

**LOPEZ CANYON RESTORATION PROJECT
COMMUNITY MEETING SUMMARY
JUNE 2014**

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

BUREAU OF SANITATION

Meeting Date: June 4, 2014

Meeting: 7:10-8:45 pm

Location: Lake View Terrace Recreation Center

OVERVIEW

40 Lopez neighbors attended the meeting. The Solar Panel Feasibility Study advisor, Parsons, was not able to attend due to an emergency. Councilmember Fuentes sent his regrets that he could not attend, as he had hoped to. The focus of this meeting was to listen to community thoughts on the possibility of placing solar panels on Lopez landfill. These community thoughts will be incorporated into the Feasibility Study.

We will reschedule Parsons attendance at another community meeting, hopefully in September 2014.

SEPT 2013 COMMITMENTS TO THE COMMUNITY (see attached agenda)

**AGENDA ITEMS: SPILL REVIEW, LANDSCAPING, LANDFILL CLOSURE MAINTENANCE,
ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER & LOPEZ CANYON ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER**

See attached agenda for information shared on these topics.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS Reva Fabrikant, Community Liaison

40 Lopez neighbors attended this meeting. The Solar Panel Feasibility Study advisor, Parsons, was not able to attend due to an emergency. Councilmember Fuentes sent his regrets that he could not attend, as he had hoped to.

The focus of this meeting was to listen to community thoughts on the possibility of placing solar panels on Lopez Landfill. These thoughts will be incorporated into the Feasibility Study.

Parsons will begin working on this feasibility study after this community meeting.

We will reschedule Parsons attendance at another community meeting, hopefully in September 2014.

An agenda was distributed with information covering other topics. It was reviewed after the main agenda item, the Solar Power Feasibility Study.

SOLAR PANEL FEASIBILITY STUDY Khalil Gharios, Manager, Solid Resources Processing & Construction Division

In order to comply with State law requiring all municipalities to generate 33% of their energy from sustainable sources by 2020, the City of Los Angeles is exploring the possibility of placing solar panels at various locations throughout the City. Lopez Landfill is one of the locations being investigated. The Bureau of Sanitation hired a technical advisor, Parsons, to explore the feasibility of placing solar panels on this landfill. This feasibility study will include community

thoughts and concerns. This meeting is the first step in this process. Work on the feasibility study has not begun yet. City Sanitation is here to listen to and record community thoughts on this idea. Community feedback will be included in the feasibility study.

Since the purpose of this meeting is to give the community the opportunity to voice their thoughts and opinions we will most likely not be able to answer a lot of the questions that will be asked regarding the feasibility study, because the study process has not yet begun. This meeting begins the feasibility study process.

Q: Could the September meeting be here, at the LVT Recreation Center, instead of on the landfill? It is more convenient for community members here.

A: We could have the meeting here but then we couldn't have a tour of the landfill. We were also considering having a tour of Fortistar's Gas-to-Energy Plant, as requested by the community. We will seek community feedback on the meeting location in August.

Q: Could this study change DWP's procedure of how they give credit for home solar power generation? Could we get credit for extra unused energy that we generate?

Q: Lots of Kagel Canyon folk want to share our opinions and have come to this meeting specifically to do that. Can we do that now?

A: Yes

Statement: DWP needs to address and provide credit for excess energy generated by our home solar panels.

Q: Lopez landfill has been designated 'open space'. How can solar panels go on 'open space'?

A: The feasibility study will address zoning and the impact of solar panels on the landfill.

Statement: Politicians always do what they want and what's convenient for them. They designated the 'open space' and now will they try to take it back? When will politicians be of a character that they can be believed?

Q: How many panels are you considering? You must have an idea of how much land will be used and what the impact will be.

A: These possibilities will be considered by our technical advisor. They will analyze possible locations, number of panels, acreage, technical feasibility, community input and other factors. At this point in time we have no idea what is possible, or even if it is possible.

Q: This landfill has been designated a park area. If so, where can you put solar panels so that it will not impact the park?

A: The landfill area is not a park yet and can not be until the final post closure maintenance process is completed in 30 years. After 30 years, when the gas production subsides, the area will be safe for public use and set up as a park. Some of the surrounding buffer areas could be used as park area now, depending on the access to the fill areas. Sanitation has committed to converting every landfill to beneficial use when they are safe for public use.

Statement: A park can't be covered with solar panels.

Statement: This issue is a sleazy way of having solar panels and other uses take over our public, open space, areas.

Statement: I support renewable energy but need answers, technical information, where, would they be placed, how, what would it look like.

Statement: Don't put it on this landfill because for years the City has promised us 'open space'.

Statement: Aesthetics are a big concern, they must be non-obtrusive on the landscape.

Q: We've been told that we can't have trails on the landfill because it's settling. If you can't put trails on a landfill how can you put solar panels that carry so much more weight? Why are you spending money on a feasibility study if you already know that the weight is too much?

Statement: Our population is continually growing and we need more land for people. Instead of tying up land with solar panels, the land should be use for people. If DWP would pay people to have solar panels on their roofs then more people would put up panels and the land would be available for people. We need more solar on roofs, not on open land space.

Statement: The Bureau of Sanitation has been telling us that the landfill gas needs to subside before the space can be opened to the public. They've said it takes 30 years. The landfill closed in 1996, 30 years from 1996 is 2026. But now we're being told the 30 year period started in 2012, which means the space won't be available for us till 2042. We want our open space and want the City out of the landfill. The City is reneging on its promise to give us open space. Scrap this idea of solar panels and give us our open space. Lots of people are upset about this.

Statement: Solar panels belong on parking lots, rooftops, and City-owned buildings. Germany puts them on parking lots and uses them as shade for parked cars. LA should do what Germany does and not use precious open space for solar panels.

Statement: As homeowners we work and sweat hard to keep our homes and pay taxes. But yet some outside entity, 'The City,' intrudes into our lives and conflicts with our interests. You are intrusive, politicians cater to 'The City', not to us, the residents, the community. That's wrong. No, No, No to solar panels at Lopez.

Q: Do you study what other countries are doing as far as solar goes? I understand the City was going to encourage solar panels on rooftops, what happened to that idea? What changed that? We expect the City to stand by what they say they will do and not change it.

Statement: We understand that there's a 30 year settling period before the landfill can be opened to the public. If that's so, why could the City propose to put a truck driving academy up there when it's not safe yet? What else will you propose to put up there? Now you want to put solar up there. If you keep up all these proposals and there will be no room left for our open space!

Q: Can you explain the DWP FIT program?

Response from a meeting attendee: DWP has proposed to financially encourage going green. They offered to initially pay three times the going rate per Kwh of energy, then the price will drop after a certain date. There's a rush now to put up solar panels to take advantage of this offer. Putting up solar panels is designated 'by-right', which means that solar panels can go anywhere, regardless of zoning. The community is confused and upset about the zoning of solar panels 'by-right'. They are upset because so many solar panels are being proposed for this area. They are also upset because there's no way for them to provide input on where the solar panels are placed. That's why they went to court on the Foothill Blvd proposal and won.

Q: What area would the solar panels be in? What are you considering here and where? Are you saying that you can have anything on the landfill, and the buffer area?

A: We are considering using the trash fill area, where the public has no access. It would not impact the buffer area. That could still be used for recreation.

Statement: You're stealing land from us and that's a problem.

Statement: Our issue is where you are proposing to put the solar panels, not with solar panels themselves. Lots of us have solar panels on our roofs.

Statement: Every roof should have solar panels, they shouldn't be on open space.

Q: What's the cost of this feasibility study?

A: \$90,000

Q: The equestrian trails haven't been built due to lack of funding. Why is there money for the feasibility study but not for the trails and our staging area?

Response: The trails and staging area will cost half a million dollars to construct, a lot more than this study.

Statement: I relish looking at our surrounding mountains. I don't want to see solar panels. We didn't want a truck driving academy and we fought that and won. Do you want another fight like that?

Q: Who's in charge of the feasibility study, of the proposal?

A: Sanitation requested the feasibility study. There is no proposal. We are only requesting a feasibility study. If the results come back saying it's not feasible then it won't happen. Technical feasibility, finances, and community feedback are being considered in the study.

Q: Whose idea was it to put the solar farm on top of Lopez and spend \$90,000 on it?

A: Sanitation mission is to protect public health and the environment and enhance the quality of life in the City's neighborhoods. Environmental stewardship and sustainability is one of the Mayor's goals and that includes complying with the State mandate of 33% sustainable energy by 2020. Increasing our use of solar energy would help us achieve these goals and therefore the City is investigating possible sites for solar panels.

Comment: The goals could be reached by putting solar panels on rooftops.

Q: As the Chair of the FTDNC Equestrian committee I'm very interested in seeing the equestrian trails and staging area completed and available for our use. Two years ago I was given a tour of the buffer area that would be used for the trails and staging area and yet that still hasn't been built. This long wait seems out of whack. As an agenda item the trails have disappeared. We believe it's not as expensive to build the staging area and trails as you claim, and it can be done for much less than you are saying. We spent time putting plans together and recommendations and Fritz Bronner sent them to Reva and we never heard anything about them. You are missing out on doing something good for us, your neighbors.

A: Reva was expecting to receive the plans from Fritz but they were never received. Please send them again and call Reva to let them know they've been sent.

Q: Where would the income from the solar farm go? Khalil keeps telling us he doesn't know and won't know any more until the feasibility study is completed but the community doesn't believe him. The current income from gas-to-energy program goes to the amenities fund and we assume the solar income will also go there. We don't get any of that money as we were originally promised.

Q: Will you need a zoning change to put solar on Lopez? Can you build solar on open space?

Statement: It takes a lot of money to do this type of project and before it's planned we need to know where those dollars will come from and where it's going. It's our tax dollars that will support it. You should structure this plan without the use of a consultant and spend more money on outreach and working with the community. I'd hate to be in your position.

Q: Will your feasibility plan include community feedback? Because it should state that we don't want it.

Statement: You can end this meeting and save the City money by your admitting that you can't build the solar panels on Lopez because of trash decomposition, gas generation and

settling. So end this study. Only a small portion of our community has come to this meeting, but we all have lots more to say. More people could come and show you that we're all against this proposal.

Statement: I see the City as acting the same way as LAUSD when I taught there, using the same bad logic.

Q: Is there an email address where we can send a letter, a petition about this project?

A: Yes. Send all correspondences to Reva Fabrikant, whose contact information is on the last page of this summary.

Statement: Once your foot is in the door every square inch of Lopez will be covered and that's my concern. There will be no open space and parkland left. I don't want anything up there.

Statement: We are all neighbors and we all try to be good neighbors. We lived through the truck driving academy issue, you've gotta know how we feel about this so why are you putting us through this? Haven't you learned anything?

A: We learned that we have to come to the community first, before planning a project. So we are coming to you now, before the feasibility study has even started. We are here to listen to you and we will share the information we receive at this meeting.

Statement: You're not good neighbors because you keep proposing new projects on Lopez and we're telling you we don't want them.

Statement: The lesson is that all we want up there is open space, as was proposed initially. Honor what you said.

Statement: Everyone here is against it, against THIS location for solar panels.

Statement: I live in upper Kagel and your Lopez employees have been very patient with all my emails about issues I have with the composting facility. I thank them for being so helpful. I'm concerned about the impact of solar panels. Among other things they could be a distraction to pilots. We are passionate about not having anything more up there.

Statement: We expected engineers to be here and are upset that it was cancelled and we couldn't see them. You should be more professional.

Response: The cancellation was due to an emergency, there is nothing we could do about that. Even though they couldn't come we felt it was important to hear from the community about the study so we continued the meeting.

Statement: Don't do it here, build them somewhere else. No solar panels in open space.

Statement: Waiting until September to have the consultants meet with the community is too long, do it sooner.

Attached to this summary are the LA Times article that was read out loud during the meeting and the Council File on The Community Use Plan, that was available as a handout.

Khalil asked for a show of hands of how many meeting attendees were against having solar panels on Lopez and all hands were raised.

AGENDA ITEMS REVIEW

Q: What was the total number of gallons that spilled?

A: Less than 50 gallons.

Q: Did the spill result in any further action for the Regional Water Quality Control Board?

A: No. The spill did not leave the site.

Q: What is involved in regrading? Are the gas pipes replaced?

A: Regrading due to settling is starting now in A Canyon. It includes replacing aging gas pipes and maintaining proper drainage.

Q: How long will it take?

A: It will take 6 months.

Q: Why shouldn't tree roots penetrate into the landfill?

A: Regulators are concerned that if the roots get into the refuse they'll die and create a void in the area, which is problematic. We are discussing this issue with regulators.

On the berm we are selective about what we plant. Since we have a 12 foot cover area we can plant only certain trees there. Native trees are too deeply rooted so we can't plant them on the berm area. Whatever trees we plant will not be clustered but will be planted to create a natural look.

Q: How many spills have occurred annually at the landfill?

A: Our first spill was in 2013 and this past April was the second.

Q: Why are there funds for the Environmental Education Center but not for the equestrian trails and staging area?

A: The promise to build the Environmental Education Center was made over 10 years ago, as part of building the compost facility.

COMMITMENTS TO THE COMMUNITY

1. We will seek community feedback on the September meeting location in August. If the meeting is held at Lopez we can offer a landfill tour and tour of Fortistar's Gas-to-Energy Plant. We can not offer these tours if the meeting is held anywhere else.
2. We will reschedule Parsons attendance at another community meeting, hopefully in September 2014.

CONTACT INFORMATION

HOTLINE PHONE NUMBER: 818-485-0703

WEBSITE: <http://lacitysan.org/srpcd/index.htm>

Khalil Gharios, Manager, Solid Resources Processing and Construction Division

(office) 213-485-3002

Khalil.Gharios@lacity.org

Jim Kurz, Operations Superintendent II, Lopez Canyon Landfill

(office) 818-485-0706

(cell) 213-216-7458.

James.Kurz@lacity.org

Dan Denering, Operations Superintendent I, Lopez Canyon Landfill

(office) 818-485-0710

(cell) 213-216-8669

Daniel.Denering@lacity.org

Reva Fabrikant, Community Liaison
(office) 866-950-7382
Reva.Fabrikant@revafab.com

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2014
Location and Time To Be Announced

Attachments:

- The agenda that was distributed
- The LA Times article that was read out loud during the meeting
- The Council File on The Community Use Plan, that was available as a handout.

Title

LOPEZ CANYON LANDFILL / COMMUNITY USE PLAN

Subject

Motion - The Lopez Canyon Landfill opened for operation in 1975 in the Northeast San Fernando Valley as a 392 acre location for the collection of household trash. From 1975 to its closure in 1996, the landfill collected nearly 19 million tons of trash on 165 acres. Local residents and business owners expressed concerns regarding the Landfill's proximity to homes, potential environmental hazards and the negative impact the facility had on the community. For many years, the residents of the Northeast San Fernando Valley around the Lopez Canyon Landfill were directly impacted by the environmental burdens of a facility opened to serve residents living far away from the site. Many local residents questioned the need for such a facility so close to a residential neighborhood and used their opposition to the Lopez Canyon Landfill to organize and become more involved in environmental issues affecting the local community. In 1990, responding to the community, the City Council established the Lopez Canyon Community Amenities Trust Fund (LCCATF) as a mitigation effort. From 1990 to 1996, the LCCATF collected \$5 million dollars to provide community improvements in the vicinity. A portion of the funds were used to establish the Lake View Terrace Branch Library. As a result of the organizing efforts, in 1996 members of the community came together to work with Council Member Alarcón to increase environmental awareness, support education, nurture community pride and create job opportunities which led to the creation of the San Fernando Valley Environmental Awareness Center. The community was the driving force for the closure of the landfill and for securing the commitment by the City to use the area as future open space. Lopez Canyon Landfill was closed in 1996. In 2000, the City established the Hansen Dam Environmental Awareness Fund (HDEAF) to receive 50% of the City's share of revenue from the sale of electricity generated by Lopez Canyon Landfill methane gas sales. The HDEAF received 50% of the revenue from the sale of the Lopez Canyon Landfill gas collection system, operation and maintenance of the gas collection system; gas rights and rent. Proceeds from the Fund were designated for the operation of the Hansen Dam Environmental Awareness Center and to assist with the construction and programming at the Lakeview Terrace Branch Library. Eleven years after the closure of the Lopez Canyon Landfill, Lopez Canyon today has the potential to re-emerge as a location where children and families can enjoy a safe and clean place for active and passive recreation as well as open space. Lopez Canyon Landfill yields revenues that have been placed in various funds, thus, providing seed funding for the rebirth of Lopez Canyon as an open space and recreational gem. The City of Los Angeles has an opportunity to make good on its commitment to the Northeast San Fernando Valley community to mitigate the impact of the landfill and other environmentally hazardous land uses by using Lopez Canyon as a location that can serve the recreational and open space needs of residents. THEREFORE MOVE that the Council direct the Bureau of Sanitation to develop an outline and timeline for the development of a Community Use Plan for active and passive recreation and any other safe and appropriate uses of the Lopez Canyon Landfill site, as determined by zoning and classification of land at the Lopez Canyon Landfill. FURTHER MOVE, that the Council direct the Bureau of Sanitation to work with the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Bureau of Engineering, the Department of Transportation, other departments as needed and with the Pacoima/Lake View Terrace Community Advisory Committee to assist with the development of the outline and timeline for the Lopez Canyon Community Use Plan. FURTHER MOVE, that the Bureau of Sanitation offer local residents and Neighborhood Councils in the area opportunities to provide input on the Community Use Plan and that a report be brought back to the Council within 45 days.

Date Received / Introduced

05/25/2007

Last Changed Date

07/21/2011

Council District

7

Mover

RICHARD ALARCON

Second

BILL ROSENDAHL

File Activities

LA
Times
6/4/14

The solar farm next door

LAST YEAR, when the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power kicked off a new program to buy electricity from local solar installations, city leaders along with environmentalists and business groups said it would be the nation's largest urban rooftop solar program and would allow hundreds of building owners to create sun-fueled power plants on their roofs or over parking lots.

But now it turns out that developers also want to use the Feed-in Tariff program to put panels on undeveloped agricultural and residential land, much to the surprise and concern of neighbors. Residents in the semi-rural neighborhood of Lake View Terrace have been fighting a proposal to sandwich 3,500 solar cells between houses and horse stables, which would produce enough electricity to power 200 homes a year. Some 19 solar "farms" are proposed for open land in the northeast San Fernando Valley alone, and city officials have told residents that state law allows the panels to be installed anywhere, without land-use permits or conditions, as long as there is no risk to health or public safety. That means residents have no ability to challenge or seek conditions on solar farms in their communities.

City officials point to the 1978 Solar

Rights Act, which was designed to encourage the use of solar power and prevent cities from enacting "unreasonable barriers" to installations. But the author of that law, then-Assemblyman Mel Levine, who now heads the DWP's Board of Water and Power Commissioners, said the act was intended to make it easier for homeowners to put solar panels on their houses, not necessarily to protect solar power plants in residential areas.

Councilman Felipe Fuentes, who represents the northeast Valley, has rightly questioned whether city officials really have to rubber-stamp these projects. He's asked the city attorney and the chief legislative analyst to take another look at the Solar Rights Act and recommend amendments that will give the city more authority over permitting solar farms. The premise of the Feed-in Tariff is still a good one: Los Angeles should generate more electricity from its abundant sunshine, and solar will play an increasingly important role as the DWP reduces its reliance on fossil fuels in favor of renewable energy. But this program was sold as an effort to put solar on rooftops, not on vacant lots in residential neighborhoods. Communities should have a voice in deciding where — and how large — ground-level solar projects operate in L.A.