

"Together
we have
clout!"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ COMMUNITY MEETING ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

— WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2026 - 7:00 PM — SOCIAL HOUR/DINNER - 6:15 PM —

SHERMAN OAKS EAST VALLEY ADULT CENTER • 5056 VAN NUYS BLVD



CONFUSED ABOUT ALL THE PROPOSITIONS ON YOUR BALLOT? OUR EXPERT PANEL WILL DISCUSS THE PROS AND CONS OF EACH PROPOSITION



SUSAN COLLINS

Deeply involved in local and statewide politics for a decade, serving four years as Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council Board Member and Co-Chair of their Public Safety Committee. On the Community Police Advisory Board and active Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association member. Tracked successes and failures of city and state policies to understand every proposition.



BRIAN DAVIS

Non-profit executive, volunteer, and community activist from the Valley. Since 2000, written robust election guide used by hundreds. Former member of the Democratic Party of the San Fernando Valley and the LA County Democratic Central Committee. Democratic nominee for the 38th Assembly District in 2004, representing the northern San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys.



DAVID PHELPS

Lifetime San Fernando Valley resident and business owner, bringing Valley experience and entrepreneurial know-how as member of the city's Government Reform Task Force. State and local public affairs professional and principal of The Palomino Group with 25 years hands-on experience in non-profit management, business consulting, and organizational efficiency building.

▶ ▶ DON'T VOTE UNTIL YOU ATTEND THIS MEETING ◀ ◀

Visit SOHA's new Website at www.SOHA914.com. Streaming begins at 7:00 pm – Click "Stream October 21 SOHA Meeting" button on website homepage. Meeting video available next day – Click "SOHA Meeting Videos" button on homepage. Email your proposition questions to SOHA914@gmail.com no later than Monday, October 19.



RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH – GRECO'S NY PIZZERIA
FIND OUT MORE ON PAGE 5 – SOHA SOCIAL HOUR @ 6:15 PM

DO COMMUNITIES MATTER ANYMORE?

by Maria Kalban, SOHA Legislative Committee Chair

The City of Los Angeles has introduced their new “Missing Middle” Ordinance, which will codify several state laws into LA’s municipal code. It will allow significantly more density in single-family neighborhoods than previously permitted. In single-family neighborhoods, the “Missing Middle” would allow building duplexes, multiple Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and – on qualifying lots – ten single family homes or three-story row townhouses that can exceed ten units. Because these housing types are enabled by various state laws, the city cannot stop them entirely. However, the city’s Missing Middle Ordinance could introduce objective design standards to protect the livability of our neighborhoods. But here is the problem. The LA Planning Department is proposing even more density than state law requires in order to entice developers to use city incentive programs. While the Planning Department claims this gives them design control, in practice, it appears they are more focused on helping developers max out property capacity with little regard for neighborhood impacts.

Our key concerns about the current Missing Middle Ordinance draft include:

- **ALLOWS MORE ADUs THAN STATE LAW** – Standard state law allows up to four units on a single-family lot (a primary home, two ADUs, and a Junior ADU). The Missing Middle draft attempts to allow as many as six ADUs on a single lot, effectively commercializing residential parcels.
- **ALLOWS MOBILE TINY HOMES WITHOUT CLEAR GUIDELINES** – The latest Missing Middle draft permits two-story “mobile tiny homes” on single-family lots without explaining design requirements or neighborhood impacts. With affordable prefab ADUs already available, adding mobile units on top of three allowed ADUs creates unnecessary strain.
- **DECREASES PREVAILING FRONT YARD SETBACKS** – State law respects prevailing front yard setbacks to maintain streetscape continuity. The Missing Middle draft leaves this open to reduction, should developers demand it.
- **WEAKENS OPEN SPACE AND CANOPY PROTECTIONS** – Despite the city’s climate goals, the Missing Middle draft allows tree removal and green space reductions as simple waivers to accommodate maximum buildouts. To prevent extreme urban heating, a minimum of 25% deep-soil space should be required for native tree canopy growth on any multi-unit project.
- **FAILS TO SHOW COMMUNITY IMPACTS** – The Missing Middle draft features diagrams illustrating what developers can build on individual lots but fails to show the impacts to neighboring homes in a community. The Planning Department should care about our neighborhoods as much as they care about helping developers.

The Missing Middle Ordinance is missing “COMMUNITY”. Density itself is not the enemy – but how and where density is placed matters. Community voices must be part of this decision-making process. All of us must stand up for our neighborhoods and for more affordable housing. The need to accommodate new residents should not mean ignoring existing neighbors and their communities. We can help both, but it will take changing the Missing Middle Ordinance as currently drafted. Once again, the city is rushing through an ordinance that needs a lot of work to make it fair and equitable.

Join our community coalition, United Neighbors, and send letters objecting to these Missing Middle provisions. The city needs to amend the Missing Middle Ordinance before it goes to the City Council for approval. Reach out to me, mpkalban@gmail.com, and I will send you a pre-written “click and send” letter.



Sherman Oaks

METRO'S \$80+ BILLION SEPULVEDA TRANSIT PROJECT DELAYED AND INITIAL ROUTE SHORTENED

by Bob Anderson, SOHA Transportation Committee Chair

In January, the Metro Board selected the design and route for the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project. It's called "Modified Alternative 5" and uses modern subway technology running under Van Nuys Blvd in the Valley. Unfortunately, Modified Alternative 5, as its name implies, was not one of the five alternatives Metro had studied in its Draft Environmental Impact Report. Metro chose it anyway as a reasonable, but not perfect, choice that had good public support. Like many of us, Metro probably felt it was time to stop studying, pick something, and start figuring out how to build it and fund it. Good idea – but the impacts are terrifying.

Jump to Metro's April public meeting where they sheepishly announced they now had to update the environmental report to include Modified Alternative 5's exact subway technology and route. Metro had approved an alternative without actually analyzing all its impacts. This wasn't a well-thought-out decision because Metro now must update and "recirculate" the environmental report to the public before moving forward. Typically, they have not yet told the public how long all this will all take and how much more it will cost.

In May, SOHA was fed up and sent a letter to the Metro Board with four easy questions. We got no response.

- Why didn't Metro realize that project approval required recirculating the environmental report?
- Could this impact the Board's January 2026 Modified Alternative 5 decision?
- When will the recirculated environmental report be available for public comment?
- How much will the recirculated report delay the overall project schedule?

In September, SOHA submitted a few California Public Records Act requests to Metro and learned that the design work won't be completed until March 2027 and the environmental work until the end of 2028. That's a huge delay for the project – with more public meetings and more environmental documents for the public to review. And if you look up the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project on Metro's website, you'll see the project cost is TBA – to be announced. They are not willing to tell us the cost even now!

So, SOHA decided to ask AI how much the project would really cost – not in 2026 dollars that hide reality – but in actual dollars spent from taxpayer pockets. We told AI that every dollar Metro spends on the project is taxpayer money, whether from our sales taxes or our federal, state, and local taxes. We told AI that Metro is planning to construct the project under a Public-Private Partnership – like the still-nonoperational LAX People Mover – and will have partnership debt payments for years after construction. We told AI that the massive funding needed for the project could actually further delay the project – because such high funding is not readily available. AI gave us a Modified Alternative 5 cost of an ASTOUNDING \$80+ BILLION – and a final project opening year well into the 2040s. This is ludicrous!

Now, Metro's latest decision to focus on an "INITIAL OPERATING SEGMENT" for the project – like they've done for other transit projects – hints that AI is in the right ballpark. In plain English, Metro wants to build only part of their originally promised project – sort of like the California Bullet Train's initial segment from Bakersfield to Merced – because they don't have enough funding or time to build the entire promised project. The Initial Operating Segment would run from Wilshire Blvd on the Westside to the Orange Line at Oxnard St in the Valley. There would only be four stations – Wilshire Blvd (D Line), UCLA, Ventura Blvd, and Oxnard St (G Line) – as shown on the map. The Valley had been promised three or four stations – but the Initial Operating Segment gives us only two – just like the Red Line ended up with only two Valley stations 25 years ago – even though we were originally promised many stations. The only other Valley station for this project would have been at the Van Nuys Metrolink – and we predict it will never be built. Metro will tend to focus their future efforts on the southern end of the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project – getting it to Pico Blvd – then eventually to LAX – maybe by 2070 – and maybe not.



STCP Initial Operating Segment Has Only Two Valley Stations

MAKING SHERMAN OAKS CLEANER, GREENER AND EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL

by Kelly Lynch, SOHA Beautification Committee Chair

Inviting all SOHA members and the entire Sherman Oaks Community to join our SOHA Beautification Committee and help us achieve our goal of planting 100 trees – or more – in Sherman Oaks by the end of 2027 to celebrate 100 years of Sherman Oaks cityhood – our 100 Trees for 100 Years Centennial! We are encouraging all residents to plant trees in their yard or parkway – or join us for our special community tree planting days that we'll schedule for later this year and throughout next year. SOHA is working closely with our community partners – the Village at Sherman Oaks BID, the Sherman Oaks/Encino Chamber, the California Conservancy, local schools, and more organizations – to achieve our goal. We'll all be working together to make Sherman Oaks even more Clean, Green, and Beautiful!



We also invite community members and local businesses to help sponsor our SOHA Beautification “Welcome to Sherman Oaks” mural. We have a fantastic artist and design lined up through our partnership with the Paint Sherman Oaks Foundation. Check our website in a few weeks for sponsorship details. Our mural will be unveiled in January 2027 to kick off the start of the Sherman Oaks' Centennial yearlong celebration. If you're interested in sponsorship or joining our Sherman Oaks Centennial Committee, please reach out to me at klynch@kplselect.com.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

by Matt Epstein, SOHA President

Everything Old Is New Again – Those of us who have lived in Sherman Oaks for a long time remember when **Sherman Oaks Fashion Square was a thriving open-air shopping center**. Long before the era of giant enclosed malls, Fashion Square was a place where you walked outside from store to store. It wasn't just somewhere you went to buy something. People met there, ate there, strolled from shop to shop, and spent part of their day there. It felt connected to the neighborhood, and for many years, it was one of our major gathering places.



Eventually, like so many shopping centers across America, Fashion Square changed with the times. The mall was enclosed, shopping moved indoors, and for decades when we talked about the success of a mall, we mostly talked about **what was inside**. What department stores did it have? What new retailers were coming? Which stores were leaving? And, of course, what was in the food court? Food courts themselves became fairly predictable. Most malls seemed to have some variation of the same choices – Chinese food, pizza, Mexican food, sandwiches, and the obligatory place selling meat on a skewer.

But lately, I've noticed something interesting happening at Fashion Square. **Some of the most active parts of the mall are once again on the outside**. Along the exterior perimeter facing the parking, restaurants and fitness businesses have created a surprisingly lively scene. On many days, these businesses appear to be every bit as active as anything happening inside the mall. **Noodle St** is frequently crowded, offering Asian dishes and its signature hand-pulled noodles. Fashion Square became the company's eighth location. Then there is **Kura Revolving Sushi Bar**, where the conveyor-belt delivery system makes dinner as much an experience as a meal. Some days you'll actually see people waiting to get in. Nearby, **Panini Kabob Grill** offers Mediterranean-style food with an emphasis on fresh ingredients and healthier choices.



And it's not just about food. At **BoxUnion**, you can take a 45-minute fitness-boxing class combining cardio, muscle sculpting, and heavy-bag work set to music. No previous boxing experience is necessary, and they also offer one-on-one boxing training. If boxing isn't your bag – literally – **Orangetheory Fitness** is right next door, offering its combination of strength and cardiovascular training in a one-hour total-body workout.

All of this makes me wonder whether the future of the American mall might actually borrow something from its past. We

recently visited a mall in Mexico where several vacant retail spaces had been transformed into **pickleball courts**. Instead of trying to fill every empty storefront with another traditional retailer, they brought in something that gives people a reason to come to the mall, spend time there, and have some fun.

Maybe that is part of the answer. The mall of the future may not be just about shopping. It may be about **restaurants, fitness, entertainment, recreation, and experiences** – things you can't simply order from Amazon and have delivered to your front door. And in a funny way, Fashion Square may be coming full circle. It started as an open-air shopping center where people walked around, ate, shopped, and socialized. Then everything moved inside. Now, some of the most interesting activity is once again taking place around the outside.

Everything old may be new again. Who knows what comes next for Fashion Square? But one thing is encouraging – people seem to be coming back to the mall – just not necessarily for the same reasons they did 30 or 40 years ago. Hopefully, the next chapter will bring some of that same energy and creativity we're now seeing outside **back inside the mall as well**. For those of us who remember Fashion Square in its heyday, it would be wonderful to see it once again become not simply a place to shop, but a true gathering place for Sherman Oaks.

LAFD STATION 109 PANCAKE BREAKFAST

JOIN US AT FIRE STATION 109 FOR OUR
FIRST ANNUAL PANCAKE BREAKFAST
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 8TH 9AM-12PM
16500 MULHOLLAND DR, LOS ANGELES, CA

Info ↓



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RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH GRECO'S NEW YORK PIZZERIA

Join us before our monthly community meeting for dinner – some delicious food before some auspicious food for thought!

SHERMAN OAKS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

The **ONLY** member-supported, volunteer-run, non-profit community organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the quality of life here in Sherman Oaks.

Learn more about SOHA on our website at **www.SOHA914.com**

★ **BECOME A MEMBER** — 💡 **STAY INFORMED** — ❤️ **MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

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SHERMAN OAKS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

POST OFFICE BOX 5223
SHERMAN OAKS, CALIFORNIA 91413-5223

www.SOHA914.com
SOHA914@gmail.com
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Find out the real pros and cons
of all the confusing ballot propositions! ◀

▶ **Also: Do communities matter anymore? Metro Sepulveda**
Transit Project - later, shorter, and way more expensive;
help beautify Sherman Oaks; Pancakes? Pancakes! ◀