

## LA's Parking Double Cross

SCREWED AGAIN

Jack Humphreville



What are our elected elites trying to hide from us, the Citizens of Los Angeles?

On Wednesday, January 12, the City Council unanimously agreed to proceed with the harebrained scheme to sell nine of our PROFITABLE parking garages, the net proceeds of which will be used to pay every day operating expenses.

And in response to the very real concerns of the Hollywood and Westwood communities, the terms of the Parking Asset Restructuring were reportedly revised to protect the local business communities.

But what are the revised terms of this sale that were adopted by the City Council in a three hour closed session?

According to David Zahniser of The Los Angeles Times and Rick Orlov of The Daily News, Miguel Santana, the City Administrative Officer, would not discuss any of the revisions. And requests made to the CAO pursuant to the California Public Records Act were summarily refused within six hours of the request, but only after "consulting" with the City Attorney's office.

So what is so secret about the terms of the transaction? Maybe we can hazard a guess.

The terms of the Parking Asset Restructuring were revised to allow for a five year phase out of the validation programs that are essential to the local merchants, restaurants, and entertainment establishments in Hollywood and Westwood. Increased rates will also be phased in over a five year period.

(Note: But why no revisions related to the 1,590 parking spaces in Pershing Square? Which begs the question: Where is the Central City Association? More than likely, the CCA has been strong armed by the Mayor who controls the ever important zoning regulations. And where are the friends of the Department of Recreation and Parks which is being screwed out of its ownership in the Pershing Square parking facility? Where are Mayor Riordan, Barry Sanders, and the directors of the Los Angeles Parks Foundation? See The Rape of Recreation and Parks. [x])

However, the Hollywood and Westwood communities are being doubled crossed.

Prospective investors will be asked to submit two bids, one for the revised plan and one for the plan prior to the revisions. Needless to say, the bids on the initial plan will be significantly higher than the bids on the revised plan because investors will be able to raise rates faster than under the revised plan. These higher, rate shocking offers will be then be ramrodded through the City Council over the feigned protests of the Council Members who represent Hollywood and Westwood.

But this transaction is far from over. The impacted communities are "lawyering up" for a prolonged

fight. Interestingly, the grossly negligent City will be liable for substantial legal fees because it has not even conducted basic studies that measure the impact of significantly higher rates on the environment and local economies.

And to compound the pain, this carefully orchestrated double cross will be followed by the sale of our parking meters, resulting in substantial increases in parking meter rates, not unlike what happened in Chicago. In Chicago, enraged citizens have taken to "gumming up" the parking meters (at least those that have survived errant snow plows) and master garage meters.

While The Mayor Who Broke LA will proclaim that "the era of free parking is over," this ill disguised tax on the business community and its patrons is just another sleazy scheme by the Mayor, the Controller, and the City Council.

It puts their self interests and those of their deep pocketed "partners in labor" ahead of the best long term interests of the Citizens of Los Angeles. Who cares if vulture investors suck billions out of our economy over the next 50 years as long as the City Hall insiders get their money grubbing mitts on \$53 million to pay every day operating expenses.

Every day, as Citizens feed the meters, they will be reminded how City Hall screwed them, their local communities, and their businesses, killing the geese that laid the golden eggs, forcing layoffs of already struggling Angelenos.

But when it comes time for citywide elections, whether it is the race for Mayor or Controller, or whether it is to raise taxes or fees to help solve the budget fiasco that City Hall created, the hard working Citizens of Los Angeles, the Neighborhood Councils, homeowner associations, the local chambers of commerce, and CityWatch will remember the fiscally irresponsible, fork tongued sidewinders who are responsible for this dastardly double cross.

Of course, this is just hazarding a guess.

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