



THE PASSWORD (January 1997 - Published periodically for the Property Owners of the Cahuenga Pass)

MCA EXPANSION -Who cares about the average Joe? (By Krista Michaels)

The story of MCA/Universal's planned development and the Cahuenga Pass sounds like an old-fashioned melodrama--the big wealthy landowner vs. the little guy. The kind of thing Universal Studios might have filmed in the days when it still wanted to be a movie studio and not an amusement park. The only difference is--in a movie the hero arrives on the scene to champion the cause of the underdog.

Unfortunately, the residents of the Cahuenga Pass so far have not found that champion. As a result of MCA's post development, our local streets are grid locked with traffic, gang members congregate on our residential streets and walk across the freeway to Citywalk to avoid paying parking fees, patio relaxation is a thing of the past with music blasting and fireworks exploding, and police, fire and paramedic vehicle struggle to reach emergencies in time.

And now, apparently with the blessing of the City and County officials, MCA is planning to more than double the size of their operation--all with almost no mitigation. We have repeatedly begged for real long-term solutions to our traffic, noise and crime problems, but so far City Hall has turned a deaf ear--we have no champion there.

MCA has made a great show in the past year of meeting with various neighborhoods. But no amount of designer coffee and sweet rolls can cover up the fact that none of our requests or suggestions have been incorporated into their Draft EIR. Nothing can disguise the fact that MCA wants to build a Disneyland in the middle of a mountain.

As hillside residents, we are subject to all sorts of building restrictions that were designed to protect the environment, ensure our neighbors reasonable enjoyment of their homes, and provide good access on narrow hilly streets for fire, police and paramedics. Why should MCA be exempt for these same restrictions?

Mayor Riordan, we too want "jobs, jobs, jobs"! We're working folks and none of us are millionaires. But we believe that a good quality of life leads to jobs. If we have affordable housing, good schools, streets safe from violent crime and proper traffic controls, people will want to grow their business here. And that's how you provide jobs, jobs, jobs, for the citizens of the city.

So far no one in City or County government has come forward to watch out for the little guy. It's the eleventh hour--the maiden is tied to the railroad tracks and the train is approaching! We elected City and County officials to protect us. When will they put on their white hats and do the job they were elected to do?

IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR THE COMMUNITY (By Florence Blecher)

1. MCA/Universal Expansion. (MCA's plan includes:)

A. Another huge high-rise hotel, three times the volume of the existing Hilton, to be sited virtually next to the Hilton, which will be taller and more massive than its existing neighbor. This is proposed as a convention center destination with everything in one spot.

B. Three new destination resort complex hotels each with its own lagoon and park three to five stories tall.

C. A children's amusement park with lots more "attractions."

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(Important issues -cont'd from P. 1)

D. Several new high-rise buildings along Lankershim Blvd., including the tearing down of the existing low rise Bank of America building and replace it with something the height of the existing "black tower" adjacent to it.

E. Several big, new parking structures facing onto the Pass.

F. The final caveat--all of the above and more is proposed with NO offsite traffic mitigation measures.

2. The Barham-Cahuenga Traffic Study.

If you think that traffic in the Pass is bad now, wait until MCA, Warner Brothers NBC Disney and the City of Burbank are allowed to expand as they like, and all of it with hardly any traffic mitigation measures. We know that we live in a bottleneck. We know that there's almost always a traffic accident along the freeway in the Pass (on the LA Times' worst traffic spots list). We know that we already can't get up Barham, Cahuenga or Highland to get home at night without very long gridlock waits in our cars. We know that summer concerts at the Hollywood Bowl and John Anson Ford Theatre make our lives even worse, in spite of the cultural benefits. But possible solutions exist if we can only persuade the government agencies to implement them.

3. The MTA/Subway tunnel to Universal.

This is not a single issue but many, and most of them spring from the inappropriateness of the chosen, approved, route. We all recognize that we need mass transit in this rapidly growing city of ours. We also know that streets have been sinking as a result of shoddy workmanship on the subway tunneling--take your pick, Hollywood Boulevard, Lankershim Boulevard, or most recently, the 101 freeway. We've all heard stories about the concern over tunneling under Runyon Canyon, de-watering; disruption of flora and fauna in the canyons; placement of huge vent shafts; and so on.

This doesn't even begin to address the concerns over potential damage and appropriate compensation for rights to tunnel under countless homes in the hills.

4. Helicopter Noise and Safety. Last year people died as a result of a sightseeing dinner flight crash in the rain in the Pass. Is it that important to see Madonna's home or the lights of Citywalk? We've all been awakened from sound sleep before 6:00 A.M. with our windows closed, by numerous traffic helicopters "buzzing" our homes. They don't fly over the freeway as required, or fly at a reasonable height above ground level, but cut corners and fly low over our homes.

At this writing, the Federal authorities declined to discuss the "Above Ground Level" limit for helicopters.*

5. Planning (General Framework Plan, Community Plan, Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan). I know that this all sounds like "bureaucratteze," but they're actually the game plans for our lives. These documents set the parameters for those lives here in L.A. They dictate what can and can't be built, and where and why, and sometimes even when. They speak from very general sweeping terms right down to the street trees on your block; the street light on the curb; and the paving on which you walk your dog. They talk about how our communities look and feel like, and you can have a say in that. Community meetings are held with notice: posted in local newspapers. Unfortunately, the attendance is very, very sparse. *

*** On December 19, 1996, the community plan for our area was presented to the Planning Commission at a public hearing held at the Sherman Oaks Women's Club. From a planning standpoint, the Cahuenga Pass is considered to be a part of the Sherman Oaks-Studio City-Toluca Lake area, which includes sections of Council Districts 2, 4 and 5. There were very few changes which affected the Pass specifically. Throughout the area, various zoning changes were proposed, neighborhood centers were identified and designated, and future good intentions were expressed. The closest controversial issue for us was regarding the zoning for the former condo area adjacent to South Weddington Park. At the last minute, Renee Weitzer of Councilman Ferraro's office proposed a TOD or Transportation Overlay District for

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that area which would ensure that future projects there would go before public hearings for input and comment prior to their approval.

Universal Studios, Inc.'s \$3 billion, 25-year expansion plan at its 415-acre Universal City property is to be approved by L.A. County and City authorities.

In this connection, Universal Studios' DRAFT EIR will be out starting Jan. 15. It is imperative that we, as concerned hillside homeowners, who live adjacent to the new "Disneyland" of the valley, seriously consider contributing to a "legal expert advice fund." This money would be used to hire a lawyer (familiar with zoning/EIR laws) to guide us through the EIR process.

PUBLIC HEARINGS will be held starting January 1997 at the following locations:

- a. Wed, Jan. 15, 1997 at 9:00 A.M.
County Hall of Records, 320 W.
Temple Street, Room 150, Los
Angeles, California 90012;
- b. Tues, Jan. 21, 1997 at 4:00 P.M.
Universal City Hilton & Towers,
555 Universal Terrace Parkway
Universal City, Ca. 91608
(free parking provided)
- c. Tues, Feb. 4, 1997 at 9:45 A.M. (field trip)
MCA Recreation Services (at Citywalk)
100 Universal Center Drive, Suite 200
Universal City, Ca. 91608 (free parking
provided)

**Please plan to attend one of these meetings.

CPPOA ANNUAL ELECTION

**TUES. FEB. 11, 1997 at 7:30 P.M.
Valley View Elementary School
6921 Woodrow Wilson Drive**

If you would like to run for office or nominate another CPPOA member to run, please fill out the bottom of this letter and return it by January 31, 1997 to the Election Committee. Please include a brief description of your qualifications and return it to us.

NAME _____ Phone (day) _____

Phone (eve) _____

ADDRESS _____

Phone (day) _____

Phone (eve) _____

Please return this form by Jan. 31, 1997 to:

Dan Bernstein, Chairman, Election Committee
Cahuenga Pass Property Owners Association
6711 Forest Lawn Drive, Suite 203
Los Angeles, Calif. 90068-1001

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