

"Together
we have
clout!"

★ ★ ★ CRITICAL COMMUNITY MEETING ★ ★ ★

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2024 - 7:15 PM — SOCIAL HOUR/DINNER - 6:15 PM

SHERMAN OAKS EAST VALLEY ADULT CENTER • 5056 VAN NUYS BLVD

TIRED OF CRIME AND HOMELESSNESS? HEAR THE TRUTH FROM TOP COP JIM McDONNELL HE'S BEEN IN THE TRENCHES, HAS NOTHING TO LOSE, AND HAS LIVED THE ISSUES



- Are Sheriff gangs a reality? How bad is it?
- Fixing low LAPD staffing levels
- LA's current crime situation & solutions
- Crime up? Crime down? What's true?
- How the District Attorney impacts policing
- What the new LAPD Chief faces
- Homelessness and Policing
- Has Defund the Police hurt LA?

Jim McDonnell served more than 40 years as a public safety professional. He's the only person to serve in senior executive leadership positions in LA County's three largest policing agencies: the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), and the Long Beach Police Department (LBPD). During his tenures, all three saw reductions in crime and improved police-community relations. Wouldn't those be great in Sherman Oaks today?

In 2019, Jim founded McDonnell Strategies Group to advise clients nationwide on public safety and leadership development. His client base includes public safety, counterterrorism, risk management, aerospace, healthcare, telecommunications, information technology, and education organizations. Now he is going to truthfully and openly address the issues that LA City and LA County face today – the real problems – the best solutions – the impacts on people like us and our communities.

Email your questions for Jim McDonnell to SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com by noon on Tuesday February 20th. Streaming works great and starts at 7:15. The Zoom ID is 884 0054 7384 with passcode SOHA914. You can find the Zoom link on our website at SOHA914.com, and we email it to members just before the meeting. The meeting video will be available about a day after the meeting – search [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) for "SOHA Community Meeting".



RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH - SAMOS CAFÉ & GRILL
FIND OUT MORE ON PAGE 4 - SOHA SOCIAL HOUR @ 6:15 PM

SOHA ENDORSES AFFORDABLE MONORAIL AND DENOUNCES ELEVATED “SUBWAY” IN VALLEY

by Bob Anderson, Transportation Committee Chair

Since 2016, SOHA has heavily participated in Metro’s Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project between the Valley and Westside, and eventually LAX 30 years in the future. We’ve suffered through Metro’s public meetings and learned next to nothing. We’ve submitted a hundred comments and questions, but never received any responses. Metro may finally make their decision on what to build toward the end of 2024 or the beginning of 2025. It’s time, but we worry they’ll give the public no time to comment before selecting an unaffordable alternative.

SOHA is now demanding that Metro give the public extra time to review and comment on the project’s Draft Environmental Impact Report which should be released later this year. It will be several thousand pages long and not written for easy reading. Metro typically gives the public at most 45 days to review and comment on these huge reports, and that’s ridiculous for Metro’s biggest-ever project that’s dragged out for almost a decade. Metro’s Board typically makes their final decision on which alternative to build almost immediately after public comments are received. That’s even more ridiculous – and shows you how little Metro values your comments.

The Metro Board will decide on one of six alternatives. Metro has paid its contractors about \$150 million for final analysis of the six alternatives. There are three monorails being designed by LA SkyRail Express (Alternatives 1, 2, 3) and three “subways” being designed by Bechtel Sepulveda Transit Partners and HTA Partners (Alternatives 4, 5, 6). We put subways in quotes because Bechtel’s Alternative 4 is only “half” a subway – underground beneath the Westside and Santa Monica Mountains but noisy elevated heavy rail trains running above Sepulveda Boulevard in the Valley. Metro is trying to cut costs by again screwing the Valley and foisting off an elevated “subway” alternative on Sherman Oaks and Van Nuys.

But Metro is doing something much, much worse. They are withholding vital information from the public about the costs and construction times to build the six alternatives. The only time Metro gave the public any cost estimates was at a July 2019 public meeting – and those costs were for four old Metro concepts – not the six new alternatives. Metro has NEVER told the public how much it will cost to construct and operate the six alternatives – or how long each will take to construct. They’ve spent more than \$150 million since that July 2019 public meeting but claim they must do further analysis before giving the public cost and construction time estimates. What’s really going on?

It’s simple. Metro doesn’t want to tell us that they only have enough budget to afford two of the six alternatives – and both these are monorails (Alternatives 1, 2). They don’t want to tell us that a real subway underground in the Valley (Alternatives 5, 6) will cost \$25 to \$30 billion and take 12 to 15 years to build – three times as much as two of the monorails (Alternatives 1, 2). They don’t want to tell us that they only have \$8 billion – and it just isn’t anywhere near enough to build any subway.

SOHA endorses Alternative 2, which is a monorail with an automated people mover to UCLA. We are not endorsing Alternative 1 which is a slightly less expensive monorail with a poor UCLA connection. We are not endorsing Alternative 3 which is a more expensive monorail because a tunnel under UCLA to a UCLA station makes it unaffordable. Affordability is paramount in getting this critical transit project built quickly and within budget. It’s fiscally irresponsible to endorse anything that is unaffordable. Remember, Metro is spending our federal, state, county, and city tax dollars. We have a say in what Metro spends it on.

It is also time to denounce the Alternative 4 “subway” with its noisy elevated trains above Sepulveda Boulevard in Sherman Oaks and Van Nuys. It is unfair to our communities to have large, noisy elevated trains running 25 feet above Sepulveda Boulevard near homes and apartment buildings and would require demolishing more than 150 homes, condos, apartments, and businesses near Sepulveda and Valley Vista to make way for the elevated tracks, which violates the city’s efforts to build more housing. Metro should have stopped studying Alternative 4 in 2019, but instead chose to keep wasting our money on it. Enough already. The Valley hates it!

Do you receive our email updates?

If not, we do not have your email address. Email it to us at soha914@gmail.com.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT AS NEW HOUSING REZONING MAPS MOVE FORWARD

by Maria Pavlou Kalban, Legislative Committee Chair

As many of you know, we started a citywide coalition of neighborhood groups called United Neighbors to give city stakeholders a voice in determining how their communities will be developed. Communities throughout LA have their own unique personalities, but the city and state love to pass sweeping policies that don't take that uniqueness into account. The issue we have been covering this past year is how to add needed affordable housing appropriately and tailored to each community's unique needs. It's a real challenge!

Over the past year, the LA Planning Department proposed rezoning several single-family neighborhoods to allow apartment development in order to meet state-mandated housing requirements. But the Planning Department failed to rezone many areas on commercial corridors that are much better suited to accommodate large multi-family housing than our residential neighborhoods.

We approached the Planning Department with zoning ideas and pointed out sites much better suited for up-zoning in Sherman Oaks. They replied that they appreciated our "ground view" to their 30,000-foot view of the city. To us that meant we could become collaborators for the best outcome. The Planning Department didn't see it that way and remained focused on rezoning neighborhoods.

We reached out to other LA City communities and found the Planning Department was using the same generic approach for up-zoning new housing into their neighborhoods. SOHA and United Neighbors joined with many of these communities, created community-based maps with better solutions for more housing, and shared these with many councilmembers, the Planning Department, and members of the Mayor's staff.

Your support alongside our community partners played a pivotal role in convincing the Planning Department in October to step back from rezoning our single-family neighborhoods in the upcoming Housing Element.

THANK YOU! However, we must remain vigilant, knowing that there are groups advocating for the unnecessary rezoning of our neighborhoods.

We continue our engagement with the Mayor's office, Planning Department, and City Council offices. Our coalition of communities have found many great areas for developing more affordable multifamily housing, even including solutions for adding more attached single-family dwellings.

As we begin a new legislative year in Sacramento and anticipate potential changes in City Hall, we are committed to keeping you in the loop on the goings on in our city.

Knowledge is our greatest weapon. We at SOHA and United Neighbors are here to keep you informed because your involvement is crucial. Together we will continue to advocate for community-based solutions for affordable housing. Change is inevitable but it must be done correctly with community input.

BURBANK AND VAN NUYS AIRPORTS BOTH GETTING BIGGER AND NOISIER

by Jay Weitzler, Airport Committee Chair

Once again, the FAA has completely ignored valid concerns of neighbors under take-off routes of our major commercial airport, Bob Hope/Burbank. As we all know, this airport is extremely busy and serves routes all over the country. Unfortunately, as a result of changing flight paths during takeoffs (and to some extent landings), a large group of Valley residents are subjected to outrageous amounts of noise and pollution poisoning the atmosphere and the very ground under which these planes fly. This is particularly obnoxious for people living in the Santa Monica Mountains. Planes are told to take off at altitudes that sound high, but those altitudes are figured from sea level, not ground level. For example, a 1,500-foot "altitude" may be only 250 to 500 feet above hillside homes. For many residents, this has resulted in planes so low they can see the pilots as well as receiving enormous noise and pollution covering the outside of their homes and patios.

Does the FAA care? Not at all! Despite lawsuits filed by the city and the urging of citizens and politicians, the Burbank Airport has begun the modernization and expansion of their terminal. After claiming the changes were needed for safety reasons, the airport’s Executive Director, Frank Miller, just told reporters the new terminal will result in “the availability to have more service from existing carriers.” Larger and more jet traffic will be coming to Burbank Airport and its surroundings despite several near misses of aircraft this past year. Burbank also apparently plans to go to the Route Americas Conference in, of all places, Bogota, Columbia to promote the new terminal to new and existing carriers. We must continue our efforts to restrict the expansion of the airport as much as we can and join with our neighbors in Studio City and Encino in these efforts.

Likewise, efforts are underway at Van Nuys Airport to modernize the site and increase its efficiency. LA World Airports (LAWA) runs Van Nuys Airport and has commissioned a study to examine the footprint of the airport and change certain locations to better utilize their land. They are likely preparing to increase the number of aviation businesses at the expense of non-aviation businesses based on efficiency studies. These studies will undoubtedly lead to a further and continued expansion of jet flights over Sherman Oaks, which have been going on for many years. There is a portion of this “Vision” study that will be helpful to nearby residents of the airport since a buffer zone of berms and trees will likely be created, but for those under takeoff and landing paths, efficiency at the airport can point in only one direction – more aircraft using the airport, more jets, more noise, more helicopters, and more pollution.

SOHA will continue to monitor this situation and join those who wish to decrease – not increase – the number of aircraft and the hours of operation at Van Nuys Airport in the middle of our residential communities.

RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH
SAMOS CAFÉ & GRILL

By Jane Kaplan, Restaurant Chair – We’ve all driven by the corner of Woodman and Ventura and wondered when Samos Café and Grill would be opening. It’s been a couple of years of wondering – but they’ve now opened and will be our February Restaurant of the Month! We thank Samos for their community support and look forward to enjoying their delicious food during our Social Hour beginning at 6:15.



They serve traditional Mediterranean cuisine in a stylish way, using their grandparents’ recipes, beginning the day with breakfast at 9:00 am and closing with dinner at 8:00 pm. The menu is incredible – from Greek avocado toast, shakshuka smoked salmon toast, and waffles for breakfast to shawarma wraps and chicken platters for lunch and dinner. And we can’t forget their pizza, soups, and salads.

Whether you’re looking for a nice coffee shop with breakfast or more signature Mediterranean dishes for lunch or dinner, Samos Café and Grill is a new restaurant not to be missed!

NEIGHBORHOOD COMINGS AND GOINGS

by Matt Epstein, President

Exciting developments are afoot in our neighborhood, marking shifts in our local landscape. Let’s delve in!

Mulberry Row, a cherished establishment at 13327 Ventura Boulevard near Fulton has been a stalwart presence since 2005 under the stewardship of owner Robin Snyder, a talented floral designer. Originally renowned for its floral arrangements, Mulberry Row expanded its offerings in 2021. The store now boasts a delightful gift boutique featuring handcrafted jewelry, candles, lotions, and vintage clothing. Local artists adorn the space with their artwork, adding to its charm. The monthly Happy Hour, every First Friday, offers a 15-percent discount on all items – a testament to Mulberry Row’s evolution into a comprehensive destination for floral, gift, home goods, and vintage clothing needs. Kudos to Robin for her dedication to Sherman Oaks, making Mulberry Row a beloved establishment sure to warm hearts, especially with Valentine’s Day approaching.

Tacos 1986, originating from a humble taco cart, has rapidly ascended to cult-favorite status, now boasting its eighth location in Sherman Oaks. Located at 15030 Ventura Boulevard east of Sepulveda, Tacos 1986 tantalizes with its

Tijuana-style offerings, notably its charcoal-grilled carne asada. While the lines may be daunting, the promise of unique tacos and quesadillas beckons, promising a flavorful experience worth the wait.

In recent memory, the closure of TJ MAXX at 14651 Ventura Boulevard opposite Medici's Pizza left a void attributed to rampant theft and homelessness issues. However, the arrival of Burlington Coat Factory breathes new life into the space, offering discounts of up to 60 percent on branded merchandise across various categories. While some may reminisce about TJ MAXX, the arrival of Burlington Coat Factory injects vitality into the neighborhood, a welcome addition to Sherman Oaks' commercial landscape.

The decline of local newsstands is a noticeable trend, with only one remaining on the corner of Laurel Canyon and Ventura. The evolution of the Van Nuys Boulevard newsstand at Ventura into a cell phone accessory kiosk called iStand Bazaar highlights changing consumer habits, emphasizing convenience and competitive pricing. Despite the nostalgia for traditional newsstands, the adaptability of businesses like iStand reflects the evolving retail landscape.

Samos Café and Grill, located at the junction of Ventura Boulevard and Woodman Avenue, has finally opened its doors after extensive renovations. Boasting Mediterranean cuisine steeped in ancestral recipes, Samos offers a tantalizing array of breakfast, lunch, and dinner options. From smoked salmon toast to traditional dishes like hummus and falafel, Samos Café and Grill promises a culinary journey worth savoring – a welcome addition to our neighborhood. And Samos is SOHA's Restaurant of the Month for February so you can come to our community meeting and sample their food in person.



Lastly, the anticipation builds as Kohl's prepares to occupy the former Bed Bath and Beyond located at 12555 Ventura Boulevard, promising new retail possibilities for our neighborhood.

As our neighborhood evolves, these developments reflect the resilience and dynamism of the Sherman Oaks and Studio City commercial landscape, offering exciting prospects for residents and visitors alike.

▶ SOHA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP AND RENEWAL DRIVE ◀



SOHA members were sent an email request or mailed a renewal envelope if they need to renew. Please renew.



Members who joined or renewed by credit card have a membership subscription that automatically renews each year. You're all set.

IF YOU'RE NOT A MEMBER, PLEASE JOIN!

It's only \$45 per year and members enjoy our monthly newsletters, community meetings, social hours, informative eblasts, and more.

- ▶ **Go to www.SOHA914.com and click the "JOIN OR RENEW SOHA" button. Select your membership level, enter your name and email, and click on the "Subscribe" button to pay by credit card.**
- ▶ **You can also mail a check with your name, address, and email to: SOHA Membership, PO Box 5223, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5223.**
- ▶ **IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, CONTACT US AT JoinSOHA@gmail.com or leave us a voicemail at (818) 377-4590.**

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO HELP KEEP SOHA STRONG! THANK YOU!

SHERMAN OAKS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

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dedicated to preserving and protecting
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IN THIS ISSUE OF SOHA NEWS

▶ **- DON'T MISS OUR CRITICAL COMMUNITY MEETING -**
Hear the truth about crime and homelessness
from top cop Jim McDonnell. ◀

▶ **See the latest updates on Metro's proposed noisy**
elevated trains, and the LA Planning Department's
rezoning of single-family neighborhoods. ◀