profit. There would be massive savings from digging for only one building foundation, as well as massive profits from selling more expensive condos on the highest floors. Also, they may gain about 2 more stories of condos - the 2 separate buildings were 101 feet and 218 feet, totaling 319 feet, but the combined building is to be 345 feet, **26 feet higher than the combined total** (and there's another "30 feet in accessory structures above the roof line" - so sometimes it's shown to be 375 feet in height).

IT IS ABOUT THE PROCESS: If Measure HH prevails, the developer will avoid the process and procedure (as well as the related time and expense) that every other resident and business in the City must follow. This skyscraper building will have no public input, no environmental impact report (EIR), no City Council Review, no Planning Commission review, no Architectural review, no traffic studies, no shade and shadow studies, no city oversight on uses of the garden as far as hours or noise and music from parties or from the pool which will now be located on Wilshire, across from residences.

→ **BUT HERE'S THE HILTON'S BIGGEST WIN FROM NOT FOLLOWING THE PROCEDURE:** By using the initiative process, the developer precludes the City from renegotiating the 2008 development agreement by which the City would receive \$10.2 million, based on overall value of the property. Condos above 18 stories with unobstructed views vastly increase value of the property more than it is currently entitled, so the Hilton reaps more millions, while the **City is robbed of its fair share of development fees.**

IT'S DEFINITELY ABOUT PRECEDENT: The floodgates will be opened and developers will vie for the chance to erect their own high rise towers here. The character of our city will be changed for all time. Even

⁽¹⁾ Beverly Hills Weekly, Issue 467, Sept. 11-17, 2008, Hilton ad - p.20.

though we can't undo existing overdevelopment, we can stand together to take charge of our city's future.

AND IT'S ABOUT PROFIT WHEREVER IT CAN BE SEIZED: There is a huge reduction in graywater usage from the 2008 plan. Recycled water was to be utilized in the operation of **all four** Hilton buildings (Beverly Hilton, two condominiums, and Waldorf Astoria) for all non-potable uses, such as water cooling and toilet flushing, as well as for the garden. In the 2016 plan, **only the garden** would utilize the recycled graywater, NOT the remaining three buildings. This was affirmed by the Judge ruling that the ballot language must describe the initiative as "reducing graywater requirements." The Hilton reduction in graywater use is estimated by the BH Public Works Department to waste over 10,000,000 gallons of water a year.

Why your Board opposes **MEASURE M, THE FOREVER TAX**

If passed by 66% of the voters, Measure M would not only add a permanent half-cent tax increase, but would also permanently extend Measure R, the 30-year, half-cent sales tax increase passed in 2008.

Those would be on top of two other permanent sales tax increases for transportation that were passed in 1980 and 1990, raising the total tax for Metro to 2 cents per dollar spent. That would bring in about \$3.4 billion a year for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority (LACMTA). These taxes would continue in perpetuity, unless and until enough signatures are collected to put a measure on the ballot and get it approved by a majority of voters.

If that doesn't bother you, here are some of the many reasons to oppose Measure M:

- LACMTA has raised taxes three successive

times, and fares numerous times, with no accompanying increase in service, mobility or ridership.

- A sales tax disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable among us. The Bus Riders' Union, representing those most dependent on good public transportation, and other civil rights advocates strongly opposes this tax. Half of the 88 cities in the county have voted to oppose the Forever Tax.
- The measure would make important parts of the county, such as the South Bay, wait decades for much-needed infrastructure upgrades.
- LACMTA's Blue Line light rail is among the deadliest, most dangerous commuter rail lines in the entire country. Over 120 people have died in Blue Line accidents and there have been over 800 collisions on this line alone since 1990.
- Measure M's proposal to build a 9-mile tunnel through the Sepulveda Pass, including a connector to the airport, is currently budgeted at \$10 billion. Compare that to the recently completed Gotthard Base Tunnel (GBT) where the Swiss tunneled over 35 miles through some of the roughest mountain terrain in the world at a cost of \$12 billion. The score:
 - Swiss GBT-- \$343 million per mile
 - LACMTA -- almost \$1 billion per mile

The Sepulveda tunnel is not fully funded, not even with the Forever Tax. A LACMTA official says "Measure M includes only \$2.9 billion for all phases. The ability to achieve state, federal or private funds will determine how this project is finally scoped."

**A NO Vote Deprives the LACMTA of
Another Blank Check from Taxpayers**

Water, Water Everywhere ... ?

Beverly Hills Public Works Division, acting within the budget approved by the City Council, is very actively pursuing its goal of producing 25% of the city's daily water needs. Despite the obvious fact that we are entering Southern California's sixth consecutive year of drought, the search goes on for more "local" sources of water. Right now the Public Works engineers are designing ways to capture storm water runoffs, in various zones of the city, which eventually can be treated as "grey water" on site and used for watering public areas instead of wasting potable water.

The following are updates from city engineers on projects currently in process:

THE MAPLE WELLS: there are two wells located near one another on Foothill. They are now pumping water but Public Works is awaiting test results from the State Water Control Board. Beverly Hills has applied to have these tests expedited because the initial results reflect a clean product. We can expect the wells to produce 550 GPM (gallons per minute) combined. Engineers are using this time to design the connection of these wells to our Water Treatment Plant, which itself has undergone rehabilitation and is now ready for testing this month, October. Once it is approved it will go back on-line by January 2017. The **four wells** along Santa Monica Boulevard have been upgraded also to stabilize the flow from them all. The **Greystone Reservoir** is fully operational for the first time in 3 years and it holds 19.9 million gallons.

THE CABRILLO RESERVOIR: located in Cold-water Canyon, has offered up a much-needed surprise. It has been sitting in need of repair for some time and, while under rehabilitation, a natural spring has been revealed bubbling up from below the reservoir itself. The quality and location make a convenient

resource to at least supply water to parks, medians etc. located downhill. When on-line the Cabrillo Reservoir will hold 1 million gallons of water.

THE BEVERLY HILLS WATER ENTERPRISE PLAN: Exploring the non-adjudicated portion of the Central Basin, La Brea sub-area, has begun in earnest. You may recognize this as the wells that were once in service along La Cienega Boulevard near the ramp for the I-10 West. The City has already engaged a Hydrogeologist Consultant who has stated, "There is water there" and identified a "sweet spot." We should have a report within 6 months as to the quality and quantity of this pool. The City Council is looking into purchasing real estate in that area. Of course all offers to purchase will be contingent on the pilot well's profitability.

It is a fact that, due to the drought, many prospects have "gone dry." Developing the resources we have, coupled with continued diligent conservation, must remain a priority. Beverly Hills should always remain a "smart city." To this end we can investigate, with our neighbors, creative ways to insure us of continued water supply and impose on all new structures more ways to capture water and enforce more strict conservation rules even on sites when under construction.

MUNI LEAGUE BOARD ENDORSES MEASURE Y

After a presentation from School Board members Howard Goldstein and Lisa Korbatov, the Board of Governors of the Municipal League at its October 5 meeting voted to endorse Ballot Measure Y, the \$260 million School Board bond. There was no opposition presented.

This is the first time that the Municipal League of Beverly Hills has ever endorsed a school bond measure.

North Santa Monica Boulevard Reconstruction

This project will rebuild and enhance a 1.8-mile segment of North Santa Monica Boulevard extending from Doheny Drive to Wilshire Boulevard. The goals are to achieve the following:

- Reconstruct the deteriorating roadway
- Upgrade the century-old drainage system, including “bioswales” to treat runoff before it enters the storm drains
- Repair curbs and gutters
- Add landscaping improvements
- Upgrade the access ramps to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access standards
- Widen the south side of Santa Monica Boulevard 2’ 4” between Canon and Wilshire
- Install LED street lamps

The first segment will be the eastern half, from Alpine Drive to Doheny Drive. Traffic coming from West Hollywood on Santa Monica Boulevard will be directed north to Sunset (Carmelita and Elevado will be closed) and south to Burton Way or Wilshire Boulevard. The decision about inclusion of bicycle lanes along the roadway has been deferred to a time later in the Reconstruction process.

The project was scheduled to begin in the fall, but because of its anticipated impact on holiday shopping, groundbreaking is now planned for January 2017 with an estimated timeline of 18 months.

For more information and to see a brief video about it, go to www.beverlyhills.org/future.

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The Municipal League of Beverly Hills is a non-profit California corporation founded in 1962 by Beverly Hills residents. Its purposes are to promote good government, residential quality of life and high educational standards in the public schools. Membership is open to all Beverly Hills residents who subscribe to the purposes of the organization.



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