

"Together  
we have  
clout!"

## SPECIAL EDITION: COMMUNITY INFO AND UPDATES

Obviously, there will be no April 15 Community Meeting. However, we have been publishing the Newsletter for 43 years and we intend to continue. We will use the Newsletter to explore important issues in Sherman Oaks and to let the community know what businesses are open during this unprecedented time. As always, we would like to continue to thank you for your support as we work to make Sherman Oaks an even better community to live and work in.

## LOCAL RESTAURANTS SURVIVING THE CORONAVIRUS

Jules Feir gives us an update on local restaurants

**Carnival (818) 784-3469** – In a recent conversation with co-owner Naabeel Halaby, he discussed what is being done to survive the downturn of over 50% in business. They are open for take-out from 11:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. daily. Their popular menu has not changed and fresh food is delivered to them daily to insure the quality meals they are known for. The kitchen staff wears gloves and the restaurant is sanitized throughout the day. Food can be ordered and pickup at Carnival or from Postmates, Grubhub, or Door Dash.

**Poquito Mas (818) 981-7500** – Owner Edgar Escalante of this very popular Mexican restaurant revealed how they are adjusting to their 50% loss of business. They offer take out from 10:30 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. daily plus, delivery is available from Door Dash, Grubhub and their online service application Chow Now through their website poquitomas.com. In early April, they will have a drive through opening. Entire surfaces inside the restaurant are sanitized every 30 minutes. All sauces are now prepacked in separate containers. Gloves are worn by the entire staff.

**Mistral (818) 981-6650** – Owner Henri Abergel, is dealing with the downturn in business by opening from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. each day. The take-out menu is extensive and prices have been reduced without any reductions of their food quality they are known for. The restaurant is sanitized throughout the day. Food orders can be placed at the restaurant to be picked up or from Caviar, Door Dash or Grub Hub.

**Vitello's (818) 769-0905** – This restaurant is known for their classic Italian and creative menu and is a popular eatery. Menu items are available in individual, half or full tray portions and are made to order. They are open for curbside pickup daily from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Orders can be delivered by Grubhub or Postmates. Vitello's is located at 4349 Tujunga Avenue in the Tujunga Village area of Studio City. They have been a long time SOHA supporter as Restaurant of the Month. Their Feinstein's Upstairs Supper Club features top entertainment.

A brand new restaurant, **Fat Tuesday (818) 208-9838**, located at 14543 Ventura Boulevard offers New Orleans delicacies, opened just days before the dine-in shutdown, and is eager to serve the Sherman Oaks community.

We urge the community to support these restaurants and all local restaurants to help them survive this difficult period.

Do you receive our email updates?

If not, we do not have your email address. Email it to us at [soha914@gmail.com](mailto:soha914@gmail.com).



# **LOCAL BUSINESSES OFFERING SENIOR HOURS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

Grocery stores, pharmacies and other essential businesses are open during this worldwide crisis. Some stores such as Gelson's, Vons, Ralphs, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, CVS, Walgreens and others are offering senior hours. For instance, Trader Joe's first hour of business from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. is for seniors and other at-risk groups only.

## **LEGISLATIVE BILLS ON HOLD, BUT ISSUES REMAIN**

As we confront this health crisis, the SOHA Legislation Committee chaired by Maria Pavlou Kalban wishes to inform everyone that the California Legislature is not currently hearing bills and will not do so until April 13, 2020 at the earliest. There are three bills that were introduced in January that concern Sherman Oaks. Those bills are Senator Scott Wiener's SB 902 and two bills from the Assembly, AB 725 and AB 1279.

Senator Wiener, who introduced SB 50 last year, believes that if we build more housing everywhere, including in our single-family neighborhoods, housing prices will drop and housing will become more affordable. With a red-hot job market that pays high salaries, demand for market-rate housing in our big cities continues to increase and home prices continue to rise. Developers build to market demands. They won't overbuild because they can't sell at high profit in an overbuilt market. Senator Wiener's bill makes land costs soar because allowing more density makes land more valuable. Higher land costs make housing more expensive. His bill won't bring land prices down, but instead are giveaways to developers allowing them to build what they want, where they want, with no restrictions and does nothing to help residents needing affordable housing.

Residents that are being priced out of the market need housing that is affordable now. To provide affordable housing, which is badly needed, we must:

- Mandate that every housing development has at least 25 percent affordable housing. Affordable housing is not profitable for developers which is why Senator Wiener doesn't mandate it in significant percentages in his bills.
- Encourage the use of public land to build affordable housing. This land is owned by the government, so the land cost can be minimized and therefore significantly decrease housing costs. This is the quickest way to add substantial amounts of affordable housing.
- Incentivize landowners to build to the zoning currently allowed. This will add housing where appropriate without needing to add apartments in single-family neighborhoods. We have plenty of capacity in areas around our communities that are already zoned for multi-family. Senator Wiener has a personal dislike for single-family neighborhoods with no logical reason for his dislike other than wanting to do away with them. We need to stop him.

There are solutions to our housing affordability crisis. Opening up single-family neighborhoods to multi-family development is not one of them.

The SOHA Legislative Committee wishes everyone to stay safe and well. We will keep you informed as these bills are heard by the Legislature.

## **SEPULVEDA TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT DECISION DELAYED**

Bob Anderson reports that LA Metro recently delayed key decisions by two months for the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project from the Valley to Westside through the Sepulveda Pass. Metro gave no specific reason for the delay, but it's very likely it is due to the coronavirus pandemic and it shows how this crisis is affecting our lives in many different ways.

Metro completed the Technical Feasibility Study for their four Sepulveda Pass concepts last year. Metro's concepts include two excellent SOHA-supported heavy rail subways under Sherman Oaks and Van Nuys – HRT1 under Van Nuys Boulevard and HRT2 under Sepulveda Boulevard. Metro's other two concepts use SOHA-opposed unacceptable

elevated trains above Sepulveda Boulevard in Sherman Oaks and Van Nuys – HRT3 with elevated heavy rail trains and MRT1 with elevated monorail trains.

Metro has also asked the transit industry to develop ideas for possible projects. In January, Metro pre-qualified four industry consortia and asked them to propose innovative and hopefully less expensive concepts through the Pass.

Industry proposals were originally due to Metro on April 20, 2020, but Metro recently delayed the due date until June 17, 2020. Metro will select up to two viable innovative industry concepts and planned to announce the selected winning concepts this August.

The announcement date is now “To Be Determined” and will probably not occur until the Fall. Because of California’s procurement blackout rules, this means that none of us will know anything about these innovative concepts – not even their basic features – until the Fall when Metro’s Board announces the winners and losers. Not very transparent to our communities. It’s wait and see time.

So, please continue to contact Metro at [sepulvedatransit@metro.net](mailto:sepulvedatransit@metro.net) and tell them NO ELEVATED TRAINS ABOVE SEPULVEDA BOULEVARD.

At the same time, Metro faces serious ridership challenges. The Economist magazine (a British publication) ran a story in February about LA Metro and the ridership challenges it faces. The article noted that “Even as its (Metro’s) budget has expanded, the number of people actually using public transit in LA has collapsed. Total ridership is down almost a quarter since 2013. Three in four Angelenos travel to work on their own in a car, the highest figure ever.” And the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic cannot be helping ridership.

We know Metro is working to improve ridership by adding new bus routes, considering bus-only lanes, and building new major transit lines, such as the one through the Sepulveda Pass. We hope these steps will be enough to drastically improve ridership and help clear our freeways and congested streets.

## COUNCILMAN RYU SECURES COVID-19 TESTS FOR LA

We cannot beat COVID-19 without more testing, isolation and treatment. Councilman David Ryu has brought 20,000 Coronavirus tests to Los Angeles through a new partnership with Seegene Technologies, the largest manufacturer of coronavirus tests in South Korea, and a further commitment from Seegene to obtain 100,000 more tests a week as they increase production. If you have any questions, you can contact the Council Office at [cd4.issues@lacity.org](mailto:cd4.issues@lacity.org) or (818) 728-9924.

## COMMUNITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

A Message from SOHA Board Member and Membership Chair Nancy Sogoian

With recent events, we are reminded more than ever of the critical role community plays in maintaining and protecting our safety and well-being. We are seeing firsthand the stark need for the many benefits that “community” provides.

The work of your Homeowners Association plays an important part of every Sherman Oaks resident's daily life. How? SOHA works with our local Fire and Police Departments to ensure our neighborhoods receive needed attention and support. And we work with our Councilmember and other key elected officials on major issues affecting Sherman Oaks, striving to:

- Ensure that major real estate developments are created to benefit our area while lessening negative impacts.
- Advocate for our best outcomes on issues our Senators and Assembly-members vote on.
- Work on mass transit issues posing significant challenges, and obtain the best solution with the least disruption.
- Beautify our streets.

- Keep our community up-to-date via SOHA's monthly newsletter, meetings and so much more!

SOHA is a non-profit and 100% member-supported organization. In order to continue our good work on YOUR behalf, we need YOUR support!

Here's how you can help: 1) Tell Friends and Neighbors about SOHA and encourage them to become members (the small \$30 yearly membership is a huge investment in their community), and 2) Renew your membership if due.

Together, we'll help Sherman Oaks stay safe and strong to preserve our quality of life. Please SHARE this Newsletter with a neighbor and bring them to a meeting (as soon as we can safely have another meeting).

Very truly yours,

Richard H. Close, President

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