



Inkelaar-Cruz, Sean, Jan. 19th, 2014

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT| GREEN IN VALLEY GLEN

Valley Glen is a community with a strong green appeal. The diversity and variety of trees as well as the native faunas fosters a pleasing first impression for visitors. The Valley Glen Community Park and the Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC) campus are valuable green assets in the community. However, some improvements are still needed for the natural environmental condition within the community, such as streetscape beautification, the creation of new parks, rehabilitation of existign parks, and habitat preservation. In this chapter, we will start with the exiting conditions, assess the findings, and form our conclusions. We have proposed five recommendations that could be used be “opportunities for identity”, in order to strengthen the characteristics of Valley Glen.

CLIMATE

According to a report published by sunset.com Valley Glen sits in two climate zones: interior climate zone and occasional ocean influence zone.

The Interior climate zones major influence on climate is the continental air mass; the ocean determines the climate no more than 15 percent of the time. Although the climate supplies enough winter chill for some plants that need it, it is not too cold for many of the hardier sub-tropicals like amaryllis. It is too hot, too cold, and too dry for fuchsias but cold enough for tree peonies and many apple varieties, and mild enough for a number of avocado varieties. Over a 20-year period, winter lows averaged from 22 to 17°F.

The Occasional Ocean Influence climate is made up of cold-air basins and hilltops. The Zone gets weather influenced by both ocean air and inland air. Due to the greater ocean influence, this climate supports a wide variety of plants. Typical winter lows are 37° to 43°F.

Valley Glen and most of the San Fernando Valley do not sit in a recognized fire zone. The fire zones are closer to the mountains in the south and east. Valley Glen sits in a mostly suburban neighborhood where there are not large amounts of chaparral and other fire fuels to be considered a fire zone. There is not much to be concerned about in this category as the fire zones are far enough away that Valley Glen would not need to be evacuated for fear of property damage due to a fire, the most Valley Glen has to worry about in terms of fires is the poor air quality that comes into the area due to burning fires in the fire zones.

Climate



Source: Sunset.com

Fire Zones



Source: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

GEOHAZARD

According to the State of California Department of Conservation, Valley Glen rests in an area where historic occurrences of liquefaction, or other geological, geotechnical and groundwater conditions indicate a potential for permanent ground displacements. However most of the San Fernando Valley sits in this zone as well and the impacts to construction and development has been minimal. The key takeaway is awareness of the region and also to be mindful when planning for new developments that the due diligence is taken to identify the proposed site as being suitable for development.

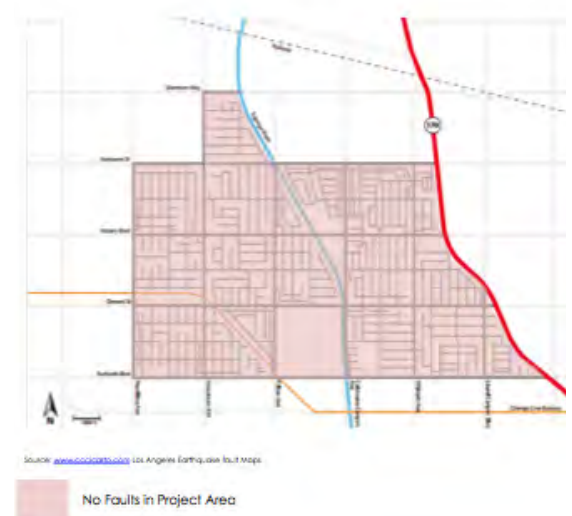
Although there are no faults that run through Valley Glen directly, it is surrounded by multiple active and dormant fault lines. As indicated by the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, Valley Glen does not need to sit on the fault to feel the economic effects of a powerful earthquake. The takeaway is awareness of the geological environment your community resides in and to plan accordingly, whether it be reinforced structures or height limits on developments.

Seismic Hazard Zones



Source: State of California Department of Conserva-

Earthquake Faults



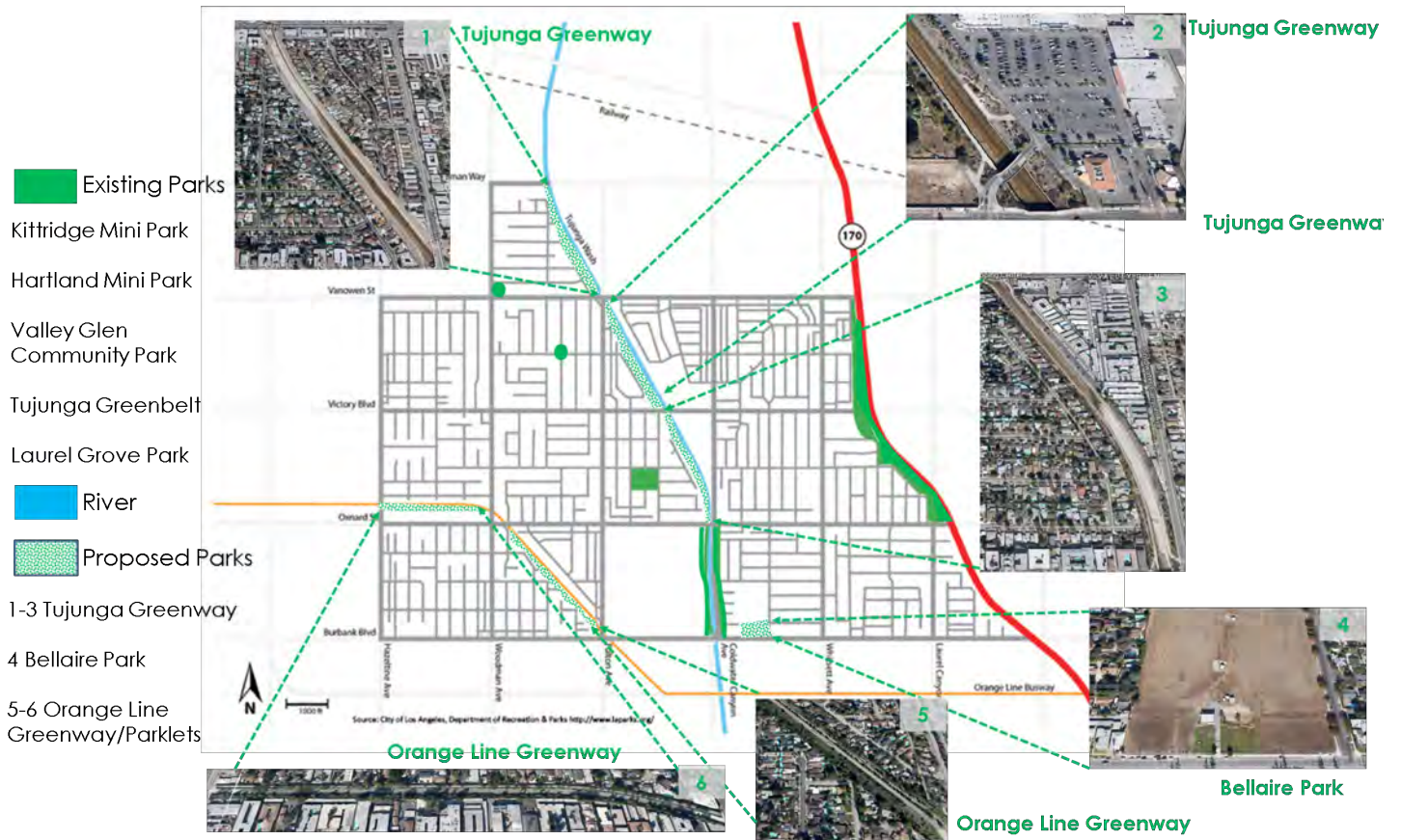
Source: www.cccicarto.com Los Angeles Earth-

EXISTING OPEN SPACES



Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood Council parks: Kittridge Mini Park, Hartland Mini Park, Valley Glen Community Park, Tujunga Greenbelt, Laurel Grove Park. The parks vary in size, layout, and the amount of leisure and athletic amenities available to the community. Some like the Hartland Mini Park offer nothing in the way of amenities and is nothing more than a shaded slab of concrete, while the Valley Glen Community park offers a nice play area for children as well as small walking, biking, and jogging paths. It also offers areas to sit in the shade and enjoy a good book.

POTENTIAL OPEN SPACES



Source: Google Map

We have analyzed the area and have proposed an additional six (6) areas for potential green space development: The Tujunga Greenway project would take three (3) sites, Bellaire Street Park, and the Orange Line Greenway/Parklets project would take two (2) sites. The Tujunga Greenway projects are already zoned open space and certain aspects of the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan could be introduced into this area. Collaboration with local non-profits, the city, and Valley College may bring together the required resources needed to jumpstart this project which would serve as a true anchor point for the Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood.

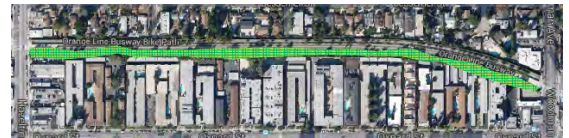
OPEN SPACES

The Bellaire Street Park parcel is currently zoned RD3-1 and R1-1, both which include a provision to build Park, playgrounds or community center, owned and operated by a governmental agency (Zimas.lacity.org). This area is in dire need of a larger green space. It has no true park in the nearby vicinity and would provide a quiet respite for a boulevard that has many multi-family dwellings.



Source: Sean Inkelaar-Cruz

The last areas identifies are the two (2) areas adjacent to the Orange Line stations within the Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood. These look to be Metro owned properties, but there may be potential to partner with Metro, and the local city government, as well as, local non-profits to develop the site into more than what it is now, which seems to be overgrown shrubbery. The potential for pocket parks is high in this area and would serve the single family dwellings directly adjacent to the Orange Line.



Source: Google Map



Source: Google Maps

Takeaway

Valley Glen is searching for an identity and the greenways could provide the community with that identity. Potential exists to collaborate with local non-profits and city government to create larger scale projects. Valley Glen can be at the forefront of shaping what type of structure is ultimately decided upon at the Victory Plaza site. The community has an opportunity to create green equity within its community by expanding or improving upon its existing stock of green spaces.

EXISTING STREET TREES



The street tree diagram identifies the type of trees that dominates each of the main corridors in Valley Glen. The main street tree types in the community included: Pine, Ficus, Palm, Evergreen Pear, and Sweetgum Trees. The diversity of the street trees creates various landscape layout along the corridors, which is pleasing for the visitors. Valley Glen's established tree landscape is a strength of the community's character and future design and development decisions should continue to enhance this strength.

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Pine



Evergreen Pear



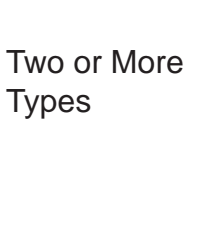
Ficus



Sweetgum Tree



Palm



Two or More Types



CORRIDORS LACKING STREET TREES



The streets which are lacking street trees are mainly east-west bound. The south-north bound corridors have a satisfying amount of street trees. Street trees can improve the walking environment for pedestrians. It is recommended that the addition of trees in the east-west corridors be considered. Adding medians in the corridors is another option for street beautification.



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FLORA & FAUNA

According to the California Natural Diversity Database (California Department of Fish and Wildlife), the flora and fauna species existing in Valley Glen are listed as follow:

- Western pond turtle
- Coast horned lizard
- Coastal California gnatcatcher (Native)
- Hoary bat
- Least Bell's vireo
- Los Angeles pocket mouse (Native)
- Pallid bat
- Silver-haired bat
- Swainson's hawk
- California Walnut Woodland (Native)
- Davidson's bush-mallow (Native)
- Plummer's mariposa-lily (Native)
- Riverside Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub (Native)
- San Fernando Valley spine-flower (Native)

As the database's scope only reached down to city level, the list above is only using Van Nuys as a reference.



Source: County of San Bernadino, Department of Public Work: <http://www.sbcounty.gov/dpw/land/>



Source: Los Padres Forest Watch: <http://lpfw.org/our-region/wildlife/mariposa-lily/>

Source:
California Natural Diversity Database, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb>

TREE INVENTORY



Indian Laurel Fig ¹
Ficus microcarpa

Evergreen

Size: 50'-80' tall

Water: Drought tolerant tree

Maintenance: Requires minimal maintenance once established, apart from periodic trimming to maintain the tree's appearance and health.

Growing Tips:

- Easily cause hardscape damage
- Generally hardy outdoors in the temperature range of 25F and to 115F



Evergreen Pear ²
Pyrus kawakamii

Evergreen

Size: 15' – 30' tall

Water: Moderate water needed

Maintenance: Prune the evergreen pear tree in late spring after flowering. Be careful not to over-prune or thin the canopy too much.

Growing Tips:

- Grow best in deep sandy or clay soils with good drainage.
- Require a fair amount of watering.
- Require alkaline soils

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Italian Stone Pine ³

Pinus Pinea

Coniferous evergreen

Size: 30-60' tall and 30-50' wide

Water: drought tolerant tree

Maintenance: Can use fallen pine needles as a natural mulch to help water retention and keep weeds at bay

Growing Tips:

- Soil can be acidic, neutral or alkaline
- Needs good drainage
- Be aware it may take many years before cones are produced, and then an additional three years for them to mature



Gumball Tree ⁴

Liquidambar styraciflua

Deciduous tree

Size: 33-50' tall, can up to 150'

Water: tolerant some drought, occasional wetness

Maintenance: Prune after the flower blooms in April and May

Growing Tips:

- Soil should be neutral or acidic
- Planting is best done in the spring as opposed to autumn
- Easily caused hardscape damaged

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Deodar Cedar ⁵
Cedrus deodara

Coniferous evergreen

Size: 40-70' tall, 20-40' wide, can up to 200'

Water: drought tolerant tree

Maintenance: Low maintenance tree

Growing Tips:

- Make sure soil offers good drainage, since it cannot tolerate wet feet
- Needs to be acidic for proper growth



Foxtail Palms ⁶
Wodyetia bifurcata

Evergreen

Size: Around 33' tall

Water: Drought tolerant tree. No additional irrigation

Maintenance: Low maintenance tree

Growing Tips:

- Prefer a well-drained, slightly acidic soil
- Watch for nutrient deficiencies in high pH soils

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Paperbark Maple⁷

Acer griseum

Deciduous tree

Size: 15-30' tall

Water: Can tolerate drought after an establishment period

Maintenance: Pruning can be done as soon as the tree enters dormancy

Growing Tips:

- The tree is able to thrive in a wide variety of soil pH conditions and textures.
- Best locations are moist with good drainage
- Is a good potential choice for areas with clay soil



Canary Island Pine⁸

Pinus canariensis

Coniferous evergreen

Size: 50-80' tall, can up to 100' tall

Water: Low drought tolerant tree

Maintenance: Little Pruning is needed

Growing Tips:

- A good choice for a street tree, since it gets sufficiently large enough to shoot past power lines
- The bark is red, which will add an extra color to your yard
- Need to have adequate water all the time

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Monterey Pine⁹
Pinus radiata

Coniferous evergreen

Size: 50'-100' tall

Water: Low drought tolerant tree

Maintenance: Little Pruning is needed, may be pruned in the spring

Growing Tips:

- It is a fast growing tree
- Require deep, well drained, medium to coarse textured soils of medium fertility



Mexican Fan Palm¹⁰
Washingtonia robusta

Evergreen

Size: 60'-90' tall

Water: High drought tolerant tree

Maintenance: Little Pruning is needed

Growing Tips:

- Suitable for planting in dry urban landscapes
- Can tolerate poor soil and drought
- Can create a striking landscape
- Easily grows out of scale in most landscape with one-story building, because all of the fronds are at the top of the palm

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CONCLUSION

- Valley Glen's established tree landscape is the strength of the community's character and future design. The tree's types are diverse in the community. Most of them are easy maintenance. Therefore, the trees in Valley Glen could be a good element to showcase. Future design and development decisions should continue to enhance this strength.

- The size, layout, amount of leisure, and athletic amenities of open spaces vary in Valley Glen. Also, the distribution of the open spaces is uneven geographically. There is potential for Valley Glen to improve and create new parks, which could be: 1) extend Tujunga Greenway; 2) Add Orange Line Greenway; 3) reuse the mini parks.

- Even though the streetscape of Valley Glen is impressive with its beautiful trees, the improvement of street tree still needed, especially for most east-west bound street, such as: Victory Boulevard, Vanowen Street, etc.

- There are several native faunas existing in neighboring Van Nuys. More emphasis could be placed on attracting some of those faunas such as birds to the Tujunga Wash to enhance the natural habitat environment and add to the community's identity.



Oustad, Courtney, Feb. 17th, 2014

Five Opportunities for Building Identity:

1) Tujunga Wash Greenway Beautification

Extend the Tujunga Wash Greenway, to let it become an anchor point for the community to help build identity.

2) Orange Line Greenway

Utilize the land adjacent to the Metro Orange Line to serve as potential green spaces. It may serve as an urban greenbelt to serve the community.

3) Create a Parktopia

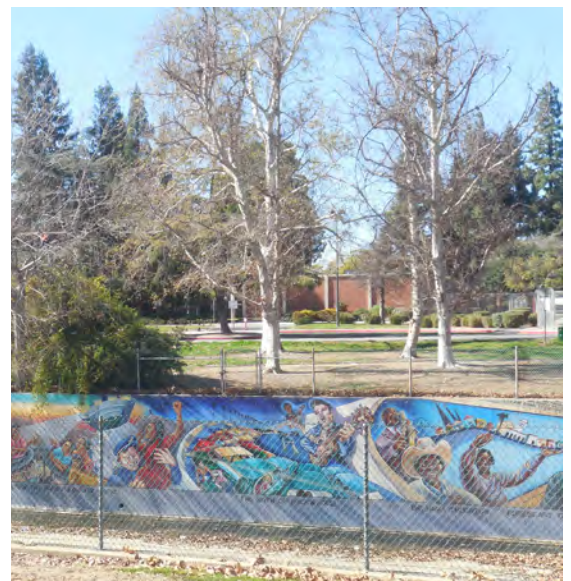
Identify current vacant lots as potential sites to become new community parks to fulfill the cities 50 Parks Initiative.

4) Median Beautification

Beautify the main corridors to strengthen the current landscape characteristics.

5) Habitat Preservation

Improving the environmental condition to become a community wildlife habitat along the Tujunga Wash.



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TUJUNGA WASH GREENWAY

The Tujunga wash currently sits as an underutilized site within the community of the Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood that could serve as a focal point for the community and neighboring communities. Aside from Los Angeles Valley College the Wash has a high potential to serve as the anchor point for the community creating a true identity of an emerald necklace that runs up and down the Wash as it passes through the Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood Council. The Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan and the Tujunga Wash Watershed Project can serve as a blueprint to incorporate a river revitalization plan and project into the neighborhood. The community can look to The River Project and the Council for Watershed Health as organizations actively seeking watershed improvements and river revitalization projects within Los Angeles County. Additionally, the community can look at a nearby community in Pacoima, which is an underserved community looking to establish a river revitalization project with their Pacoima Watershed Project.



Source: The River Project, Retrieved from: <http://www.riverproject.org/>



Orange Line Woodman Station, Chester Paul Sgroi, Flickr, Oct. 13, 2011,
Retrieved from: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/sgroi/6239905345/>

ORANGE LINE GREENWAY

Currently only one side of the Metro Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is developed. It currently has a bike path and jogging path adjacent to the busway. However, more can be done to expand upon this area. Although the main function of this area is a BRT that connects the East San Fernando Valley with the West and North-West San Fernando Valley it seems short sided that only one side was developed. Currently there is brush overgrowth on the residential facing side of the busway. Instead of overgrown shrubbery which could be a fire hazard and area for transients to camp out in making it dangerous. The area could be better served to be landscaped into flat green space with benches, athletic equipment, and children play areas. Parts of New York's Highline can be used as a precedent and Philadelphia is also planning to incorporate green space into an abandoned viaduct. Both of these Projects can be used to gather ideas to incorporate along the Orange Line and maximizing the space available. With so few areas to develop green space the Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood Council will have to be creative with the existing infrastructure to find ways to expand their current inventory. This greenway along with the Tujunga Wash Greenway would do a lot in terms of identity and separating this community apart from it bordering neighbors. A November 2010 publication by the Rails To Trails Conservancy entitled *Rails With Trails: Design, Management, and Operating Characteristics of 61 Trails Along Active Rail Lines* may prove to be a useful resource in planning along the Orange Line moving forward.



Highline Park in New York, Jovare, Flickr, June, 10th, Retrieved from:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/jovare/3614623149/>



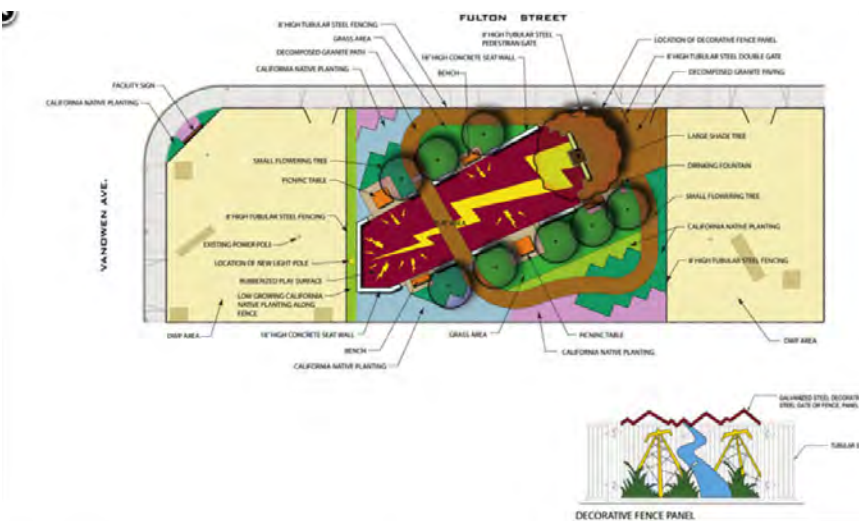
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IMPROVE AND CREATE NEW PARKS

The space within the Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood to incorporate new green spaces is limited, however there may be an opportunity for green space expansion at the corner of Burbank Blvd. and Bellaire Ave. It is currently zoned RD 3-1 and R1-1 which provides an opportunity for the development of a park, playground or community center, provided that it is owned and operated by a governmental agency (Zimas.lacity.org). Potential exists to work with non-profit organizations like The City Project to work towards designing and building a new park for the community. Additionally, talks with the local government and the City's Department of Recreation and Parks will be critical to moving forward with any future park development.



Kittridge St. Mini-Park and Hartland St. Mini-Park, Source: Google Map



FULTON / VANOWEN POCKET PARK CONCEPT

Brasuell, James, Much-Needed Pocket Park Breaks Ground in NoHo, Curbed Los Angeles, May 17, 2012
Retrieved from: http://la.curbed.com/archives/2012/05/muchneeded_pocket_park_breaks_ground_in_noho.php

The Existing Mini-Parks at Kittridge and Hartland are not much more than extended sidewalks and it is difficult to see how much added value these spaces actually bring to the community as the Hartland Mini-Park lacks any sitting space and neither offer any true amenities for the surrounding community. Although there is plenty of space to offer a small jungle gym or swing set. Understanding how to maximize the space and gathering community input are critical to creating a green space that the community will use and respect. The City's push for corner parks and parklets would be a great start into seeing what types of amenities can be incorporated into smaller spaces. This would go a long way in making sure there is green equity within the borders of The Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood Council.

MEDIAN BEAUTIFICATION

As previously mentioned, the streetscape of Valley Glen is a strong element of the community. However, some improvements are still needed along the main corridor, such as Victory Boulevard and Vanowen Street, as shown in the “Corridors Lacking Street Trees” diagram. The main corridors are the first images representing the community to visitors of Valley Glen. Therefore, it is critical to the reputation of Valley Glen that a priority of effort is placed in beautifying the main corridors. Median beautification will help to build a proud identity for the community. The diagram on the left shows existing streets with medians in Valley Glen. According to it, there is little portion of streets in the community which currently with medians. Therefore, there is a high potential to use median to beautify the community. One precedent of the street median beautification project can be Huntington Drive in Arcadia. The median island in the street creates various layout of the landscape, which can enhance the pleasing both for the pedestrians and the drivers.



Victory Boulevard, Liang, Weining, Feb. 4th, 2014



Huntington Drive in Arcadia, Source: Google Map Streetview



Minch, Michelle, Peacocks in Arcadia, April, 21th, 2010, Retrieved from: <http://activerain.com/blogsview/1610931/arcadia-peacocks-are-good-feng-shui>

COMMUNITY WILDLIFE HABITAT

There are several beautiful native flora and faunas that exist in the Van Nuys region, such as: the Coastal California gnatcatcher, Plummer's Mariposa-Lily, and San Fernando Valley Spin-Flower to name a few. If Valley Glen can enhance its habitat to attract those faunas, that could be an identity for the community. One precedent for it is Arcadia, where residents improve their lawn as well as community's environment, to attractive peacocks in the community. Peacocks has become one of the unique identities for Arcadia. Also, there are organizations that can help the community to create the community wildlife habitat, and certify it, such as the National Wildlife Federation. Becoming a certified community wildlife habitat could help Valley Glen to brand itself and build a unique identity.



Source: National Wildlife Federation, Retrieved from: <https://www.nwf.org/Who-We-Are.aspx>

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