

"Together
we have
clout!"



ZOOM COMMUNITY MEETING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2022 - 7:15 PM

JOIN FROM ANYWHERE - VIA COMPUTER, TABLET, SMARTPHONE OR TELEPHONE

GUEST SPEAKER: CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR COUNCILMEMBER JOE BUSCAINO

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING

PUBLIC SAFETY

IMPROVING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

represents the 15th District which are the communities of Harbor City, Harbor Gateway, San Pedro, Watts, and Wilmington, as well as the critically important Port of Los Angeles. In 2019, Councilman Buscaino was elected President of the National League of Cities which represents more than 2,000 cities, towns, and villages across the country. This gives him a critical overview of the types of problems faced by various cities across the country.

Also, Councilman Buscaino currently serves as the Mayor's appointee on the board for the South Coast Air Quality Management District. He has served as the Chair of the City's Trade, Travel, and Tourism Committee since 2017. The committee oversees the Port of Los Angeles – the busiest container port in the United States, LAX – the second-busiest airport in the United States, and the LA Tourism and Convention Board. In addition, he serves as the Vice Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on the 2028 Olympics and Paralympic Games.

Councilman Buscaino is a first-generation Italian American whose parents emigrated from Italy more than 40 years ago in pursuit of the American dream. He has lived in the 15th District his entire life and currently resides in San Pedro with his wife and two children.

If you have a question for Councilman Buscaino, please email it to us at SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com on or before Monday, February 14, 2022. This will be your opportunity to ask the potential new Mayor a question!

To attend the virtual Zoom Meeting, the Meeting ID is 898 1310 6418 and the Passcode is SOHA914. Please arrive at the waiting room between 7:00 p.m. and 7:10 p.m. The Meeting starts promptly at 7:15 p.m. If you are unfamiliar with how to sign into a Zoom Meeting or need help, please email us at SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com. We will email you instructions.

DO YOU WANT TO WATCH A PAST SOHA COMMUNITY MEETING?

If you do, please go to www.YouTube.com and search for "SOHA Community Meeting." You'll get a list of SOHA Community Meeting videos for the past few years. They're very interesting and informative. Enjoy!

METRO IS WITHHOLDING INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC ON THE SEPULVEDA TRANSIT PROJECT

Metro's recent three Public Scoping meetings on the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project were a sham and withheld vital information from us! Metro provided only trivial information about the project's six alternatives that would go from the Van Nuys MetroLink station in the Valley to the Expo light rail line at Pico and Sepulveda Boulevard on the Westside.

Metro basically told the public nothing at the scoping meetings. No route details. Useless cartoon maps. No technical details. No tunneling impacts. No train noise information. No hints on station parking. No cost or affordability considerations. No schedules. No public-private partnership facts. The public cannot make meaningful comments based on such trivial information. Trivial information ensures that public comments are trivial and ignorable. Metro is being unfair and irresponsible. Tragically, Metro's lack of information has also fostered the spread of misinformation. A bad situation for a project that will impact the Valley for the next 100 years.

Metro's six alternatives include three monorail and three heavy rail trains. SOHA thinks both monorail and heavy rail are viable technologies for the project, but all six alternatives have flaws that must be corrected before we would support any of them. Here are the latest SOHA positions on each of the six alternatives. We based our positions on three critical criteria: technical acceptability, financial affordability, and schedule reasonableness. We will not support any alternative that does not fulfill all three criteria. The world's greatest alternative cannot be acceptable if it is unaffordable and can't be built on a reasonable schedule.

ALTERNATIVE 1 - Driverless Monorail along 405 with Electric Bus Connection to UCLA

ACCEPTABLE - ONLY IF route realigned to 405 median (versus east shoulder) in Valley

AFFORDABLE - Possibly buildable with currently available Metro budget

SHORTEST SCHEDULE - Quickest to build with no tunneling

ALTERNATIVE 2 - Driverless Monorail along 405 with Automated People Mover Connection to UCLA

ACCEPTABLE - ONLY IF route realigned to 405 median (versus east shoulder) in Valley

AFFORDABLE - Almost buildable with currently available Metro budget

SHORTEST SCHEDULE - Quickest to build with no tunneling

ALTERNATIVE 3 - Driverless Monorail along 405 with Tunnel Under UCLA

ACCEPTABLE - ONLY IF route realigned to 405 median in Valley **AND IF** no tunneling under Bel Air

UNAFFORDABLE - At least \$2 billion more than currently available Metro budget

LONGER SCHEDULE - Three-mile tunnel under UCLA adds at least two years

ALTERNATIVE 4 - Driverless Subway under Westside and Pass; Elevated above Sepulveda in Valley

UNACCEPTABLE - Ridiculous elevated heavy rail trains in Valley - **TERMINATE STUDYING THIS NOW!**

UNAFFORDABLE - At least \$5 billion more than currently available Metro budget

LONGER SCHEDULE - Nine-mile tunnel under Westside/Sepulveda Pass adds at least four years

ALTERNATIVE 5 - Driverless Subway under Westside, Pass, and Sepulveda Blvd in Valley

ACCEPTABLE - ONLY IF route realigned under 405 freeway through Sepulveda Pass

UNAFFORDABLE - At least \$9 billion more than currently available Metro budget

LONGEST SCHEDULE - Fourteen-mile tunnel adds at least five years

ALTERNATIVE 6 - Driver-Operated Subway under Westside, Pass, and Van Nuys Blvd in Valley

ACCEPTABLE - ONLY IF modern automated technology **AND IF** route better under Beverly Glen near Sunset

UNAFFORDABLE - Almost \$9 billion more than currently available Metro budget

LONGEST SCHEDULE - Thirteen-mile tunnel adds at least five years

**For more information, go to SOHA's website at www.SOHA914.com and click on the button:
"Click Here To Read SOHA's Latest Letter to Metro on the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project!"**

We know a lot more. Contact Bob Anderson at BobHillsideOrdinance@gmail.com for details.

THE CRISIS OF AFFORDABILITY



SOHA's legislative committee is studying a few recently introduced State bills and will be reporting on them next month. The committee continues to be concerned about the housing supply-side policies of Sacramento. Housing affordability is a problem, not supply. Wages have not kept pace with housing prices in the last twenty years. In 2000 it took eight years of wages to afford a home, today it takes sixteen years of wages. Speculative investments have added to the soaring cost of housing. Billions of dollars of institutional and corporate money are purchasing single-family homes, outbidding individuals constrained by their wages. This is a problem that SOHA's committee will continue to address with our legislators.

Update: "Our Neighborhood Voices" Initiative is actively collecting signatures and donations to place the Initiative on the 2022 ballot. The Initiative would simply allow local land use law to supersede conflicting state land use law. All other state laws, including environmental, fair housing and anti-discrimination remain in full force. If you're interested in signing this petition along with your neighbors, you can request petitions on their website: www.ourneighborhoodvoices.com.

We need to stand together to fight for smart planning that is locally controlled.

BUSINESSES SUFFERING IN SHERMAN OAKS

The Village at Sherman Oaks Business Improvement District (BID) reports that businesses are suffering from a worsening homelessness crisis on Ventura and Van Nuys Boulevards. There are encampments in front of many of these businesses and theft and vandalism perpetrated by the unhoused are causing many Sherman Oaks businesses to beg for help during this crisis. Some of these businesses have not been renewing leases due to this ongoing problem.

The BID is working with a team of community leaders up and down Ventura Boulevard – from Encino to Studio City – and meeting with Council District 4 (CD4) staff to try to get help. The CD4 office has assured the group that they're working on programs that will dispatch on-call security to help. They're also working on getting mental health help from the county. The BID is encouraged by CD4's words and hopeful that there will soon be a solution to this terribly difficult situation.

Businesses and residents are encouraged to communicate with our council office on this issue. Please send emails to the CD4 homelessness deputies for Sherman Oaks:

stephanie.caridad@lacity.org

cesar.vasquez-carrera@lacity.org

THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY

Drive down Ventura Boulevard on a weekend morning and you are bound to see a long line waiting outside Blu Jam Cafe. Some will say it's the expansive menu, which includes Tex Mex Tofu Hash, Crunchy French Toast, and Chilaquiles. Others will say it's the jazz music inspired by the cafe's original location in which Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie and other musicians once played. The Restaurant still pays homage to its origins with such Jazz and Blues musicians on the walls and has their music fill the room.

Established in 2006, Blu Jam's first location on Melrose was an immediate success. There are now six locations, including Sherman Oaks, and members of the community can stop by on Ventura Boulevard from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

"The most important thing is that we create a fun and inviting environment for our neighborhood guests," co-owner Kamil Majer says. "Our main goal, especially in creating the menu, is to include everyone." This is why Majer and co-owner David Fris offer vegan, vegetarian, and gluten-free options for breakfast, lunch and even brunch.

Majer and Fris opened their restaurant sixteen years ago with hope and a clear vision. They wanted to open an affordable and pleasant cafe that used locally sourced, nutritious ingredients while maintaining a gourmet selection. Majer emphasizes the impor-



BLU JAM
C A F E

tance of serving delicious food with the best, highest quality ingredients and will never install a freezer in his restaurants. "Breakfast should never be boring" he says.

Blu Jam Cafe // 15045 Ventura Boulevard // Sherman Oaks, California 91403 // 818-906-1955

The above article is not an advertisement. SOHA does not accept payment for articles.

THREE SHERMAN OAKS RESTAURANTS MAKE LA TIMES BEST RESTAURANTS LIST

We all know that Sherman Oaks is home to many fine restaurants, but SOHA would like to point out that three have been listed in the L.A. Times 101 Best Restaurants of 2021. Food lover Jay Weitzler insists you try all of them.

Long-time local favorite **Anajak Thai** has been family run for 40 years. The son of the original owners, Justin Pichetrungsri has taken over management and has creatively energized the menu with new curries, stir-fries and grilled pork with chile and sticky rice. His Thai fried chicken with shallots is amazing. Justin has also created Thai Taco Tuesdays, which are incredibly popular, and which are frequented by many of the City's most respected chefs. Special meals are often designed on the weekends, and it is well worth the effort to make reservations at (818) 501-4201.

Another 101 Best is **Mizlala**, a Mediterranean/Moroccan/Israeli restaurant on Sepulveda Boulevard near Whole Foods. Also a family endeavor, run by Danny and Justine Elmaleh, Mizlala is known for its superb tagines, a North African stew named for the clay pot in which it's prepared. Tagines may be savory lamb with apricots and date syrup. Or they may be chicken tagine with lemon, olive and almonds. Or even short ribs braised in red wine. In the cold weather, be sure to begin with harira, a Moroccan lentil soup laced with lemon and tomato. To make reservations call (818) 783-6698.

Finally, there is **Petit Trois**, a terrific French bistro/bar. This is the second restaurant of that name from acclaimed Chef Ludo Lefebvre, the first being a long-time fave in Hollywood. Petit Trois is deservedly known for their omelettes, steak tartare, Croques Monsieur and Madame, and many other authentic and delicious French Bistro dishes. The Big Mec burger is also not to be missed. The Sherman Oaks location is a great place for a nice glass of wine and a pretend visit to Paris. Make reservations at (818)-989-2600.

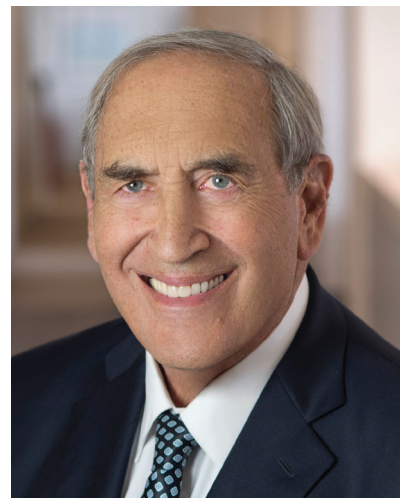
SOHA MOURNS PASSING OF ITS PRESIDENT, RICHARD CLOSE

Our community and Los Angeles lost a tremendous leader, Richard H. Close, President of the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association (SOHA), who passed away on Monday. SOHA's Board of Directors mourns Richard's death and recognizes that we and the community we serve were fortunate to have someone so skilled and dedicated at our helm.

Richard brilliantly held the volunteer position of SOHA President since 1977 – more than 40 years. His leadership and guidance steered SOHA to become one of the most powerful non-profit community organizations in California. The New York Times referred to Richard as the "King of the Valley." Former Councilmember Tom LaBonge once said "If you look at the history of Los Angeles in 50 to 100 years, you will find the name of Richard Close. He has been and is an impactful community leader, not just in his neighborhood of Sherman Oaks, but for all of Los Angeles." It was Richard's dedication that built SOHA into the strong, vibrant community force that it is today.

Richard Close worked tirelessly for Sherman Oaks and the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association. In his role as a community leader and SOHA President, Richard worked on the passage of Proposition 13, a ballot initiative which immediately reduced California property taxes by more than 50 percent. He worked on Proposition U which impacted development citywide. Another contribution was getting a carpool lane on the 405 freeway through the Sepulveda Pass.

Richard's community work was accomplished alongside his distinguished career as an attorney. His law practice focused on land use entitlements, administrative and regulatory law, project development and financing, manufactured-housing communities, governmental relations, and advocacy. Richard was nationally recognized for his expertise



on legal issues related to his housing and real estate specialties. The legal, political, and business communities each recognized Richard's skills in creating community opportunity and valued his ever-astute judgment. His work will continue to have a lasting and beneficial impact on the residents of Los Angeles County.

Although he excelled in every area of his life, he always made it clear that it was his family that came first. Richard is survived by his wife Sally, his children Matthew and Abby, and his four grandsons. In lieu of flowers please direct donations to the UCLA Health Extensivist Program.

Richard will truly be missed.

PLEASE JOIN SOHA – IF YOU'RE NOT ALREADY A MEMBER

A message from Nancy Sogoian, Boardmember and Membership Chair

As we look back on the last year and forward to 2022, we're thankful for those who provide vital support. SOHA's Board members are grateful for you, our members, whose membership provides resources for the important work we do.

Since 1964, SOHA, the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association and the ONLY non-profit, member-supported, volunteer-run community organization, has been at the forefront of preserving and protecting Sherman Oaks. Independent of city and county influence, SOHA is considered one of the nation's preeminent homeowners associations and widely recognized as a leader in facilitating significant beneficial impact on our community. SOHA is dedicated to obtaining the best outcomes for Sherman Oaks in all areas of critical concern for our community.

If you are not already a SOHA member, JOIN US and support your community by becoming a member. Membership is a small investment that yields big benefits in keeping Sherman Oaks a wonderful place to live! While Basic membership is just \$30 annually, if you're able to join at the \$50 Silver or \$100 Gold level, that provides critical added resources for the many challenges we face. To join online, go to www.SOHA914.com, click on Join SOHA, and become a member via PayPal or credit card. (Note: to pay via credit card, select PayPal, then select Checkout as Guest). Alternatively, send a check to SOHA at P.O. Box 5223, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423. Be sure to include member name, address, and email.

Membership includes our monthly SOHA Newsletter filled with info and updates on issues of major concern to Sherman Oaks. Monthly meetings (via Zoom right now) featuring guest speakers of key consequence to our lives and community. Please tell your neighbors about SOHA, share this newsletter, and encourage them to join, too!

We thank you for your support!

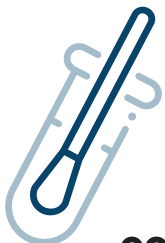
HOW TO ORDER FREE COVID-19 HOME TEST KITS

Even if you're fully vaccinated (including the booster shot), it's important to get tested when you experience COVID symptoms or when you may have been in contact with someone with COVID or with COVID symptoms. The federal government is offering FREE at-home COVID tests mailed to your home address, with a limit of four tests per address.

Go to covidtests.gov to order yours!

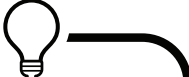

For testing sites across LA County, go to: covid19.lacounty.gov/testing/ (or call 211).

For free PCR Test pickup sites, go to: covid19.lacounty.gov/la-county-pick-up-testing-kit-program/.



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