

# RE-ENVISIONING THE L.A. RIVER AND LOS ANGELES' URBAN ENVIRONMENT: QUESTIONS FOR THE NEXT MAYOR

## A Written Questionnaire for the Candidates

Prepared by the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College along with Progressive Los Angeles Network (PLAN) and other co-sponsors of the September 14, 2000 Mayoral Debate

Respondants Francis Della Vecchia, Steve Soboroff, Antonio Villaraigosa, and Joel Wachs are listed in alphabetical order in the following document.

Not responding at the time of this posting are candidates Xavier Beccera, Kathleen Connell, and James Hahn.



...for a more just, livable, and  
democratic region

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## The Los Angeles River

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### **Cornfield/Chinatown Yards:**

There is a 47-acre site just north of Downtown, near Chinatown and the Los Angeles River, known as the Cornfield or the Chinatown Yards. This site has been the focus of controversy regarding the mayor's current role in helping secure federal brownfields funding and for his overall support for a warehouse/manufacturing development project. A recent UCLA study commissioned by the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute identified pressing community needs that are not being met, such as a lack of adequate housing, parks, and schools, as well as jobs.

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**Would you, as Mayor, re-open the case around the redevelopment of this site to address these additional needs, or move forward with the plan as it is?**

#### **Della Vecchia**

I would re-open the case around the redevelopment issues that affect the people who live in that area. Without their full backing, it would be inadvisable to proceed with any existing proposal. The people of Chinatown have been patiently waiting to improve their neighborhood through a mixed use approach to this property. My plan would be to include any and all the people of L.A., giving them a voice in the final result of that very choice piece of real estate. I propose a culturally sensitive multi-use scheme that would encourage open space, housing, education, and retail.

#### **Soboroff**

I am currently working to bring both sides (FOIA and the property owners) together on an agreement for the Cornfields. This is exactly what I would do as Mayor.

#### **Villaraigosa**

The Chinatown Yard (Cornfield) has become the most contentious piece of property in the downtown area. The Majestic Realty River Station industrial/warehouse proposal has been approved by the City but is now in CEQA litigation, where it typically would remain for about a year.

According to Majestic, the viability of the project depends on City-induced federal subsidies and loans from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). That agency has just put the funding process on hold and asked for the City to do a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the project. This is consistent with the position I took early in the City's approval process, and should render moot the issue of whether the project should be subject to a more complete environmental review.

The ability of the next Mayor to impact the River Station project relates to the complexities that have arisen relating to the CEQA litigation and the HUD funding. Were it not for those phenomena, the existing project approval would allow the developer to begin construction before July 1, 2001. As it is, the new Mayor will have several venues

in which to influence the situation. The City is the defendant in the lawsuit and the Mayor can play an important role in determining the City's stance in the litigation, depending on where it is in the process on July 1. The current Mayor is the driving force behind the HUD applications, so the next Mayor could essentially terminate that process either by withdrawing the applications or by instructing the Planning Department to stop the EIS process. Finally, the next Mayor could simply ask Majestic to drop the project and cooperate with the City and the community in an effort to find better uses for the Cornfield site.

When we speak of involving "the community," we have to remember that there is rarely unanimity on any issue. The planning process for a large site such as the Cornfield should include community participation long before the project gets to the point of official public hearings. This is something the upcoming neighborhood councils could be involved with, providing a quasi-official forum for public brainstorming and discussion. Existing community organizations should also be consulted. However, I do not believe that the desires of community members should completely replace the professional judgement of those whose job it is to design and approve a project. There should be a collaboration, and no one in the community, especially a community with divided opinion, should expect to get everything they want.

Regarding the River Station, I question the need for the federal subsidy. If the developers feel this project needs to be subsidized, I have to believe they are paying too much for the land. Taxpayers should not be saddled with the burden of providing gratuitous profit for Union Pacific, the underlying owner, just to make the River Station viable. So as Mayor I would not continue to pursue the subsidy for the River Station.

If City Hall is going to spend a lot of time, energy and political capital at the Cornfield, it should be for uses that are desperately needed in the Central City area but which can't be located just anywhere. The River Station uses can be located anywhere there is vacant industrial land, and there is a lot of it. Despite the fact that Southern California has a shortage of warehouse and industrial space, there are lots of currently unused industrial sites. Instead of trying to put schools on them, as LAUSD has tried to do in Central City West and South Gate, perhaps we should encourage their use for River Station-like purposes and use the Cornfield, which Majestic tells us is a relatively clean brownfield, for things we need in downtown, like schools, parks and housing. There is a dialogue to be had on the future of the Chinatown Yard and I urge that we begin it as soon as possible.

**Wachs**

Yes, I was one of only two Councilmembers to vote against the project. I voted that way for the very reasons that are cited in this question.

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**Would you require an environmental impact report on this plan as currently constituted?**

**Della Vecchia**

A thorough environmental impact report is essential to any project being considered at this time. However, the goal of this report should not be to tinker around the edges of the current project for minimal mitigation. We have to look into the distant future anytime we build a project to determine what our legacy will be. Can this project still be beneficial to our citizens one hundred years from now? Too many projects with short term goals have been built only to be later found completely inadequate.

**Soboroff**

Yes.

**Villaraigosa**

[see above]

## **Wachs**

Yes, I am the only Councilmember who has signed on to the lawsuit demanding an EIR.

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## **Los Angeles River State Park System:**

Recent legislation designated parts of the Los Angeles River as a state park system. However, certain segments of the River within the boundaries of the City of Los Angeles, most notably the Cornfield site, were not included in this legislation.

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## **Would you support new legislation extending the state park system to include the entire boundaries of the River within the city limits or would you keep the current boundaries?**

### **Della Vecchia**

I would support legislation extending the state park system to include the entire river, but this park must have a flexible enough status to ensure that low income housing, schools, and green industries may be included. A mixed use plan should be designed to allow the greatest opportunity for access. State park legislation may be valuable, but only when it will directly benefit all of the people concerned in an affected neighborhood and in the larger circle of the city. Further study and open debate will be necessary to determine whether this is in fact the best possible solution for each section of the river. As long as sufficient leeway exists within the State Park legislation, then I am in support of it.

### **Soboroff**

The Cornfield should be included in new legislation.

### **Villaraigosa**

This is a question born of enthusiasm that may be getting ahead of itself. Before pushing to expand the River Parkway boundary I think we first have to show that we can and will do something constructive with the sites already designated in the 2000-2001 State Budget.

Of course, if additional monies become available and we can go through a planning process that identifies a viable concept for a continuous Parkway, then we should try to create one. But we haven't even begun the process yet, and the State Parks Department has yet to identify staff to oversee it. First things first.

### **Wachs**

Yes. If it is feasible for the state to do so. If not then I would continue to proceed to make it part of the city park system or designated open space.

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## **Los Angeles River Planning Process:**

Although the Los Angeles River runs through several neighborhoods within the City limits, there is no current L.A. City-based agency or planning process that addresses River issues.

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## **Should there be a planning process or additional planning mechanisms pursued by the City to address the future of the River and its multiple uses?**

**Della Vecchia**

Solutions for the L.A. river, as a whole, should fall under the Sustainable City Plan. I don't want to create a plethora of new agencies. There should be a planning process and additional planning mechanisms to address the future of the river. My vision includes water reclamation for public use as well as bike path improvement, green space, parks, etc. I plan to use the best and the brightest design team to help create a real gem in L.A., to be the envy of the entire Pacific.

**Soboroff**

If the current negotiations are successful, this would not be necessary!

**Villaraigosa**

There does need to be a planning process and the City should play a role in it.

When I led the effort in the legislature to appropriate more than \$100 million in this year's State Budget for the L.A. River Parkway, the State Parks Department was designated as the "lead agency." I have discussed how to plan the River Parkway with State Parks chief Rusty Areias and my Assembly office has continued the discussions at the staff level and with other relevant agencies. Ultimately, planning for the River and the River Parkway should involve the various state agencies, the County Department of Public Works (which has jurisdiction over the L.A. River as a flood control facility and has already drafted a Master Plan), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and, of course, the various municipalities through which the river flows, including the City of Los Angeles. The other very important participants would be environmental organizations and people from the communities along the river. They should be full partners in this crucial process.

As Mayor, I would adapt the role I have already been playing – that of catalyst – to the new venue and continue to push the planning process for the River.

**Wachs**

Yes. It will be one of my top priorities as Mayor to make the LA River a corridor park complete with a bikeway. It is a wonderful way to connect neighborhoods.

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**Should there be a specific person in the Mayor's office responsible for addressing L.A. River issues?****Della Vecchia**

Again, the person in charge of the Sustainable City Plan and will have jurisdiction over River issues.

**Soboroff**

Yes. I have proposed a Deputy Mayor for the Environment

**Villaraigosa**

I would designate the appropriate member of my staff, probably at the Deputy Mayor level, to take responsibility for coordinating the City's involvement and working with the other jurisdictions to make sure the process is moving forward and to generally make sure that my office remained on top of every aspect of the L.A. River process.

**Wachs**

Yes and with a staff.

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**Water Quality:**

Maintaining and improving the water quality of the L.A. River provides significant environmental and community benefits in making the River available for multiple uses.

However, the City Bureau of Sanitation is suing the Regional Water Quality Control Board to lower water quality standards for discharges into the River.

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## **Would you as mayor drop this lawsuit or continue it?**

### **Della Vecchia**

I would drop any suit that would seek to lower water quality standards. As mayor, I would continue to fight for more rigorous standards in water quality. Using alternative methods to chemical filtration would improve the quality of the L.A. river and the quality of life for our citizens.

Biofiltration is a process in which microbes and other living organisms are used to break down and make harmless practically every known toxic. Biofiltration is a proven alternative to chemical decontamination. L.A. should be a leader in developing and promoting new technologies. We should use natural self-sustaining systems wherever possible. We need to take serious long lasting steps towards reducing our use and dependence on outside water sources.

### **Soboroff**

My intuition would be to drop the litigation, but I would need all details from CBS and the RWQCB to make a final decision.

### **Villaraigosa**

With everything that is going on around water quality in Los Angeles, I think the Bureau of Sanitation is moving in the wrong direction. While I would provide the Bureau with an opportunity to explain and justify its lawsuit, my initial inclination is to ask the Bureau to withdraw the suit. It would take a lot of very credible and persuasive arguments to change my mind.

### **Wachs**

My goal as Mayor would be to be compliant with water quality regulations and have the water as safe as possible.

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## **Bikeway:**

The Los Angeles River Bikeway, ultimately designed to encompass the entire 52 miles stretch of the River, is also designed to increase alternative transportation and recreational opportunities. There are funds currently available for a commuter bikeway. However, there is no current implementation plan to link the bikeway through downtown to Union Station and south from the Union Station as well.

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## **Should the City move forward to pursue the development and implementation of the plans to establish a commuter bikeway to and from Union Station?**

### **Della Vecchia**

With funds available for a commuter bikeway, we should work to extend it the length of the River, including to Union Station. However, only when included with a massive re-education program, including many cost effective and rapid transportation alternatives, will such a commuter option see any significant use. The bikeway that does exist should be improved with landscaping and any forms of architecture that would make it a more esthetically pleasing and attractive asset of our city.

**Soboroff**

Yes, and I have a detailed “rails to trails” plan for Los Angeles as a part of my coordinated Environmental program.

**Villaraigosa**

As a bicyclist myself, I would love nothing more than to be able to ride along long stretches of the Los Angeles River and the Arroyo Parkway. In order to pick up the pace of bikeway development along these waterways, the City and County need to get more serious about the project. Mayor Riordan is an avid cyclist, so I don’t believe he has been disinterested, but he’s had other planning and spending priorities. Nonetheless, it has taken three years to open just a few miles in the Elysian Valley/Arroyo Confluence area to public use, and progress has been slow.

The County will always want to make sure its flood control concerns are being met as recreational facilities are placed next to the river, but it has cooperated with the effort to create bikeways. The challenge of bridging over the 110 freeway at the confluence of the River and the Arroyo still must be met. There are two channels, two freeways and a light rail bridge there and it creates a space problem in that location. An opportunity was lost when the City, County and MTA failed to address the issue when the rail bridge was being planned. Now that it is built, finding room for a bikeway bridge is more difficult.

There’s a lot of planning and engineering to be done to make a contiguous bike path along the L.A. River, so I’m not prepared to say it can be done in the blink of an eye. As for linking it to Union Station, I think that may actually be the easiest part of the task. If the future of the Chinatown Yard is changed, it could include a bikeway that could link to bike lanes leading to Union Station, or bike lanes could follow North Main Street from the River to Union Station. I believe the linkage can and should be done.

**Wachs**

Absolutely, as stated above it is one of my top priorities.

**Parks:**

Los Angeles has less parkland space than other major metropolitan areas. Yet through Proposition 12 and other funding sources, millions of dollars are also now available to create new urban parklands, including along the L.A. River.

**Should the City seek to establish a policy specifically designed to develop new parklands or open space along the River?**

**Della Vecchia**

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### **Would you commit resources or have the City help facilitate community-based initiatives such as the pocket park developed by the Northeast Trees organization across from the Taylor Yards site?**

#### **Della Vecchia**

We can simultaneously commit city resources and facilitate community based initiatives to develop new parks. Certainly, successful organizations, such as Northeast Trees, must continue to be encouraged. I would also train and hire individuals to lead and facilitate a force of community volunteers to care for and maintain new and existing parks, greenscape and gardens throughout the city of L.A.

#### **Soboroff**

Yes, we have already begun many pocket parks.

#### **Villaraigosa**

The Elysian Valley pocket parks created by Northeast Trees and the Mountains and Rivers Conservation Authority (MRCA) were important well beyond their size in creating the attitudinal sea-change we have seen with regard to the Los Angeles River. They revealed a world of possibilities that dovetailed with the efforts of the Friends of the Los Angeles River, and the dedicated activists and public servants who made them possible deserve our heartfelt thanks. The City of Los Angeles should embrace this concept and take a leadership role in identifying and implementing other opportunities to create more such parks. The City Department of Recreation and Parks, which has typically resisted pocket parks because of what it believes are maintenance and security problems, needs to become a willing partner in the effort to make it happen.

This issue carries with it community concerns about maintenance and public safety, concerns which are completely legitimate in a heavily populated urban area with too much crime and a demonstrable inability to adequately maintain public spaces and infrastructure. In recent years, members of the Atwater Village neighborhood on the northeast bank of the River clashed with environmental advocates over questions of allowing and increasing public access to the River because they felt too much mischief and illegal activity was taking place there and that it was spilling over into the adjacent residential neighborhood. The local congressional office worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to limit access in certain locations requested by the neighbors. It was

another reminder that we need to exhibit some caution when trying to determine “what the community wants” with regard to the Los Angeles River.

I happen to subscribe to the general concept put forth by the famed urban planner/author Jane Jacobs in her landmark book, “The Death and Life of Great American Cities,” that a neighborhood is safer with more, rather than fewer, people being out in public. In a troubled urban area such as Los Angeles, this theory has for a generation or more been challenged by the fear so many feel regarding crime. With gangs warring over turf in what constitutes a community existing parallel to that in which the rest of us live, dangerous things can happen anywhere at anytime and there can be unintentional victims along with intentional ones. It has elicited a fortress mentality in many communities and led to the relative abandonment of our public spaces in many situations, especially after dark. It takes a lot of effort and good faith to overcome this trend, and I look at the Los Angeles River as a unique opportunity to try to do so in a non-commercial context. But we must remain sensitive to the realities and the concerns as we work on it.

**Wachs**

Yes.

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**Community Art Projects Along the River:**

There are several soft-bottom stretches of the River that allow for green space and are not fully channelized, while other areas, as the River approaches downtown and winds its way south towards Long Beach harbor, are fully encased in concrete. These channelized stretches of the River have largely established the River’s reputation as a type of anti-environment or hostile landscape.

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**Do you see the channelized sections of the Los Angeles River as an eyesore, and if so, are there opportunities for the City to address that concern?**

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**Specifically, would you sponsor a community arts program to develop murals and other artwork along the channel?**

**Della Vecchia**

The channelized sections of the River are an unfortunate, albeit necessary, eyesore. Their distinctly flood-control-channel-feel certainly dampens much enthusiasm for our city’s river. However, the form and function of water retention could be made to look and work as art.

Murals and other forms of art would be encouraged and can only serve to enhance our quality of life and celebrate the rich culture of our community. Beyond murals, sculpture and other expressions of art can be incorporated into the river system. Architecture, landscaping, even theme park elements could be used to enhance the river and make it visually stimulating. A program to foster the input of our many arts and design colleges, including Art Center, Otis Parsons, USC, UCLA, FIDM, and Los Angeles Art Institute, would produce a plethora of possible concepts.

**Soboroff**

Yes, concrete is unsightly. That is why our “greening of LA” program has already begun removing asphalt at schools and replacing it with grass and trees.

Yes. In LA schools and Parks, this is already underway.

**Villaraigosa**

The soft-bottom sections of the Los Angeles River in the vicinity of Elysian Valley, Atwater and Griffith Park certainly provide a contrast with the all-concrete sections of the River

and suggest that the concrete channel is an eyesore. Graffiti and trash does not help either.

The City of Los Angeles is in a difficult position with regard to the River channel because it is largely under the purview of the County and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I am aware that certain City officials approached the County and the Corps a number of years ago with regard to the idea of "greening" the banks of Ballona Creek west of the 405 freeway using permeable block systems that successfully have been employed in other similar situations. Those agencies resolutely resisted the idea at the time, asserting that plantings on the banks would reduce the carrying capacity of the channel. The County's more recent clearing of foliage from soft-bottom stretches of the River reminded us that they continued to view greening the River as an impediment to the flood control function. With new leadership at the Army Corps and an improving attitude at County Public Works, perhaps greening has a future yet.

Murals and artworks are different story. Judy Baca's famous mural already graces the channel in the San Fernando Valley and the Arroyo Arts Collective's exhibition of River-related art installations this past spring show another way to approach making the River a more welcoming place. The City provided partial funding for the Collective's project and has an ongoing relationship with Baca's S.P.A.R.C. mural organization based in Venice.

Rather than have the City be the actual sponsor of an arts program, with all the bureaucracy that could accompany that role, I would be more inclined to seek out private sector sponsors to work with entities such as S.P.A.R.C. and the Collective. But I would want the City to be supportive and actively involved. As we saw last spring when the Arroyo Arts Collective did its exhibition, it is a great idea. It brings out the public and, along with the unique performance art pieces of years past and FOLAR's poetic vision, is another way to change how we perceive the River.

#### **Wachs**

Of course. I have been, and continue to be the city's, strongest advocate for the arts. In fact one of the city's best kept art secrets is the "largest mural in the world" along the walls of the Tujunga Wash between Gant High School and Valley College.

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## The Urban Environment: Planning a Livable City

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### **Livable City Plan:**

Many different departments in the City deal with one or another aspect of the urban environment. Some cities like Seattle and San Francisco have turned to Livable City or Sustainable City Plans to create a broad environmental mission statement and set of goals for their city, to help overcome the compartmentalization of environmental policies, and to govern the activities of all city departments in the context of their environmental mission.

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### **Do you think Los Angeles should establish a Livable City Plan?**

#### **Della Vecchia**

L.A. must establish a sustainable city plan. We cannot afford to continue on this path of resource depletion. We sorely lag behind neighbors Pasadena, West Hollywood, and Santa Monica.

#### **Soboroff**

Yes. I have already submitted an overall, coordinated environmental policy for Los Angeles (air, water, noise, greening).

**Villaraigosa**

I have already been thinking about a “Livable L.A.” planning process based on what I know about what was done in places like Curitiba, Brazil, and Chattanooga, Tennessee. I would want to bring together experts and lay people in a creative planning process, with full community involvement. In a place as spread out as Los Angeles, it might have to be done at the community-level before it’s done citywide. That opens the door for involvement of the forthcoming neighborhood councils. It would be a major way to empower them right out of the blocks.

So, yes, the City should establish a Livable City Plan. My first thought is that it should address public spaces and sustainability issues, along with general environmental policies. But there should be some discussion about what would constitute such a plan.

**Wachs**

It is presently being worked on by the City Council, and I am an ardent supporter.

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**Do you think there should be a single broad-based agency to oversee implementation of this plan and its policies?**

**Della Vecchia**

There will be one agency to carry out the Plan, but all city departments must include sustainable approaches in their individual missions. Whole systems design should be used to test the validity of any existing project.

**Soboroff**

I was the first to announce a commitment to appoint a Deputy Mayor of the Environment. I pledge to raise the level of awareness and importance to environmental issues in the same manner that Mayor Riordan did with education.

**Villaraigosa**

The question of whether there should be just one agency to oversee it all is a challenging question. The Department of Environmental Affairs could be retooled and strengthened for that kind of task, but I don’t think it’s practical to assume that the existing departments, such as Planning and Public Works, who have legal responsibilities in many of these areas, would somehow just disappear from the mix. The oversight role would be just that, and one of coordination. But don’t forget: bureaucracies are not built for change, and neither are they inclined to give up their turf easily. This would be a long-term project.

**Wachs**

It would have to be an umbrella agency that includes the Planning Environment Affairs, Housing, Building and Safety, Housing and all departments that deal with new and existing projects.

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**How do you best see coordination and implementation of environmental policies for the city? In a single agency? By establishing an environmental mission for City Departments? By maintaining and/or strengthening existing departmental jurisdictions?**

**Della Vecchia**

The agency overseeing the Sustainable Plan must handle this coordination. City departments must build on their individual missions to carry out and implement the overall

environmental strategy. It is only through the establishment of a single environmental mission that we can start to bring this city into a new era.

**Soboroff**

A Deputy Mayor of the Environment will do this without creating more bureaucracy and City departments.

**Villaraigosa**

As for implementation of environmental policies in the city, the problem we have now is definitely one of scattered authority and inconsistent levels of expertise. Some of the departments with jurisdiction over environmental issues just don't have adequate staff or the proper expertise in house to do certain tasks required under the law. Also, we're dealing with people, and people sometimes have differing views. I am sure there are some folks in the Planning Department and elsewhere who, for example, don't think it's the City's business to be nitpicky about the fate of endangered black walnut trees in the Self-Realization Fellowship expansion project on Mount Washington when they think there are other, broader issues that should come first.

The Livable City Plan may be the key to addressing this issue. If a firm set of environmental policies are established, the Mayor's office and the Department of Environmental Affairs could work with the other departments to establish implementation guidelines and procedures that would be integrated into normal departmental functions, and make sure there is knowledgeable staff in each department to oversee compliance. Making an environmental ethic a routine part of how the City functions probably is the best way to improve City Hall's performance in this area, and it should be a priority for the next Mayor.

**Wachs**

[no comment]

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**Livable Communities/Urban Design Issues:**

Often, the weight of the planning process in the city has been oriented toward promoting single purpose big box-type development or grand scale projects like the Staples Center. Others argue that such developments provide needed jobs and tax revenues. Those types of developments have also led to a kind of "fiscalization of land use" that prioritizes sales tax revenue over other kinds of planning strategies. Such an approach differs from strategies that provide for mixed-use developments and those that encourage street life and community places as well as residential, commercial, and industrial development.

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**Do you favor expanding opportunities for mixed-use development?**

**Della Vecchia**

I strongly support mixed use development, and would encourage it wherever feasible.

**Soboroff**

Yes. I have both public and private sector expertise in mixed-use projects.

**Villaraigosa**

In this questionnaire's little prologue for this topic, it is asserted that big box development leads "to a kind of 'fiscalization' of land use...". As the sponsor of an 18-month project to address the State's fiscal reform needs (The Speaker's Commission on State and Local Government Finance), I must take issue with that assertion. Big box retail development is one of the results of fiscalization, but it is skewed tax policy that leads to it. Until local jurisdictions receive tax benefits from making sound land use decisions that create balanced communities, they will continue to favor revenue-producing development and

we will be faced with the very real problem of fiscalization and all of the related ills that accompany it.

I hope that this Mayoral campaign provides more Angelenos with an opportunity to understand this crucial issue. Too often we have been inclined to assume that our elected and public officials make land use decisions with which we disagree because they have somehow been corrupted by developers. Many people don't know that the large, high traffic-generating retail and other sales tax-generating projects provide the only source of money subject to the local discretion of their home town. That money is what pays the response to increased demand for public services. As the public begins to understand this relationship, as well as the fact that the State takes the property and income tax revenues, leaving cities and counties with only sales taxes to work with, I believe it will demand the kind of fiscal reform that has heretofore been bogged down by politics in the State Capitol.

Now, to address the questions.

I do favor expanding opportunities for mixed-use development. However, it should be understood that the City has, in the last decade, already taken several steps to encourage mixed-use development. In the early '90s a mixed-use ordinance was approved offering density and other incentives for developers of mixed-use projects. Then the General Plan Framework, an otherwise flawed document in need of some revision and updating, followed suit by establishing policies and zones that encourage mixed-use buildings on major thoroughfares. Additionally, the concept of "transit-oriented districts" for implementation near Metro Rail system stations also is meant to encourage mixed-use.

So, I am not sure that we do not have the opportunities, at least in the City Codes, to encourage mixed-use development. The private development community needs to step up and use the opportunities, or explain why they can't or won't. In my observation, the financial community must bear some responsibility for the paucity of modern mixed-use development in Los Angeles. It has been reluctant to finance such development because it is not perceived as being consistent with what has been popular in L.A. since World War II. The construction lenders need to become more flexible, and the Mayor can use the "bully pulpit" to push the issue.

**Wachs**

Yes.

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**Do you support more in-fill development that increases rather than decreases density?**

**Della Vecchia**

I do support more in-fill development that increases rather than decreases density where it supports public use and participation.

**Soboroff**

Yes, if the development is proximate to existing mass transit systems.

**Villaraigosa**

The issue of in-fill development dovetails with the mixed-use issue but carries with it other implications. Among those in the planning field, as well as in the "smart growth" movement, it is an article of faith that increased urban residential density is necessary to deal with population growth in a manner that preserves open space and maximizes the efficient use of existing and future infrastructure.

When we talk to residents of neighborhoods adjacent to likely locations for increased density, we hear a much different perspective. They fear the implications of increased density in a city that seems unable and unwilling to provide (or utilize) comprehensive mass transit, and they view in-fill opportunities such as Playa Vista as places where the public would be better served by parks. One can argue that they are not looking at the

big picture, but one cannot argue that they live in a city where traffic congestion and poor air quality are rampant. Angelenos have a right to be concerned about these problems, even as they contribute to them.

Consequently, I will say that I do feel that increased density in certain locations (along existing transit corridors, for instance) is justifiable and appropriate, despite the reticence of some neighbors. But planning for this kind of densification must involve communities and must be accompanied by a genuine municipal commitment to providing adequate, if not superior, infrastructure in these locations.

**Wachs**

In-fill development should stay at the same scale as the existing community.

---

**Would you promote strategies that encourage pedestrian activity on the streets?**

**Della Vecchia**

I would encourage more pedestrian activity, as this is a main goal of my plan to recentralize LA. Regional centralization must occur as the primary concern of this city. Communities must be designed to look inward so that they can constantly improve and re-evaluate their rate of progress.

**Soboroff**

Yes.

**Villaraigosa**

I definitely support strategies to encourage pedestrian activity. These would include wider sidewalks where feasible, pedestrian amenities (benches, good lighting and landscaping), pedestrian-friendly design of commercial buildings (with entrances unimpeded by parking areas), and features such as sidewalk cafes and shopping displays. I am pleased to see how ongoing City programs such as the Targeted Neighborhood Initiative place some focus on pedestrian needs.

Of course, not everyone views pedestrian needs as priorities in our communities. Some residents and merchants view sidewalk amenities as clutter and are more interested in things being tidy and auto-friendly. In a city with so much concern about congestion, and the consequent pressure to move traffic more quickly and smoothly, the challenge to aid pedestrians is heightened. Talk to the City's traffic and public works experts about the trade-offs and the competition between autos and people becomes all the more apparent.

**Wachs**

Yes. It is essential to neighborhood vitality.

---

**Would you be in favor of establishing a city policy to encourage and facilitate the development of community gardens, in part as a way to encourage street life and community places?**

**Della Vecchia**

Community gardens are an important part of the new urban experience I envision. As people spend more time in somewhat higher density architecture, it becomes necessary that more communal open space be made available.

**Soboroff**

Yes, especially in our parks and at our schools.

**Villaraigosa**

Community gardens are, thankfully, less controversial [than the issues raised by the previous question]. (There are about 100 of them in Los Angeles.) But they require

land, and land in Los Angeles is expensive and not always available for community gardens (especially when there are competing needs for more parks). During my term in office, several community gardens have been established in my Assembly district. I collaborated with Councilmember Goldberg on a couple of them, working with Caltrans to provide land for gardens in Hollywood and Solano Canyon. They have been small gems around which neighbors have come together to do constructive things. They also provide a means for cleaning up nuisance lots, producing inexpensive, wholesome food, and saving people money.

The City should actively promote community gardens and work to make more land, both public and private, available for them. These gardens are inherently collaborative, and there are non-profit organizations that are in the business of helping community members design and implement gardens. The City should be working closely with them to do so. Its modest contribution to implementing the statewide "Garden In Every School" initiative in L.A. is a beginning, but it is nowhere near enough.

At present, there is no one entity in City Hall that deals with these gardens. If a certain department is providing the land, it will be involved to the extent necessary. To the best of my knowledge, departments with a hand in at least one community garden include Environmental Affairs, Public Works, Sanitation, Recreation and Parks, and Water and Power. With this kind of decentralized activity, however, it often has been left to Council Office staff to do the coordination work.

Coordination of community gardens should become the responsibility of one department. The next Mayor can work with garden advocates (such as the LA Community Garden Council), the garden support non-profits and the departments to come up with an action plan. The action plan will need to include strategies for helping residents of poor, politically disempowered neighborhoods, create more gardens. The issue of water rates and water set-up costs must also be addressed.

As with so many good, seemingly simple, ideas, creating more community gardens will require a lot of work. In a city where the "crisis du jour" tends to take precedence, it is understandable, if lamentable, that the work hasn't already begun in a more serious way.

#### **Wachs**

Yes. This too is essential. The \$4,000,000 we gave to the DNC could have been used to build numerous community gardens and pocket parks.

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### **Park Space, Recreation Space:**

Los Angeles has fewer acres of parks per thousand residents compared to any major city in the country. There are 0.9 acres of parks per thousand residents, far short of the national average of 10 acres. There are also vast disparities in access to parks. Inner city communities have 0.3 acres of parks per thousand residents, compared to 1.7 acres in wealthier white areas of Los Angeles.

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### **Would you seek to undertake a major expansion of parklands as mayor?**

#### **Della Vecchia**

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#### **Soboroff**

Yes, especially in our parks and at our schools.

#### **Villaraigosa**

Community gardens are, thankfully, less controversial [than the issues raised by the previous question]. (There are about 100 of them in Los Angeles.) But they require land, and land in Los Angeles is expensive and not always available for community gardens (especially when there are competing needs for more parks). During my term in office, several community gardens have been established in my Assembly district. I collaborated with Councilmember Goldberg on a couple of them, working with Caltrans to provide land for gardens in Hollywood and Solano Canyon. They have been small gems around which neighbors have come together to do constructive things. They also provide a means for cleaning up nuisance lots, producing inexpensive, wholesome food, and saving people money.

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As with so many good, seemingly simple, ideas, creating more community gardens will require a lot of work. In a city where the "crisis du jour" tends to take precedence, it is understandable, if lamentable, that the work hasn't already begun in a more serious way.

#### **Wachs**

Yes. This too is essential. The \$4,000,000 we gave to the DNC could have been used to build numerous community gardens and pocket parks.

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### **How would you address the problem of the lack of access in the most park poor areas of the city?**

#### **Della Vecchia**

Our existing and successful parks are vital green spaces for people who have limited personal land resources. The land along the River is the first and best choice. All available brownfields and vacant lots must be considered, as well as improving mass transit to city wide open space destinations.

History tells us that parks are essential. Ebenezer Howard's Garden City Concept was first proposed in 1898, this concept stressed the absolute necessity of enough green space. In 1882 Arturo Soria Y Mata published a concept of the Linear City that to a large extent we have manifested by our obsession with the Automobile. Mata understood the need to include "farmland" or green space as an essential part of the equation. The Olmsted Bartholomew Plan of 1930 clearly included a strategy to incorporate major landscaping elements.

#### **Soboroff**

More joint use agreements with schools, libraries, community colleges, etc.

## **Villaraigosa**

In the most park-poor neighborhoods, which also tend to be the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, all of the challenges are magnified by the extent of the shortage of parkland. But, frankly, too much of Los Angeles was developed with the idea that yards could be substituted for parks. Thus, in the first half of the 20th Century, influential developers convinced City officials to not require the dedication of land for parks, and we ended up with sprawling street grids of single-family homes with few recreational spaces to serve them. We're all paying a high price for that mistake now.

As I have seen how quickly Proposition 12 money can be spent, I am reminded that Los Angeles will not be able to rely on those funds to solve its park problems. In the end, this bond money will barely make a down payment on the solution. We need other kinds of aggressive policies to make more recreational space available.

There are situations, such as the "spreading ground" in Griffith Park and Ascot Hills, where we have conflict over what kind of open space use we want in our communities. As a result of a 1999 lawsuit, the City is under pressure to create more playing fields, and Mayor Riordan is pursuing an aggressive policy to do just that. But several sensitive areas have been earmarked as potential sites for fields that might be better used in more natural ways. As a strong advocate for active recreation space, I am not prepared to say at this time that recreation should always take precedence over habitat, or vice-versa. But this competition for scarce space is another of the challenges we need to face. I hope that use and ecological management techniques can be identified to enable us to achieve workable compromises.

There has been a lot of talk about joint use of school facilities in recent months. But LAUSD so many problems of its own that working out a joint use policy and implementing it quickly has not been a priority. I know of examples where perfectly good proposals for opening up school playgrounds and fields for public use are sunk by the unavailability of restroom facilities – staffing and liability issues understandably make it infeasible to open up school buildings after hours or on weekends to provide bathroom access. It would be very cost-effective for the City could to help solve this problem compared with having to acquire property and develop a park from scratch.

Another issue is the provision of open space and park space in private developments. There are a couple of examples of privately developed parks in Los Angeles (South Park being a visible example), but I am not aware of any City policy to aggressively pursue such ideas. More typically, the developer of a multi-acre project will complain of the inconvenience (and expense) of such a proposal and City Planning and the City Council will not take it any further.

For example, a proposal to redevelop Lincoln Place, a large, old federally-funded housing project in Venice, could easily include a park and still have room for a substantial number of units. But the developer instead asked for the City to invoke the State Quimby Act, which allows for an in-lieu fee to be paid instead of dedicating land. This is an outrageous misuse of the State law, which is intended to mitigate the recreation impacts of condominium developments that have no surplus acreage. It is irresponsible to permit in-lieu fees when the site has plenty of acreage. (Of course, in the case of Lincoln Place, there is a more fundamental issue of demolishing existing affordable housing that must be dealt with as well.)

As it should have been doing all along, the City should be creating parks by requiring the dedication of private acreage as a condition of development approval wherever and whenever it is appropriate. Doing the right thing now won't make up for a century of doing the wrong thing, but we need to do the right thing anyway.

## **Wachs**

[no comment]

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## **Wetlands:**

The continuing debates over the proposed development that impacts Ballona Creek and other wetland-related issues, such as concerns regarding the small wetland area in Hazard Park, raise issues about maintaining or restoring wetlands in urban areas and whether such areas could be available for educational, recreational, and open space purposes.

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### **Should the City undertake an inventory of existing wetland sites within the city's boundaries as well as potential sites for restored wetlands?**

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### **Should the City establish a "wetlands" policy that could help govern future land use decision-making processes?**

#### **Della Vecchia**

As Mayor I will take an inventory of the existing wetland sites within the city boundaries as well as potential sites for restoration and preservation of wetlands.

There should be a wetlands policy, and it should include a commitment to exhaust all other options before consideration of development on current wetlands.

Biofiltration as designed by John Todd and Living Technologies would also be a way to manufacture simulated wetlands. These simulated wetlands could be used to repair some of the lost natural resources.

#### **Soboroff**

Yes. Wetlands are a valuable asset and we need to know the extent of our wetlands.

Yes and that policy should be done with the input of those who are stakeholders in each of the wetlands that exists.

#### **Villaraigosa**

The simple answer to both of these questions is "yes." But that wouldn't take into account the complexities of wetlands issues.

First, there are federal and State agencies, as well as non-profit groups, that already have a pretty good inventory of existing and degraded wetlands, so it's entirely possible that the City's doing so would be redundant. Before committing to an inventory, the City should survey the available information.

Second, establishing a wetlands policy independent of existing federal and State regulations also may be redundant. The one exception I can think of is if the City desires to be more restrictive regarding development in or near wetlands. In that case, any policy would have to be accompanied by a generous property acquisition program, since wetlands protection laws do not appear to abrogate the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Designated wetlands do drop in value and thus become more negotiable as to price, or available for dedication. But wetlands-adjacent property tends to be developable and, consequently, more expensive. This is a key issue in the controversy surrounding Playa Vista and the Ballona Wetlands, where proposals to develop upland habitat areas near the wetlands are unfettered by regulation yet opposed by some wetlands advocates.

#### **Wachs**

Yes and yes.

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## **Green Buildings/Sustainable Building Practices:**

Building construction generates a wide range of environmental impacts and raises important environmental issues, ranging from disposal of construction debris and use of building materials to plumbing and lighting. A number of cities around the country have created Green Building Guidelines and, in the case of Seattle, a Green Building Ordinance was passed and signed into law. The City has now established a City of Los Angeles Sustainable Design Program to develop specific Green Building recommendations.

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### **Do you support a Green Building Ordinance for municipal owned and leased buildings?**

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### **Would you favor mandating specific sustainable building practices such as building materials of recycled content; double plumbing to make use of reclaimed water; and/or energy-efficient utilities for heating, cooling, and lighting?**

#### **Della Vecchia**

This administration would absolutely support a green building ordinance for municipal buildings, and would offer strong incentives for private developments to follow suit.

I favor strong incentives over mandates in the private sector, as different developments will naturally have different needs.

I feel a strong urgency in using and creating industries to develop recycled materials within the city of Los Angeles. If industries were created to convert curb side waste into usable goods, we could easily reduce our dependence on raw materials. An eventual goal is to phase out and then eliminate the use of any materials that are not produced from recycled resources.

A clear example by the City of Los Angeles to use sustainable building practices and recycled materials is long overdue. Any demolition of existing buildings in the city on L.A. most include a salvage assessment. Too many usable items are hauled off to the dump. Technology has long been available to close the loop on wasteful building practices. Solar panels on roof tops, double plumbing in new construction to utilize gray water, and landscaping that compliments this coastal desert region are very feasible ways to maximize our use of resources.

#### **Soboroff**

Yes, if it is reasonable and does not increase the cost of the buildings to the extent that other building projects (in neglected areas of LA) would be unfunded.

Yes, to a reasonable extent.

#### **Villaraigosa**

Any new buildings the City develops should be state-of-the-art when it comes to energy conservation and smart design. Technically, accomplishing this would not require an ordinance. However, as happened with the Living Wage Ordinance (which essentially applies to the City itself), placing the requirements into law provides the basis for implementation of what could otherwise be a policy. Certainly, there is no reason to expect that every department would be completely enthusiastic about green building practices even if they are mandated by Mayoral directive. So I would support an ordinance.

Additionally, to the extent that existing buildings can be retrofitted, the City should make the effort to do that too. It will take time and money, but it will pay off in energy savings over the long run, and it sets an example that will make it much easier for us to impose these kinds of policies on the private sector. Besides, the City has a lot of existing buildings and probably will not be building very many new ones over time. An ongoing effort to reduce energy and water consumption in existing municipal buildings

is a good start. The Sustainable Design Program is developing guidelines for a more comprehensive approach and should provide the foundation for whatever gets done in the future.

Regarding the mandate of sustainable building practices, as noted above, I believe the Mayor can do that for City projects. Mandating them for private sector projects probably will require an ordinance. While there is a growing body of evidence that sustainable practices are economically and technically feasible, it will be easier to pass such an ordinance if the City itself is already setting the example and increasing the availability of green building materials by increasing demand for them. In the meantime, the Departments of City Planning and Building and Safety should begin moving private developments in the direction of sustainability. That will help provide the basis for a mandate and ordinance.

**Wachs**

Yes [sic. to all parts of the question].

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**Street Trees:**

Several cities around the country have recognized the importance of increasing the number of street trees and managing those trees and other plant materials in an environmentally and economically sound way. Trees can provide multiple benefits, including improving air quality, cooling landscapes, and making neighborhoods more livable. The City, however, does not have a budget for planting new trees and a limited budget for the care of existing trees. Nor does the City have an “urban forester” position as other cities do.

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**Would you create the position of Urban Forester for Los Angeles?**

**Della Vecchia**

I would designate the street trees program as being part of the Sustainable City Plan, and would not establish the position of Urban Forester. Establishing an Urban Forester is not as imperative as giving full support to existing organizations such as Northeast Trees and Tree People.

**Soboroff**

Yes, as a part of my policy with a Deputy Mayor of the Environment.

**Villaraigosa**

I have been a consistent supporter of our urban foresters – like Tree People, North East Trees and the Hollywood Beautification Team – as they have conceived projects and sought funding during my term in the Assembly. But that’s not enough. The City of Los Angeles, which has paid some attention over the years to urban forestry, needs to step up and make the greening of L.A. a priority.

We can plant another million trees in Los Angeles just like Tree People did for the 1984 Olympics, but this time the City should make a commitment to maintain them, or help those that will. We must look at trees as a resource that cleans the air, provides cooling shade and reduces urban runoff, instead of looking at them as just another municipal maintenance problem and a potential nuisance.

The current Bureau of Street Trees has accumulated a good amount of knowledge on trees in Los Angeles, but urban forestry is not the Bureau’s natural orientation. Establishing the position of Urban Forester may be the way to remedy that, but some thought should be given as to how the position should mesh with the existing Bureau.

**Wachs**

Yes or a similar position.

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**What other policies, if any, would you develop to better support an urban forestry approach?**

**Della Vecchia**

Street trees not only beautify but also lower the temperature of city streets. This in turn reduces our energy demand on hot summer days. One of the major byproducts of biofiltration and manufactured wetlands is the ability to grow edible vegetables and landscape materials. As part of a comprehensive biofiltration program, the city will be able to use water from the sanitation system to produce all necessary landscape materials. Biofiltration not only reduces our dependency on chemical treatment methods, it also allows us to produce an abundant tree crop. We could grow and use all landscape materials produced by the city for the city.

**Soboroff**

Advisory Commission made up of Tree People, and other local excellent organizations.

**Villaraigosa**

Along with the Urban Forester and a strong commitment to maintenance of all trees, the City should establish a preference for native, drought-resistant species that need less maintenance over time and adopt policies that optimize the planting of trees for shading and runoff reduction purposes. The City also needs to come to maintenance agreements with other jurisdictions, such as Caltrans, so that more trees can be planted in rights-of-way not controlled by the City.

**Wachs**

While we are public open space poor. We are private open space rich even in some of our poorest areas. I will implement a program that gives assistance for landscaping and maintenance in private open areas particularly in poorer areas.

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**Brownfields Redevelopment:**

A number of cities like Los Angeles confront the problem of brownfields -- large expanses of vacant or underutilized land, particularly in inner city communities and/or along old industrial corridors, that have a real or perceived problem of contamination. The City currently has no brownfields policy establishing criteria for decisions regarding future potential uses of such land and how to address the problems of contamination and community needs, and related land use issues.

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**Should the City establish planning and decision-making criteria for re-use of brownfields?**

**Della Vecchia**

There must be city wide criteria.

**Soboroff**

Definitely. I have a Brownfields-to-Greenfields plan for L.A. It is similar to the successful one in Pennsylvania.

**Villaraigosa**

Brownfields are underused properties, primarily in commercial and urban areas, that have been abandoned or ignored because of real or perceived contamination by hazardous materials. Lack of financing, fear of liability after cleanup and regulatory uncertainty are common problems making it difficult to get these sites developed. Some estimate there are as many as 50-100,000 such sites in California. Many are in low-income neighborhoods where they contribute to urban blight, poor environmental health and crime. Due to the lack of parks, children may also use these abandoned sites as playgrounds.

Since 1998, the City of Los Angeles has been a designated Federal Brownfields Showcase Community, but the City's response has been tentative. There needs to be a comprehensive policy, including planning and decision-making criteria, beyond the current haphazard effort to encourage the commercial re-use of a modest number of sites (including the previously discussed Chinatown Yard).

These sites pose a variety of challenges and opportunities. Many lend themselves best to re-use for industrial purposes, while others are large enough to consider a wider variety of options. Because their re-use is ultimately a land use issue as well as a hazardous clean-up issue, and I believe communities should be more involved in making land use decisions in Los Angeles, I support the participation of community members in the planning and design of a citywide brownfields policy. However, I do not think it would be appropriate to substitute the public's untrained judgement for that of trained experts in the process of assessing sites and determining how best to remediate them.

### **Wachs**

These sites need to be cleaned up and used more for community needs. I voted no on the Cornfields site for that reason. Here, there is a screaming need for housing, schools, and parks. Majestic refuses to even consider looking at such options.

I will require more community involvement and opportunities at Brownfields sites as well as all other projects that have an impact on the community through my proposed "early warning system to neighborhood councils."

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## **Should such criteria include community participation in the planning and design of such programs?**

### **Della Vecchia**

WatchTheMayor.com encourages community participation in the design of all programs, and a brownfields program is no exception.

### **Soboroff**

It does.

### **Villaraigosa**

As the debate over the future of the Chinatown Yard reminds us, the appropriate redevelopment of any brownfield can be a hot issue. Ultimately, brownfield redevelopment should be part of the regular community planning process so that such sites are used for purposes that fit into communities and serve their needs. Obviously, some extremely polluted sites will be too expensive to clean up to the standards required for some kinds of uses (housing, for example), so the scientific part of the equation never completely disappears. Establishment of citywide criteria for brownfields planning and re-use will help to ensure that appropriate use takes place whenever feasible. Making re-use sustainable should be a function of citywide policies regarding sustainability, a matter which I believe transcends the brownfields issue.

The question of how to deal with brownfields has been hotly debated in the legislature over the last couple of years. A central issue has been how much control and authority to give to local jurisdictions in determining the fate of contaminated sites. Some advocate augmenting local authority to allow District Attorneys or City Attorneys to declare currently idle properties a 'public nuisance' and trigger a site investigation by the Department of Toxic Substances Control. This would create additional local tools to get the sites cleaned up and for the State to take action.

Certain aspects of this were included in SB 324 [Escutia], which did not pass during the 1999-2000 session. That bill allowed local jurisdictions to conduct the clean up assessment [many environmentalists believe they are not qualified], in accordance with pre-established cleanup standards [many feared this cookie cutter approach was inadequate to ensure cleanup], with a grant of immunity [many feared this would

ultimately leave the poor communities holding the bag]. Developers and owners of brownfields viewed the empowerment of local jurisdictions to trigger a state investigation an onerous prospect. These competing concerns were too great an obstacle for the bill to overcome, but the issues are still under discussion for next year.

**Wachs**

Yes.

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**Should appropriate or sustainable forms of development be the goal of any such planning and design process? If so, how would you go about ensuring this will happen?**

**Della Vecchia**

I would emphasize tax and fee incentives for Green industries and those that don't pollute. I would offer even bigger incentives for startups in the fields of alternative energy and transportation.

**Soboroff**

Schools, affordable housing, parks and other important types of developments on brownfield-to-greenfield sites is a very worthy goal for Los Angeles, and one I take seriously.

**Villaraigosa**

[See response to previous question.]

**Wachs**

Yes. As stated above, as Mayor I will continue the development of a Sustainable Living Urban Plan.

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## Wastes and Hazards: Detoxifying the Urban Environment

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**Toxics:**

Opportunities for the development of environmentally preferable products and processes are available for a number of different businesses that currently use hazardous or toxic materials and generate hazardous byproducts. However, much of our environmental regulatory system fails to encourage such developments, focusing instead on mitigating existing practices. The City could seek to encourage the development of a non-hazardous or pollution prevention approach.

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**Do you think that the City should inject itself in these issues, for example, by using the business license fee, or other financial incentives, to subsidize businesses that use clean production technologies?**

**Della Vecchia**

I would emphasize tax and fee incentives for Green industries and those that don't pollute. I would offer even bigger incentives for startups in the fields of alternative energy and transportation.

**Soboroff**

Schools, affordable housing, parks and other important types of developments on brownfield-to-greenfield sites is a very worthy goal for Los Angeles, and one I take seriously.

**Villaraigosa**

[See response to previous question.]

**Wachs**

Yes. As stated above, as Mayor I will continue the development of a Sustainable Living Urban Plan.

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**What other strategies, if any, should the city employ to support clean production or pollution prevention businesses or processes?**

**Della Vecchia**

A carrot and stick approach of license fee breaks for improvements and stiff fines for excesses should be enacted for gross polluters.

**Soboroff**

Elimination (phase out) diesel school busses and city trucks. Encourage the use of EV cars (I have driven one since December 6, 1997) and Electric-Gas hybrids.

**Villaraigosa**

As author of the Carl Moyer diesel engine clean up bill in the legislature, I am a subscriber to the concept of using incentives to help businesses move in the right direction when it is the most appropriate alternative. In the case of diesel emissions, there have been no other regulatory approaches in force and truckers and other diesel engine users were persuasive in their argument that their industries could not themselves afford to pay the entire price of moving to cleaner fuels and engines. There are other businesses and processes that are already more tightly regulated. For these, there may not be a need to provide incentives to attract them to Los Angeles. There may be things that could be done with the Zoning Code that could help too, making certain clean uses permissible by right.

When it comes to consider what we can do using City Codes, we need to keep in mind that sometimes the neighbors don't share our zeal for progressive environmental policies when they're worried about traffic or other day-to-day concerns relating to what goes on in their neighborhoods. A few years ago, some Studio City neighbors objected to recycling being mandated for a commercial project near them because it would require more trash trucks to come to the site each week, and they won that fight.

**Wachs**

Tax incentives, fee reductions, and the like for businesses that use such technologies. Penalties for those who don't.

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**Urban Pesticide Use:**

The Los Angeles Unified School District has adopted an integrated pest management policy to ensure that the safest and lowest risk approaches to control pest problems are used in our schools. Other cities, such as San Francisco, have also created such programs.

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**Do you think that Los Angeles should create an integrated pest management program for all City facilities and properties?**

**Della Vecchia**

The City should have an integrated pest management program.

**Soboroff**

Yes. We have an excellent model in the Department of Recreation and Parks, which we are constantly improving.

**Villaraigosa**

Yes. In the Assembly, I supported the limitation of heavy-duty pesticides (such as Methyl Bromide) used on strawberries within a certain distance of schools and homes. I certainly think a pro-active reduced risk policy would be good for the City to institute.

**Wachs**

Yes.

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**If so, how would such a policy best be implemented? If not, why not?**

**Della Vecchia**

The plan would best be implemented as guidelines, listing possible treatments in order of preference. The use of chemical pesticides is the most common short term solution. But a longer term, safer strategy using organic elements to encourage bio diversity is without doubt the safest way to prevent both pests and chemical contamination. Our children should be taught by demonstration to use alternative methods in pest abatement.

**Soboroff**

Implementing department by department. Responsibility w/ Deputy Mayor.

**Villaraigosa**

In terms of implementation, since there is no one Department of Pest Management in the City of L.A., there's no one button to push. Even if it's done by ordinance, it will take a while to get every department that manages property and facilities to be on the same page, and it might take some coordination by a "Pest Management Czar" of some sort. The City has already been through this kind of evolution with water conservation, with curbside recycling and with a mandate to purchase recycled goods, so we know you don't just snap your fingers and have a finished product. It takes time and sometimes trial-and-error.

**Wachs**

The San Francisco model would be the best foundation to start on.

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**Environmental Justice:**

Environmental justice refers in part to the disproportionate level of environmental hazards experienced by low-income and communities of color. One major hazard is exposure to particulate matter from diesel fuel, a problem that is likely to be magnified with new warehousing proposals stemming from the changes along the Alameda Corridor. Reducing exposure to diesel can be an important environmental justice outcome. Many of the busses, trucks, and vans, and other vehicles that constitute a city's fleet also use diesel fuel. According to City estimates, about 5% of the City's fleet of vehicles run on alternative fuels, ranging from compressed natural gas sanitation trucks to electric cars and buses.

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**Would you commit the City to significantly increase the percentage of the vehicle fleet that run on alternative fuels?**

**Della Vecchia**

We must increase the use of alternative fuels in the City's vehicle fleet. We are a city that prides itself on state of the art innovation. Detailed schematics have been available for the last two decades outlining designs for highly fuel efficient vehicles. Within this region are some of the most advanced design schools in the nation. Santa Monica has already implemented the use of electric vehicles. Hydrogen cell engines have already been designed and are available for use. It is for us to simply decide to use this technology. Los Angeles should be the alternative fuel and transportation leader.

**Soboroff**

Yes, as per my above answer.

**Villaraigosa**

I am a long time supporter of the concept, and reality, of environmental justice. Environmental justice is about overcoming powerlessness and prevalent assumptions about how we make decisions. Historically, when it comes to deciding where undesirable facilities would be located, money and power have spoken loud and clear.

As our collective sense of fairness evolves and grows, more people in the environmental movement are embracing the notion that communities of color and poor communities have the same right to be able to protect themselves from risk as anybody else. But that means that some folks who've been able to insulate themselves from risk in the past may have to learn to accept a fair share of the burdens deemed necessary by society for it to function effectively.

As environmental activists become more aware of this issue, and begin to feel a little uncomfortable, well then, that's what environmental justice is all about.

As I noted earlier, my commitment to reducing the hazards related to diesel emissions in the environment was affirmed by my authorship of the Carl Moyer Clean Air Fund program in the legislature in 1998. AB 1571 established a \$50 million incentive program to subsidize the clean up of dirty diesel engine emissions from buses, trucks, trains and ships.

Diesel emissions were recently identified as a carcinogen. With the confluence of freeways and industrial land uses in communities where the poor and people of color tend to live and work, the impact of diesel emissions falls disproportionately on them. Thus, creating a mechanism to begin to clean up diesel-powered vehicles is a fundamental environmental justice issue. It took bringing together scientists, environmentalists, community activists and people from the business community, including truckers, to make the Carl Moyer program happen.

The struggle was worth it: the Carl Moyer program is a runaway hit. We receive applications for funding equal to ten times what has been budgeted. Every Californian, no matter where you live or work, will enjoy the benefits of this effort to clean up or eliminate diesel emissions.

Additionally, in the early '90s, when I was on the RTD and MTA boards, I was a leading proponent of the MTA's clean fuels program. That program has subsequently gone on to create the largest fleet of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses in the United States.

Finally, I have consistently joined with clean air advocates to support the retention of the California's Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) program, which is one of the major incentives for automakers to do the research and development necessary to develop electric cars and other non-polluting vehicles. I applaud the efforts of local cities, including Los Angeles, to bring ZEVs and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles into their fleets, and will step up the pace. Public agencies can lead the way by bringing to bear their purchasing power to create economies of scale.

The percentage of the City's vehicle fleet that should be powered by alternative fuels depends upon what is realistic in this context. It's abundantly obvious that a major effort by a city like Los Angeles to purchase big fleets of ZEVs and LEVs would be a major

breakthrough. Los Angeles could double the number of EV-1s on the road in the blink of an eye if they were still making them.

But we would need the infrastructure to support serious increased numbers, and there are some situations in which it remains infeasible. We won't soon be seeing electric trash trucks, I would venture, but we can certainly do better with autos and vans.

At the September 14 Occidental College forum I said I would like to see 50% of the fleet be alternative fuel. At this point I would set that as a goal, subject to a review of the infrastructure and supply.

**Wachs**

I along with the rest of the City Council have already voted to do so per the requirements/recommendations of the AQMD.

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**Would you support a phase-out of all diesel-powered vehicles among the city fleet and advocate that MTA, LAUSD, and other regional government agencies do the same for their vehicles?**

**Della Vecchia**

The time for phasing out diesel vehicles is here. Regional agencies should be encouraged to follow suit. Alternative systems sometimes seem like costly measures in the short term, but pay for themselves over time.

**Soboroff**

Yes.

**Villaraigosa**

Regarding diesel vehicles, I do support their phase-out by the City and other agencies, but it will have to be done in an orderly fashion. Trying to do it all at once presents a couple of problems, not the least of which is the expense which constitutes a sort of "balloon payment" that must be repeated when the vehicles purchased at the same time all begin to break down and wear out. It would be more prudent to bring in the new, clean vehicles over a period of years so they won't all wear out at once. (This is an issue for the MTA, which has a large fleet of primarily diesel buses all getting old and complicating the agency's effort to comply with the federal Consent Decree with the Bus Riders Union.)

**Wachs**

I along with a majority of the City Council just approved, and the future Mayor and Council will have to provide the budget to accelerate having all medium and large city vehicles (light trucks, busses, and sanitation trucks) operate on alternative fuels over the next few years to reach AQMD goals. And busses can run on natural gas and other less polluting fuels now. MTA and LAUSD must accelerate a program to have their current diesel vehicles replaced.

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**Solid Waste/Composting:**

The City has made some progress in recycling, but the continuing debates over disposal facilities, such as the expansion of Sunshine Canyon Landfill, highlights the need to divert more waste from landfills.

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**Are you committed to the goal of 50% reduction of waste to be sent to landfills or incinerators as originally mandated in 1989 state legislation for the year 2000?**

**Della Vecchia**

I am committed to at least a 50% reduction in waste.

**Soboroff**

Yes, and we have a great composting program at Recreation and Parks.

**Villaraigosa**

I remain committed to the 50% recycling goal, and I am pleased that Los Angeles is one of the success stories in California in terms of recycling. We are much closer to the 50% goal than many jurisdictions.

**Wachs**

I was the first City official to propose mandatory recycling and formulate our hazardous waste mobile collection program. I am fervently committed to reaching that 50% goal, just as I am fervently committed to do every thing in my power to stop the expansion of the Sunshine Canyon Landfill.

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**What new opportunities and programs, if any, should be developed in recycling, composting, and waste reduction to achieve and/or surpass that goal?**

**Villaraigosa**

The biggest hole in our local recycling effort is commercial facilities. It's high time we figured out how to make recycling in commercial buildings a regular, if not mandatory, part of our program. A lot of businesses have figured out that it's good business to be able to sell some of their solid waste rather than pay to have it trucked away, but small businesses need help because they don't generate the volume. That's why we need to make the buildings themselves a part of the solution.

We can require recycling to be built in to new commercial buildings so that it simply becomes the way solid waste is dealt with in the businesses that locate there. And we can work on setting up the equivalent of a curbside program for commercial buildings. Because commercial buildings, including apartment complexes, are not directly serviced by City Sanitation, we'll need to work with the County on this. I'm not prepared to say that doing so will be a cinch.

The Sunshine Canyon situation reminds us of the environmental justice issue and how difficult it is to determine what "fair share" means, let alone implement a policy based on it. The siting of recycling transfer stations raises similar issues.

There's no transfer station on the west side of L.A. because the communities there had the political wherewithal to stop it in the early '90s even when the City Councilmembers representing the area thought it would be appropriate to site one there. It would cut down on the number of diesel-spewing trips the trucks would have to make across town every day, but it would keep those trucks in communities where they are not wanted. Since there was, and is, already a big transfer station in the downtown industrial zone, the City backed down from the confrontation for the meantime.

There's no easy answer on the siting issue. But to say that L.A. can and should be "dump free," as some have asserted, makes a mockery of environmental justice and the very notion of fair share. The City is looking at solutions that include rail-haul out to far-flung locations near Native American reservations and sensitive desert habitat areas. If we stood in solidarity with those Native Americans on the Ward Valley nuclear waste dump issue, what is our justification for turning on them with regard to solid waste disposal? What constitutes our fair share of the burden we create every day when we toss something in the trash can? It's a question we should all be asking ourselves. The sooner we realize that, when we throw something "away," we are really just transferring responsibility for it to someone else in another location, the sooner we'll understand that there is no such thing as "away."

For the present and near-term future, Los Angeles needs to step up recycling to levels even higher than they are now, and we need to continue to use education and persuasion to increase awareness regarding being wasteful. The City can also set an example by using its purchasing policies to include a preference for products with reduced amounts of packaging and disposable elements.

**Wachs**

More waste transfer stations that will include these features such as the one that is presently being built in my Council District in Sun Valley.

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## Resource Issues: Water, Energy and Food

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### **Water Supply Issues:**

With the recent court decisions and agreements concerning the reduction in use by L.A. of imported water supplies from Mono Lake and the Owens Valley and with the continuing stresses concerning availability of imported water from Northern California, the City needs to take into account the reduction of imported water supplies.

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### **How would the City most effectively reduce its reliance on imported water?**

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### **Should the City, for example, increase opportunities for recycling water by expanding and/or developing new water reclamation facilities and/or by including, in the city's budget, money to pipe reclaimed water for irrigation to such irrigation sites as golf courses?**

**Della Vecchia**

To reduce imported water reliance, we must retain what we have, and use it to its fullest potential. Strategies include retaining floodwaters, implementing biofiltration, and manufacturing wetlands. A program of tree propagation and food production would greatly reduce the amount of imported water needed for city and private landscaping. Water is this area's most precious and valuable resource. Technology must be used to harness it to its greatest potential.

All available sites and methods for reclamation and re-irrigation should be utilized.

**Soboroff**

Implement "best practices" policies in conservation. Yes. We already do this to an extent at R and P.

**Villaraigosa**

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#### **Wachs**

More waste transfer stations that will include these features such as the one that is presently being built in my Council District in Sun Valley.

---

### **Stormwater/Water Retention:**

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board has instructed the City of Los Angeles to adopt policies to limit the amount of runoff within the city limits. The City is currently challenging this ruling. However, the City has numerous opportunities to limit runoff. For example, one type of policy would seek to amend the Uniform Building Code so that retaining storm water on site would be in compliance with the code. Another approach would be the adoption of a multi-media strategy, such as the one developed by Tree People, to establish broad water retention, tree planting, and energy saving programs in residences, schools, and other buildings.

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### **Should the City continue its court challenge against the Regional Water Quality Control Board?**

#### **Della Vecchia**

The court challenge, to not limit runoff, is foolhardy and should be stopped.

#### **Soboroff**

Without having seen all information on this one, I would say “no”.

#### **Villaraigosa**

From the L.A. River to the Ballona Wetlands, dirty runoff from our heavily paved city creates pollution and flood hazards. We need to create a new mindset about runoff so we don’t bankrupt ourselves cleaning up after a mess we didn’t have to make in the first

place. As I stated in my answer to question 1.D. [above], the City should withdraw its appeal of the Regional Water Quality Control Board decision. There's too much to be gained by complying with it, even if it means changing the way we do things.

**Wachs**

As stated above my goals as Mayor would be to be compliant with water quality regulations and have the water as safe as possible.

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**Would you favor a water retention program through changes in the Building Code?**

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**Would you seek to pursue a multi-media strategy along the lines developed by the Tree People program?**

**Della Vecchia**

I favor changes that would allow for retaining storm water, and double plumbing, on site.

As in so many areas, Tree People is leading the way with its multi-media strategy, and the City would do well to follow.

**Soboroff**

Yes. Absolutely!

**Villaraigosa**

Changing the Uniform Building Code will require a lot of political effort, but it's worth working on. However, I don't think L.A. has to wait for the politicians in Sacramento to do our work for us. We can do it ourselves. I support including water retention techniques in both public and private new development in the City.

Our urban foresters, led by Tree People and working with LAUSD and DWP, have begun to point the way toward a cost-effective, sane way of dealing with runoff: replace pavement with greenery, improve groundwater recharge and save \$20 billion dollars on infrastructure we won't have to build to increase storm water capacity. They've done pilot programs at homes and schools and they are making believers of the public works people.

This issue is actually at the heart of the whole effort to change the face of the L.A. River. You've probably heard about Curitiba, Brazil and its famous busways and city planning. But Curitiba should also be famous for the creative, environmentally sound way it solved its "L.A. River-type" problem. Instead of paving the river that runs through town, they turned the flood plain into a park and brought sheep in to graze so they could save money on upkeep. If our city fathers and mothers had been that creative and far-sighted in the 1930s, Los Angeles would be a vastly different place right now.

Additionally, I want to make sure that funding requests are coordinated and that resource decisions are integrated so that water pollution control measures, water replenishment, recreation and flood control become integrated goals rather than competing forces. This is the only way our vast watershed will have a chance to serve all the functions it needs to serve.

We also need to be looking at land use decisions that impact the watershed as well. As we have seen, what we have built next to the Los Angeles River impacts how we think about the river and how we treat it. If we had respected the flood plain in the first place, the city would have developed differently. But we didn't. But it's not too late to begin doing things right, by designing projects appropriately to minimize runoff, and by orienting them toward the river instead of ignoring it.

**Wachs**

I propose a three pronged approach for reducing pollution from storm drain runoff.

Developments/property should be held responsible for capturing more water run off. Last Spring, Council adopted a new policy that will require new developments to capture 85% of the runoff from a storm in a 24 hour period or the first three-fourths of an inch of rain. Ways to retain water can be achieved with relatively simple and inexpensive design changes. This policy will become law for all future projects within my first 100 days as Mayor.

De-polluting dry weather low flow run off. LA is responsible for 6 drains as well as Ballona Creek that dump directly into the Santa Monica Bay. Currently council has approved plans to divert three of those drains to go through the sewer system. These are Santa Monica Canyon, Brooks Avenue in Venice, and Thorton Avenue in Venice. Still not funded are the drains located at the Pacific Coast Highway and Sunset, the Bel Air Bay Club, and Pulga Canyon. Those three will be funded in my first year in office.

Other options include netting or screens placed at strategic locations along the drain system to catch at least trash. This is being deployed now in Balboa Creek and the LA River where the dry weather flows are too high to be diverted. Filter inserts can be placed in catch basins as well. The sweeping of the storm drains and all city streets should be done prior to the wet whether months.

Source control. Over the last few years there has been an aggressive program to educate people to not put motor oil and the like down the storm drains. Trash and litter that goes unchecked eventually goes into the storm drains. This program has been somewhat successful, but there are still violators out there who must be caught.

Public areas, where there tends to be a high volume of discarded trash, must be policed better. Two major public areas where trash pick up has to be improved is in our public parks (especially parks near storm drains), and public streets, especially in impoverished areas where trash cans are frequently rummaged through. In such areas, trashcans should be emptied and the environs cleaned every afternoon before dusk.

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## **Energy Sources and Uses:**

The City's Department of Water and Power has established a Green Power program for its energy customers that can create significant environmental benefits by increasing the use of renewable energy sources.

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**Would you seek to increase the number of participants in the Green Power Program, and, if so, how would you do it?**

**Villaraigosa**

[see above]

**Wachs**

[see above]

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**Specifically, would you commit the City to purchasing all of its energy (for City-related facilities) from the Green Power Program?**

**Della Vecchia**

My administration believes that we must lead by example. We must use all forms of clean, green energy and technologies. How else can we expect our citizens to comply?

**Soboroff**

No, not for all, but for as many as possible...

**Villaraigosa**

DWP has promoted the Green Power Program modestly, making it available to all ratepayers but not undertaking a major promotional campaign beyond the boundaries of what arrives in the billing envelope every month. I would like to see DWP use additional promotion, advertising and pricing incentives to sell its green energy. Perhaps new developments requiring power hook-ups could be required to use green power, not unlike the City requires all new toilets to be ultra low-flush. Once again, the City can set the tone for this kind of effort by making its own commitment to buy only Green Power Program electricity.

**Wachs**

[no comment.]

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**Organic and Genetically Modified Food Issues:**

The City of Minneapolis recently passed a resolution urging all City departments and agencies to include certified organic food vendors as an option during contract negotiations. It also urges any special event held by the City include caterers that avoid genetically engineered ingredients and that use organic foods as an option, and urged the Minneapolis School District to consider offering certified organic lunches as an option.

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**Do you support the City of Los Angeles adopting similar resolutions or policies around organic and sustainable food practices?**

**Della Vecchia**

The Minneapolis approach seems sound. I would like to foster a more organic oriented approach to growing fruits and vegetables. I would like to encourage neighborhood production and proliferation of organic gardening. I would also work to encourage growers markets wherever possible but especially wherever needed.

Keep the production of food in the hands of the people. Genetically modified food is very controversial and does not seem to be the right way to foster sustainable, local, individual, food production. Using time tested and age old methods of growing seems to be the most logical direction to pursue.

**Soboroff**

Yes, seems interesting...

**Villaraigosa**

I am aware that some cities such as Minneapolis are being very aggressive in making organically grown foods available for City uses. I think that, while this is an important issue, it's not my highest priority when there are so many things Los Angeles has yet to do to lessen the major impacts it has on the environment.

**Wachs**

Yes. It is critical component to our health and safety.

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**If so, what policies would you favor? If not, why not?**

**Della Vecchia**

[see above]

**Soboroff**

Must be practical and not overly expensive.

**Villaraigosa**

Policies encouraging organic gardening certainly would be appropriate as part of a community garden program, and I support the adoption of policies favoring organic foods for use in City cafeterias and at City events where food is served. I note, however, that there is still a debate going on as to whether organic foods are adequately authenticated and regulated. I would want to be sure the City wasn't just making a costly symbolic gesture that didn't deliver on its promises.

**Wachs**

Require that special events held by the city that provide food do so from vendors that provide organic food. Advocate organic and healthy food choices at schools. Zoning fast food restaurants away from school areas. Encourage organic food s to be grown at schools and community gardens.

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**Farmers' Markets:**

The City of Santa Monica, with 80,000 residents, hosts 4 farmers' markets every week, while Los Angeles, with a population of over 3 million, has less than 10 farmers' markets.

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**Do you think that the City should play a role in the creation of more farmers' markets and if so what would that role be?**

**Della Vecchia**

As stated farmers, or growers (the term we prefer because you do not have to be a farmer to grow and sell produce) markets should be encouraged and actually placed where fresh fruits and vegetables are needed. The city could go a long way in making this resource available to our residents. This is a small gesture and would improve the lives of our citizens greatly. At first the markets could be put into any parking lot or vacant lot. Later we would integrate space for these markets in new mixed use developments. The most natural choices seem to be near or in newly built parks and gardens. I would like to keep it easy and inexpensive for growers to participate. But the first priority is to get this healthy inexpensive food supply to the people who want it.

**Soboroff**

Yes, by allowing communities to vote "yes" and then having an easy entitlement process

**Villaraigosa**

I like Farmer's Markets and think it's really unfortunate that our neighbors in Santa Monica can manage four of them while the entire city of Los Angeles can only muster up ten! Not only are these open air markets a good source of wholesome food, they are community gathering places and localized energy jolts for economic development. They bring people to a location and there's nothing that says those people only have to spend money in one place.

The City should be working with community and business organizations to set up more of these markets, especially in business districts in need of revitalization such as Highland Park and Santa Barbara Plaza down in Crenshaw. We can make the permitting easier and provide guidance for groups that have little experience in conducting business of this sort.

One encouraging effort in my Assembly District has seen consideration of space for a farmers' market built into the design for a plaza adjacent to the Avenue 57 Blue Line light rail station in Highland Park. Community advocates have been working with the Blue Line consultants to make sure the facility potentially can serve this important function in addition to its crucial transportation-related functions.

As Mayor, I would instruct an appropriate member of my staff to pursue the creation of more farmers' markets, working with the Council Offices and relevant departments, Chambers of Commerce and local merchants to generate activity. I do not think it is a

coincidence that farmers' markets have been a part of economic revitalization efforts in Santa Monica, Westwood Village, Hollywood and elsewhere. They are a useful tool.

### **Wachs**

Yes. I am proud that one of the best farmers markets is not only in my district, but in my neighborhood: Studio City. I was able to provide seed money from the Community Development Department to start the market and waived all city fees to close Ventura Place every Sunday morning for the market. I envision every community to have a farmers market.

Unfortunately, farmer's markets have not faired so well in poorer communities. The solution to that is to have farmers provide in those areas more basic foods (i.e. lettuce instead of arugula) at lower prices.

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## **Transportation and Land Use**

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### **Needs of the Transit Dependent:**

A key transportation problem for many city residents is access for the transit-dependent; namely those individuals or families who either do not own a car or have to share its use. However, there are only limited programs specifically tailored to meet the needs of these transit-dependent populations who must access employment, child-care, food shopping, and other health and human services.

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### **How would you go about addressing the needs of the transit-dependent, given the mayor's crucial role at MTA and in other transportation forums?**

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### **Would you advocate for increased public transit services near places of employment, residences, child-care centers and health and human services offices?**

#### **Della Vecchia**

The first thing I'll do is to make sure there are transit dependent people sitting on the MTA board. We'd never see another strike if that were the case. WatchTheMayor.com regularly rides the buses (when they're running) and asks the riders what their real needs are.

I will advocate for more public transit, period.

#### **Soboroff**

Convene a task force with this specific goal to be its sole responsibility. Yes.

#### **Villaraigosa**

The transit-dependent are the "forgotten people" of Los Angeles, as we have seen from the prolonged MTA strike which inconveniences them in ways that most of the rest of us never have to experience. Obviously, in the short-term, these transit riders need basic service and the Mayor should be a leader in making sure it is not interrupted for such long periods of time.

The needs of the transit-dependent are best served by service, service, service. I support the major increases in bus service currently being implemented under the Consent Decree, but I do not share the Bus Riders Union's narrow focus on buses. I say this primarily because I do not believe that increased bus service will substantially reduce auto congestion, and I do believe that the transit-dependent should not always

be consigned to being stuck in traffic. So increases in specialized programs such as RapidBus, Bus Rapid Transit (busways) and light rail will serve the transit-dependent very well, especially if they are not accompanied by fare increases. I also feel that the longer distance routes need to be beefed up, such as the famous “nanny express” that is so important to inner city women who work on the west side. Additionally, the short-hop DASH routes are proving very successful in a number of neighborhoods and the City and MTA need to figure out how these services can effectively be increased.

Improved service goes hand-in-hand with places where people need to go, such as job sites, residential areas and so forth. As I have discussed earlier, improving transit in conjunction with such facilities is one of the few tools we have to cope with the pressures of growth. In our spread out city, there is no simple formula for accomplishing this, nor is there a consensus on how to do it. The City must undertake a major dialogue on this issue, perhaps as part of the Livable City process. We simply cannot continue on depending on the car and complaining about gridlock.

### **Wachs**

As a member of the MTA board with 4 appointees, I will provide the following incentives that will double the number of commuters using public transit (from 7% to 15%) by:

Making the busses cleaner and safer and destroy the myth that public transit is dirty, dangerous, and only for those who are too poor, too old, too young, or too disabled to drive. MTA has to deliver and promote public transport as being safe, clean, comfortable, and convenient in order for people to switch from cars.

Develop a clean, sleek, and modern mass rail line. I envision such a system to serve the East West Valley Corridor. It would be a transit system that would work efficiently, and quietly, and set the standard for mass transit for the 21st century.

Implementing the Consent Decree and add 400 more busses on the streets at once.

Support measures to cut bureaucratic costs of operating public transit. Preliminary studies show that the new San Fernando Valley Transit zone could cut up to 20% of costs attributed to overhead, and not from worker layoffs, pay or benefit cuts. This savings would go directly into adding more service.

Continue the program to build out HOV lanes on all freeways.

Repair and promote the use of “park and ride” areas.

Accelerate the ATSAC program to synchronize intersections on major arteries. The benefit of this system will only be realized when completely built out. There are 4,200 intersections. As of now, just more than half are synchronized using ATSAC. With a serious funding commitment the full build out could be done in 3-5 years. It will increase traffic flow by about 10%. Advance Traffic Control System (ATCS) is the newest advancement in ATSAC. It can improve flow by another 5% and should be implemented along our major surface corridors.

Coordinate Public Works, DWP, filming, construction, and other projects that require partial or full closure of road way to no more than six in any square mile, unless it is any emergency. It was appalling to read in the LA Times that on March 22, 2000, there were no less than 9 partial street closures in ½ square mile in Downtown LA that had mid-morning traffic snarled up to twenty minutes delays. The program could be easily implemented and enforced by the Department of Transportation.

Encourage more use of flex time and compressed work weeks. If fully implemented, it could reduce traffic by 10% to 20%. Such programs are also helpful to workers who have to juggle their professional and domestic lives.

Promote “Don’t Drive” days. The major cause of pollution from autos is from starting up a cold engine. That releases as much carbon monoxide pollution as driving at regular speed for 20 minutes. Currently, AQMD has a poorly promoted program “Rideshare

Thursday". As Mayor I will have all City employees take a pledge that one day every two weeks they do not drive their cars at all.

More one-way streets. This worked downtown for the 1984 Olympics, and flow increased 20-30%. Only 200 miles of the city's 6,000 miles are now one-way. It would allow better use of city street, doubles safety for motorists and pedestrians. Imagine, no head on collisions, no need for left turn lanes, and easier signal condonation.

Encourage more walking. Clean up the sidewalks. Not just of litter, but of unnecessary poles, dilapidated racks, benches, and tree roots. Make the sidewalks more friendly. Can make them wider if we used one-way streets.

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## **Would you support the increased use of para-transit services, where public transit services are lacking?**

### **Della Vecchia**

Para-transit should be encouraged, where currently needed.

### **Soboroff**

Yes.

### **Villaraigosa**

Para-transit is an important way we open up our society to everyone. The MTA has contracts with para-transit providers and, as Mayor, I would make sure those services are meeting the community's needs. Where they aren't I would advocate for improvements.

### **Wachs**

[See above.]

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## **Alternatives to Car Use:**

A city and region built around and dependent on the automobile becomes a place subject to the daily hazards and stresses of pollution, congestion, and sprawl. Although there remains the perception that Los Angeles continues to be the "land of the car," there are large numbers of people (for example, 76% of all MTA bus riders) who do not own a car.

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## **Do you see a need in Los Angeles for more and better public transit, as well as land use practices that support transit usage, walking and biking as alternatives to the automobile?**

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### **If so, how would you pursue alternatives to the automobile approach?**

#### **Della Vecchia**

What's most important is that we begin to engage in new, long term, regional thinking where transportation is involved. Los Angeles must retool our dormant aerospace industry and position ourselves as the alternative transportation capital. Offer incentives for the next wave of transit development to be researched and produced here. That includes clean cars, buses, and forms of transport now only imagined.

#### **Soboroff**

Yes, that is why we have a rails-to-trails program as a part of the overall strategy. By working with the decision makers and property owners to enable the plans to happen.

#### **Villaraigosa**

This confluence of transportation and land use is just one of those "little issues" we have to deal with in L.A., where the land use patterns are not naturally conducive to retro-fitting solutions. Let me begin by saying that I believe there is a lot of value to the concepts

of “smart growth” being discussed and debated across the country these days. I also believe that there probably is a lot of disagreement in this city as to what constitutes smart growth and how it should be applied to a place such as Los Angeles.

This city wasn’t invented as a smart growth place and it has attracted a lot of people who like it as a big sprawling suburb, because they don’t think they want to live in a traditionally urbanized city. So, when someone comes along and tells them, “To improve the environment of L.A., we have to densify the city and focus on mass transit so we’ll have better jobs/housing balance, shorter commutes, cleaner air and less sprawl,” they react negatively. They talk about quality of life and crime and noise and traffic and inadequate infrastructure and the need for population control. I’m not sure I can fault them, but that doesn’t mean I think they’re contributing to a solution.

I fought hard in Sacramento for the infusion of transportation funding we’re now enjoying because I believe we absolutely have to make it feasible to add housing density to our major transportation corridors once the carrying capacity of those corridors has been increased. And we should not do it by widening streets again and again. As noted earlier, the new RapidBus program is already a success and should be expanded along with the regular bus service. We have to honor the Consent Decree with the Bus Riders Union, though I know there is some disagreement as to what constitutes compliance.

A big problem with the General Plan Framework adopted by the City a few years ago is that it doesn’t link the growth on transit corridors tightly to the infrastructure development. Thus, the linkage might never take place and it would be business-as-usual in this town that some think is run by developers for developers. I don’t have that big a beef with developers if they’ll work with us to create a coherent vision and a livable city. Sometimes that means they won’t get to do exactly what they want wherever they want.

To answer your questions, of course there is a need for more and better public transit, along with a changed public attitude that encourages its increased usage. The success, until the strike, of the Metro Red Line to North Hollywood is, I think, a harbinger of an L.A. future we can only just begin to visualize. Ride the Red Line back to Union Station during the weekday P.M. peak period and you might think you were in another city where this kind of mass transit is taken for granted.

Walking and biking, as discussed earlier, require a more friendly environment if they are to become more viable means of daily transport. During the MTA strike, we have seen stranded transit-dependent workers walking and biking miles to work in most inhospitable circumstances. However, there is no way to make a ten mile walk to work “user friendly,” which raises the larger question of jobs/housing balance and the lack of proximity of affordable housing to work sites. In the meantime, the Mayor’s office should support the LADOT bicycle coordinator’s efforts to increase the number of bikeways and bikepaths, and to make bicycle use safer.

**Wachs**

[See above.]

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**Would you push MTA to become an advocate for the use of public transit, something that Agency currently does not do?**

**Della Vecchia**

Yes, the MTA must reinvent itself as a public transit advocate. That will involve reinvigorating its buses, adopting a regional approach, and putting an end to sweetheart deals for rail contractors.

**Soboroff**

Yes.

**Villaraigosa**

The MTA is in a peculiar situation with regard to promoting its service. I disagree with the statement that it does not currently promote public transit usage, but it certainly can be faulted for not doing it enough. Because the agency loses money on each passenger it carries, be it by bus or rail, its incentive to promote the services is compromised. Plus, promotion costs money, so that adds to the expense per passenger. This, however, is not an excuse for not promoting service, especially to the non-transit-dependent. Whenever possible, the MTA should be seeking ways, especially, to make its bus service more attractive and fathomable to commuters who don't typically use it. As Mayor, I would advocate for that, in addition to seeking additional operating funds to make sure that the per passenger operating deficit was less of an issue.

**Wachs**

[See above.]

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**Pedestrian Issues:**

Residents from the Pico-Union have recently raised concerns about pedestrian safety due to increased auto traffic to Staples Center. This is a problem experienced in many of our more densely inner city neighborhoods, especially in the City's Latino neighborhoods where pedestrian activity is also part of the fabric of daily life. Studies have in fact indicated that pedestrians most likely to be hit by a car are poor and non-white, and that Latino and African American children are most at risk. Twenty-seven percent of all traffic-related fatalities in Southern California are pedestrians and Caltrans spends less than one percent of safety funding on pedestrian issues.

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**What would you do as mayor to address the problem of pedestrian safety, particularly in inner city/dense neighborhoods?**

**Della Vecchia**

As we increase mixed-use development, walking becomes more commonplace. We become more aware of pedestrians as we get people out of their cars. Producing a walking friendly city reduces the incidents of pedestrian versus car.

We must stop building practices that favor the automobile over the pedestrian. The continuing bus strike is a perfect example of the utter disregard our so-called leaders have for our non-driving public. My administration will work tirelessly to include all of its citizens in the decision making process.

**Soboroff**

Crosswalks, lighting, patrols for children during school hours, smart traffic lights.

**Villaraigosa**

Improving pedestrian safety is a matter of dealing with a number of intertwined forces, including facilities, pedestrian understanding of the laws and risks, and motorist respect for the rights and needs of pedestrians (and bicyclists, for that matter). For many decades, Los Angeles has been re-designed to favor automobiles, to the detriment of just about everything else, including pedestrians. There is an auto-oriented mindset that plays into increasing problems for pedestrians, and that is not going to disappear overnight.

The City of Santa Monica has, for several years, undertaken some fairly bold "traffic calming" initiatives that could be promising. Many people think of traffic calming as a technique to protect neighborhoods from traffic, but Santa Monica's willingness to apply it to major thoroughfares suggests a potential for helping pedestrian safety. The problems residents of Pico-Union are having as a result of downtown and Staples Center traffic are largely due to the volume of traffic and the impatience of drivers. Los Angeles has not heretofore been willing to sacrifice traffic flow to the needs of pedestrians in these kinds

of situations because of the widespread outcry over traffic congestion we hear from all quarters.

Short of keeping people from using autos, the only ways we have come up with to reduce traffic are to use carpools and public transit to reduce the number of autos. Otherwise, the impulse remains to find ways to move the autos more quickly and efficiently. Even if it reduces the impatience of drivers, it also reduces opportunities for pedestrians to get where they are going. The pedestrians lose out in that equation.

I am hesitant to propose simplistic pedestrian-friendly measures simply for the purposes of this questionnaire because making Los Angeles more pedestrian-friendly is a complex matter. Most of the available concepts, from changes in land use patterns to increased public transit, are long-range approaches that will not produce immediate results. Traffic calming techniques may be applicable, but I would want to work with the appropriate technicians and communities to determine what might be appropriate.

**Wachs**

[See above.]

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**If 27 percent of all fatalities are pedestrians, would you advocate that 27 percent of transportation safety-related funding go toward pedestrian safety?**

**Della Vecchia**

Though more safety-related funding should go toward pedestrian safety, picking 27% because it corresponds to the percentage of pedestrian fatalities seems arbitrary, and may not be the best use of that amount of money.

**Soboroff**

Clearly, this is a serious need. It is something that will require greater funding.

**Villaraigosa**

Offering to set aside 27 percent of all transportation safety-related funding for pedestrian safety sounds interesting at first glance. As a co-author of the 1999 "Safe Routes to Schools" legislation signed by Governor Davis, I know we can devote a lot more funding to pedestrian safety. Doing so will require a serious commitment.

Before I would specify a figure, or a percentage, I would want to work with LADOT and Public Works, as well as concerned community members, to identify the problems and determine what remedies are available. That would determine the funding needs and provide the foundation for a concerted, coherent effort. Of course, we do not need to do a study to know that we need to spend more money on pedestrian safety. We may, however, need to take some steps to make sure we know how to spend it wisely and in line with reasonable and constructive priorities that are supported both by the experts and people in our communities.

**Wachs**

[No comment.]