



Westchester BID

NEWS

A monthly newsletter for the business leaders of Westchester
Volume 1, Issue 2 • Fall, 2008



Celebrating the new “Welcome to Westchester” sign are (from the left) Dick and Winnie Brubaker, Kelly Pfeil, Moheb Rahman (CFO of HB Drollinger Co.), Karen Dial (President of the Westchester BID), Bill Rosendahl (City Council Member), Renate Hild (Past President of Westchester Vitalization Corporation), Denny Schneider (President of ARSAC), Jim Kennedy (City Council Office), Barbara Musella (Board Member of the Westchester Streetscape Improvement Association), John Ruhlen (Board Member of the Westchester BID & President of the Westchester Streetscape Improvement Association).

A Report Card on Westchester BID Accomplishments

- ▼ Provide streetscape maintenance in the BID area that attracts and enhances business in Westchester

Result – The BID has contracted with a new vendor, Clean Streets, Inc., to provide sidewalk pressure washing, trash collection, street sweeping and wind blown debris pick-up. This vendor comes highly recommended for its work in other communities and was the successful low bidder after an extensive competitive process.

- ▼ Add pedestrian safety and landscape beautification lighting to the Sepulveda Boulevard Improvement Project – not included in City work

Result – The BID was successful in getting the City to add \$30,732 in underground conduit and about \$16,000 in water meters to the base City project. The BID retained a professional electrical engineer to prepare plans and specifications necessary to the installation of pedestrian and landscape lighting along Sepulveda Boulevard. City approval and a Building Permit for these plans have been secured. The BID is in the process of contracting for about \$160,000 in electrical facility installations and is attempting to raise an additional \$95,000 from several

community groups to fund palm tree lighting costs, making the total benefit of this BID project approximately \$255,000.

- ▼ Coordinate construction work on the Sepulveda Blvd. Improvement Project so as to minimize adverse business/community impacts

Result – Improvements to the West side of Sepulveda Boulevard are complete; and, the contractor is hoping to complete all major project work about six (6) months early, in mid-November. What a wonderful new streetscape Westchester will have to identify, beautify, and re-vitalize to community.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Donald R. Duckworth
(photo at right)



NEWS & UPDATES

Status Report on Sepulveda Boulevard Construction

Ryan Aukerman, of Griffith Construction, the City of Los Angeles' Sepulveda Boulevard Improvement Project general contractor, reports that the major work on the West side of the street was completed in July which enabled him to begin work on the East side of the street. The best news is that the contractor is hoping that all heavy work can be complete by about Thanksgiving 2008. That would be a full half-year before the originally anticipated completion of construction and none too soon for local businesses that are anxious to enjoy the revitalization promise of the project.

Council Office Thank You

Council Member Bill Rosendahl and his office staff including Jim Kennedy and

Mark Antonio Grant have come through on behalf of the Westchester business community big-time over the past Quarter and deserve recognition and a *BID thank you!* The Council Office did support the BID's request that was subsequently

approved by the City for funding the costs of adding electrical conduit to the palm tree planters (about \$30,732). The conduit has been installed as part of the adopted project budget. This represents a savings to the Sepulveda Boulevard businesses and contributes to the area's aesthetic enhancement. *Home* is going to look nicer because of the active leadership of our City Council Office!

Installation of Westchester Triangle area street trees is another project to which City Council Office support has been applied. City policies have trapped the BID in a *catch-22* type conflict that was stopping the proposed installation of street trees. Trees have been donated and businesses have expressed the desire to have them. Yet, existing City policies say that new trees can't be installed until sidewalk repairs are completed, and there is no money in the City budget for this work. The Council Office is attempting to negotiate an accommodation that will allow the BID and the City's *urban forestry* division to proceed with the installation of the trees while all develop a way to complete sidewalk repairs over time. Thank you again to Council Member Rosendahl and Mark Antonio Grant.

New Member Added to BID Board

Local property owner and real estate agent Heather Lemmon has been added to the Westchester BID Board of Directors. Heather is a long-term resident of the area with an extensive history of community and professional activities. She has been active with the Chamber of Commerce, the Westchester YMCA, local educational

causes, the Westchester Vitalization Corporation, and Neighborhood Council. She is currently spearheading fundraising efforts to renovate Fire Station #95 and to assist the Ignacio Luna Family.

Heather is a commercial property owner (Truxton's and the WAMU bank building) and also a business owner in Westchester (*Your Hometown Realtors, The Real Estate Consultants and LB Property Management*).

She is "excited with all the projects that the BID supports and in particular looks to assist in resolving the parking problems of the Triangle and business owners along Manchester and Sepulveda." Heather is also "very interested in the overall beautification of the Westchester Business District and looks to extend this effort" in the community.

Trash Enclosure Beautification at Mervyn's Shopping Center

Tracy Thomas, Coreland Companies, property managers of the Mervyn's Shopping Center have announced their plans to improve and beautify that property through the addition of architectural trash enclosures and parking lot lighting off Sepulveda Westway. This project is another of the continuing list of improvements that new owners Lubert Adler West under the guidance of Joe Fahey and Kerri Schneider have planned since they acquired the property. While the proposed improvements respond to long expressed resident and Westchester Streetscape Improvement Association beautification requests, they also have generated resistance from the City's Department of Building & Safety. Even though the shopping center's trash bins currently obstruct more parking spaces than the proposed enclosure, the construction could be halted by city regulations. Here again Council Member Rosendahl's Office is attempting to make sense of the labyrinth of City Code dysfunctions for the benefit of the community. ▼



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Dedication of Howard Drollinger Way

In honor of the late Westchester-area developer and philanthropist, the City has re-dedicated a portion of 89th Street (between Sepulveda Westway and Sepulveda Eastway) as **Howard Drollinger Way**.

The effort to re-name the street was spearheaded by **Robert Acherman** and the **Flight Path Learning Center of Southern California**, and was unanimously approved by the **Los Angeles City Council**.

“For decades, Howard Drollinger defined civic leadership in Westchester,” said **Council Member Bill Rosendahl**. “Building on his mother’s legacy, he helped give birth to downtown Westchester. Howard always put his community first – whether it was by fighting LAX expansion, stimulating economic development, or lending his name, his time and his resources to community beautification projects. Howard was a treasure.”

Among his accomplishments, **Howard Drollinger** was the spark plug for BID formation because of the tremendous benefits that it would have for the identification, beautification, and revitalization of Westchester.

A Report Card on Westchester BID Accomplishments

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▼ Represent BID interests in the LAX Expansion proposal

Result – The BID has responded to the airport’s “Notice of Preparation” of an environmental impact report on the possible amendment of their Specific Plan by asking for a thorough economic evaluation of the potential impacts it may have on the Westchester business community.

▼ Facilitate merchant group success – Triangle Merchants’ Group

Result - The BID has attempted to promote Triangle Merchants’ Group activity and even sponsored several promotional efforts. While a core group of business people continue to be active, it seems that the majority of the business owners in the Triangle area cannot sustain active participation on a continuing basis. Consequently, the group’s members seem to be on the eve of reconsidering its nature and role.

▼ Represent BID interests in planning for Northside LAX land uses

Result – The BID attended the Northside land use workshop co-sponsored by the City Council Office and Los Angeles International Airports to express the idea that any use of currently vacant Northside land should contribute to the economic viability of the Westchester business district and not adversely impact the adjacent neighborhoods.

▼ Implement efficient & effective BID operations

Result – The BID has been successful in its requests for about \$46,732 in funding assistance from the City of Los Angeles that will benefit its stakeholders (for electrical conduit extensions and the addition of water meters to the Sepulveda Boulevard Improvement Project). These would not have been provided for the project had it not been for BID advocacy of its stakeholder’s interests. In addition, the BID has generated operating savings to fund the installation of electrical facilities in Sepulveda Boulevard. Night lighting in the

BID area will identify, beautify, revitalize, and enhance community safety in the area. The BID is also working to bring about the planting of street trees and sidewalk repairs in the Triangle area.

▼ Promote positive stakeholder relations and BID participation

Result – The BID has written several “open letters” to all stakeholders and invited their participation in BID affairs. An electronically distributed newsletter, BID News, is created and distributed in an effort to open on-going communications with the stakeholders.

▼ Facilitate City adoption of a Design Overlay District to improve the business district

Result – The City has adopted a Community Design Overlay District (or “CDO”) for the Westchester business district that will improve and standardize storefront design, building orientation, landscaping, and signage. The new CDO will also prohibit any property owner from re-configuring parking in a way that conflicts with neighboring property owners, and to the detriment of the district as a whole. The BID played a leadership role in making sure that as many community groups as possible fully participated in CDO review, modification, and adoption.

▼ Advocate for improved BID area parking

Result – The BID worked with the Westchester Parking Association to study the feasibility of adding parking in the Triangle area, and in retaining a new parking enforcement contractor to bring about increased parking availability. Without adequate parking, business cannot prosper, thus it is in the best interests of BID stakeholders that it use its best efforts to create expanded parking opportunities in the area.

Do you have some thoughts to share with the BID Board or the Executive Director? Write or telephone Don Duckworth 8929 S. Sepulveda Boulevard, Suite #130 Westchester, CA 90045; (310) 417-9030. ▼



HOMELSS SERVICES IN WESTCHESTER

A Partnership of the BID and PATH (People Assisting the Homeless)

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The Westchester BID was formed to assist in the revitalization of local businesses. You may be asking yourself, “*How does that relate to homelessness?*”

BID 2008 DIRECTORS

Karen Dial
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President



John Ruhlen
Ruhlen & Associates
Secretary



Miki Payne
H.B. Drollinger Co.
Treasurer



Tracy S. Thomas
Coreland Companies



Heather Lemmon
Company
(not pictured)

William F. Allen
HFH Ltd.
(not pictured)

Great question. Here are a few examples:

1. The presence of homelessness detracts from the customer friendly environment we want to provide for business owners, and employees and pedestrians.
2. Homelessness can sometimes accompany anti-social behaviors (i.e. panhandling, loitering), and in some cases require us to involve public safety.
3. On a moral / ethical level, every human being is affected by homelessness and it is therefore important that we participate in positive solutions that will create change in our community.

When the Westchester BID Board considered the growing problem of homelessness in our community, we could have adopted the approach of security enforcement, which historically, has meant harassing the homeless until they “move-on down the line.” The alternative, a more responsible and collaborative approach that was adopted was to provide immediate resources for the homeless that held the hope of finding a permanent resolution to their homelessness.

The BID Board’s far-sighted thinking led them to enter into partnership with PATH (People Assisting the Homeless) to provide strategic outreach to homeless

people in the BID area. Through PATH’s comprehensive network of programs and services, homeless individuals can be connected to a myriad of services including mental health, medical, substance abuse, employment, and immediate housing opportunities. PATH is a premier non-profit organization dedicated to ending homelessness through innovative, grass roots solutions. In the three (3) months that PATH has been providing services in Westchester they have made 23 “unduplicated contacts,” and provided clothing, lunches, and hygiene kits to people in need. Four (4) of the people contacted by PATH in the BID area since March, 2008 have accepted placement into transitional housing.

PATH regularly coordinates with local LAPD as well as other public and private social services agencies. For more information about PATH, please visit www.epath.org.



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