

"Together
we have
clout!"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ COMMUNITY MEETING ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2025 - 7:00 PM — SOCIAL HOUR/DINNER - 6:15 PM —

SHERMAN OAKS EAST VALLEY ADULT CENTER • 5056 VAN NUYS BLVD

ASSEMBLYMEMBER NICK SCHULTZ BRINGS LOCAL EXPERIENCE AND FRESH EYES FORMER BURBANK MAYOR'S FIRST YEAR IN ASSEMBLY



- Enhancing Public Safety
- Controlling Utility Costs
- Strengthening Local Control
- Funding Transportation and Transit

We elected Nick Schultz as our Assemblymember in 2024. Shortly after being elected, he was tapped by Assembly Speaker Rivas to take the helm of the Assembly Public Safety Committee. As chair, he has set the course for the committee to focus on increasing safety for all California communities and building a more equitable criminal justice system. Nick is also a member of the Assembly Committees on Budget, Natural Resources, and Utilities and Energy. In his prior role as a Deputy Attorney General with the California Department of Justice, Nick prosecuted public corruption, human trafficking, and financial crimes. In 2020, he was elected to the Burbank City Council and was Burbank Mayor in 2023 where he prioritized housing affordability, approving 1,000+ new low-income units.

Don't miss our live meeting and the opportunity to ask questions directly to our Assemblymember. You can email questions to SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com no later than noon Tuesday September 16th. Streaming starts at 7:00 pm. Zoom ID: 876 7050 9461; Zoom Passcode: SOHA914. Zoom link is on our website at www.SOHA914.com, click on the "SOHA Community Meetings" button, then click on "Stream This Month's Meeting". Our meeting video is available at www.SOHA914.com a day after the meeting by clicking the "SOHA Meeting Videos" button.



RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH Crave Café & Pita Kitchen

**FIND OUT MORE ON PAGE 5
SOHA SOCIAL HOUR @ 6:15 PM**

STEALING YOUR AMERICAN DREAM

by Larry Slade, SOHA Board Member

Does my home rob someone else of having a home? Put more dramatically, does the fulfillment of my “American Dream” steal the American dream from someone else? This is a serious and unexpected question that arises from an ideological break between myself (plus many Los Angeleans) and our CD4 Councilmember Nithya Raman. Ms Raman would have you believe that single-family homes are the problem that generates homelessness generally and feeds the housing shortage more specifically. In short, she is wrong.

As many of you are no doubt aware, California is close to passing Senate Bill 79, a law that would permit the construction of far greater density than our single-family neighborhoods currently permit. If SB79 passes, I could (without permission) tear down my Sherman Oaks house at the end of a cul-de-sac and build a six-story apartment building. No need to worry about what my neighbors would think, how infrastructure must expand to accommodate 18+ more people who would live there, or where people would park. I only need to worry about whether there is a bus stop within a half-mile radius. That’s right a “radius” – more commonly known as a circle.

California, with the help of Ms Raman, wants to “up-zone” the entire state using circles. Are you kidding me? While many of us agree that we need more housing, there is more than one way to get there. Blind or “dumb” up-zoning ignores intelligent ways to create hundreds of thousands more housing units without stealing the American dream from everyone who worked hard, saved aggressively, and bought a home. The answer is simple: build along major corridors. Put up apartment buildings along Sepulveda, Van Nuys, Ventura, and Burbank Blvds – not on single-family streets where doing so would destroy neighborhood character. The City Council recently passed and the mayor approved a resolution against SB79 unless it was amended to exclude cities like LA that had already implemented “smart” up-zoning through a state-approved “Housing Element”. Ms Raman voted against the resolution and laid bare her objective to destroy our single-family neighborhoods. If you can get to your destination by driving on the main roads but you choose instead to drive across my lawn, your intentions are clear and cannot be hidden behind the rhetoric of helping others. For those of us paying attention, we see your intentions clearly Ms Raman and we object to your “circles”.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH SB79?

by Maria Kalban, SOHA Housing Committee Chair

As Senate Bill 79 enters the final stage of the legislative process, we certainly hope that our assemblymembers and senators have listened and fully understand the impacts of this bill on their districts. We certainly have tried to illustrate impacts to them through our meetings and graphic presentations. It’s important to remember, none of us are trying to stop housing. We support more housing on major corridors because that’s where new housing needs to go. Rather than mini malls and single-story commercial buildings, we have an opportunity to create new vibrant neighborhoods on these corridors that will enrich our whole community and produce more affordable housing.

We feel LA’s “certified” (state-approved) Housing Element does what we think is good planning. It tries to respect open space, neighborhoods, historic districts, and multi-family low-density housing, and protect the urban tree canopy, high fire areas, and environmentally sensitive communities while increasing housing to state-mandated levels using major corridors.

We appreciated the City Council’s resolution to oppose SB79 unless amended to exclude cities like LA with certified Housing Elements. Although the mayor supported the resolution, we are disappointed that she didn’t use her bully pulpit to warn constituents of SB79’s dangers. All of us who live in single-family neighborhoods or low-density apartments must be vocal on how we want our communities to grow and support what makes good planning sense. We must also oppose loudly what is simply a grand give-away of our neighborhoods to developers.

Two years ago, we started our fight to get good planning ideas for our community. We succeeded in getting a good Housing Element, but SB79 now threatens to undo all that progress. We don’t want our state legislators and the governor to ultimately have the last word about our neighborhoods.

NITHYA – FILM IN YOUR OWN NEIGHBORHOOD, NOT IN SHERMAN OAKS!

by Tom Glick, SOHA Planning and Land Use Committee Chair

When Nithya Raman voted at City Council on August 19, 2025, opposing the resolution against SB79 unless it exempted cities with approved Housing Elements, she was quoted the next day in the *LAist* publication saying the reason for her opposition was LA not having done enough to produce housing: “We talk a lot about our housing crisis in this body, but our actions have not met the moment.” These are strong words, but not a reasonable argument to oppose a resolution against SB79. However, Ms Raman never supported the city’s Housing Element in the first place. LA’s Housing Element resulted from hard work by many parties, and the state even adopted it as a good example of providing strong future direction to build more housing. City Council adopted the Housing Element despite Ms Raman’s last-minute attempts to undermine it with amendments that would significantly upzone LA’s single-family neighborhoods. She and those who fund and support her including the Progressive Democrats, Streets For All, and Abundant Housing, could not even bear to see the Housing Element adopted.

Recently, Ms Raman posted a five-minute video on X as she walked through Sherman Oaks near the Van Nuys-Sherman Oaks Park – pointing out examples of neighborhoods that must densify to meet LA’s housing goals (view at <https://youtu.be/juGv3ZAD1F0>). She called out Sherman Oaks as a prime example of a community that has enjoyed the privilege of single-family-dominated neighborhoods for far too long. Like a slap in our faces, she chose our community to make her point. It is funny though that this is Ms Raman’s very, very public demeanor. She is hell bent on destroying established communities like Sherman Oaks because she and her contributors – Abundant Housing, Streets For All, and the Democratic Socialist of America – feel that LA has too much single-family housing. This is interesting, considering Ms Raman enjoys the privilege of living in an exclusive, affluent single-family neighborhood in the Silverlake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley community. Why doesn’t she film in her own neighborhood about the need to end single-family in LA. More to the point, she doesn’t live in an apartment, condo, or townhome, but in a single-family house. And it is probably fair to say that her neighborhood will not be affected by the havoc that SB79 will cause on the rest of our city. Like the Granthams of Downton Abbey, she’ll be living comfortably in her exclusive estate while the rest of us face the uncertainty of the future in our own neighborhoods.

She is not the first politician to have her public actions conflict with her private actions, nor will she be the last. I wonder what her supporters will think when they understand that her public actions to support more housing are only a façade for a “do as I say, not as I do” politician. How would she or her neighbors feel if SB79 developments sprung up in her neighborhood or actually next to her own house? But more to the point, her actions not opposing a bad bill like SB79 and her obvious support for the larger effort to wipe out single-family communities may not affect her and her neighborhood, but they will affect our families and quality of life in Sherman Oaks – where many of us have invested time, money, and energies into making our community flourish.

Additionally, in her video, Ms Raman talks about how expensive LA housing is – as if the only reason for that is LA’s single-family-dominated zoning. She ignores more important factors like exorbitant building, insurance, utility, and labor costs, as well as local labor hiring requirements. But most importantly, she is part of the problem as an LA elected official. The city causes huge difficulties, hardships, and delays for developers when they file to build residential projects. Developers will tell you they won’t develop in LA because it’s so very, very difficult to do. Her video compares Sherman Oaks to Houston, which has brought down the cost of housing. But she ignores the fact that Houston has a low minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, as well as limited restrictions on labor costs and hiring, lower or waived taxes, cheap utility costs, and low insurance premiums. No wonder Houston has lower housing costs. But actually Nithya, please get your facts correct instead of using fake ones to make your point. Houston has a much higher percentage of land devoted to single family than Los Angeles – 50 percent. Comparing LA, specifically Sherman Oaks, to Houston doesn’t make the point she thinks it does.

Nithya, next time you decide to make a very public video on your very public views about ending LA single-family, please do so in your own neighborhood in front of your own neighbors who you have to interact with every day.

BECOME A SOHA MEMBER!

It’s only \$45 a year including our monthly newsletter, community meetings, public service emails, and more. Go to www.SOHA914.com, click “Join or Renew”, and pay by credit card subscription that renews annually. Or mail your check, name, address, and email to: SOHA Membership, PO Box 5223, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5223.

- PUBLIC COMMENTS ARE OVER - WHAT HAPPENS NEXT ON SEPULVEDA PASS TRANSIT?

by Bob Anderson, SOHA Transportation Committee Chair

The public comment period for the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project Draft Environmental Impact Report closed on August 30th. Metro's Board must now decide what to do next. Maybe they'll select a single Alternative to construct. Or they might make Metro update the five Alternatives and restart the environmental process. Or, better yet, they might identify funding before they do anything else. Rumor has it that nothing will be decided before the first quarter of 2026. We'll keep you informed.

SOHA does know that the environmental report was terribly flawed. Of the five Alternatives Metro offered to the public, none fulfilled the project goals. Alternative 4 is a disaster for Sherman Oaks and the Valley with elevated noisy trains above Sepulveda Blvd in ONLY the Valley. The remaining four Alternatives each have serious problems highlighted in the environmental report – and SOHA could support none of them as designed. Learn more at www.SOHA914.com by clicking on "Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project" under "Hot Topics".

A BATTLE OVER SOUND AND FUMES AT VAN NUYS AIRPORT

by Jay Weitzler, SOHA Airport Committee Chair

Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) officials have rejected a resident-backed proposal for a 15-foot sound-absorbing wall along the west side of Van Nuys Airport (VNY). The decision has sparked outrage among community members who have been fighting for relief for years. Those living in the neighborhood called "The Pocket" have long complained about noise and jet fumes, and with increased jet travel, it has become impossible to ignore since they are separated from the runways by only a low concrete wall, a chain-link fence, and a row of trees.



Residents acted in response to what they saw as city inaction. They teamed up with two airport businesses who offered to fund the estimated \$2.2 to \$2.5 million construction of the sound wall. In exchange, the businesses would receive 5 to 7-year extensions on their VNY leases. This offered immediate relief for the residents and a sound business deal for the tenant businesses.

Rather than seriously consider the offer, LAWA and the Board of Airport Commissioners have said they instead want a "land swap" plan that they say offers a more permanent fix. This involves tearing down the Airtel Hotel and relocating some tenants from the east side of the airport to the west side, creating a buffer zone of buildings.

While a swap might eventually create a good buffer, it may never happen because VNY has dragged its feet for many years in drafting a City-Council-ordered Specific Plan. VNY faces years of environmental study before considering the land swap. The specifics of the environmental studies for the land swap itself have not yet even been published, and just the review process itself is projected to take 12 to 18 months. At this time there is no formal estimate as to the length of time the land swap would take as the airport seems more concerned in building up jet service than solving health issues for nearby residents.

A UCLA-VNY Health Impact Assessment found substantially higher airport-related air quality impacts compared to other areas, particularly concerning ultrafine particles and lead, which are linked to higher rates of respiratory and heart disease. The report found that higher lead concentrations in the air from piston-driven aircraft using leaded fuel resulted in children living in Lake Balboa to be in the 90th percentile for lead exposure statewide. The EPA ranked VNY as the second-largest producer of lead emissions among California airports.

Although VNY needs to seriously address a quick and apparently effective solution, instead it wants more studies as it continues to maximize profits with more jet flights. For residents, the issue is immediate and personal. They are contending with daily noise and health concerns from idling jets, and they believe a solution which does not cost the airport any immediate expense is a win-win. For LAWA and VNY, more studies and more jet business continue to increase noise and pollution burdens on their neighbors – and certainly on Sherman Oaks as we are directly in their flight path.

RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH

Crave Café & Pita Kitchen

TWO NEIGHBORHOOD FAVORITES

by Jane Kaplan, SOHA Restaurant Chair – This September, we're shining the spotlight on not just one, but two neighborhood favorites – and here's a fun fact you might not know: Crave Café and Pita Kitchen are owned by the same person! It's no wonder so many of us love both spots. Even better, they're conveniently located side by side on the corner of Ventura and Van Nuys Blvd – making it easy to grab a coffee, a wrap, or a full Mediterranean feast, depending on your cravings.



Crave Café has become a true Sherman Oaks staple, buzzing morning to night with regulars who can't get enough of its extensive menu. From hearty breakfast plates and creative wraps to crisp salads, sandwiches, and their much-loved coffee drinks, Crave is the go-to place when you want variety and comfort in a casual, upbeat setting.

Pita Kitchen, on the other hand, takes us on a flavorful Mediterranean journey. Known for its authentic dishes, fresh ingredients, and crave-worthy flavors, it's the perfect place when you're in the mood for shawarma, falafel, kebabs, or a perfectly seasoned pita wrap.

Both restaurants strike the perfect balance: great food, great vibe, and great value. Together, they reflect the best of Sherman Oaks dining – delicious variety and warm hospitality. We're lucky to have them right here in our community, and we're proud to celebrate Crave Café & Pita Kitchen as our September Restaurants of the Month!

COMINGS AND GOINGS

by Matt Epstein, SOHA President

A Flavorful New Arrival – Billa Indian Cuisine, 14350 Ventura Blvd, <https://BillaIndianCuisine.com>. Have you spotted the newest gem at Beverly Glen and Ventura? Billa Indian Cuisine has opened its doors, bringing the vibrant flavors of India to Sherman Oaks. Owned and helmed by an Indian chef, Billa serves up traditional recipes with an authentic touch. They're open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and their all-you-can-eat lunch buffet (12 to 4 pm) is already earning fans. They reopen for dinner at 5 pm. Expect rich curries, fragrant spices, and Halal lamb and mutton dishes that showcase the heart of Indian cooking. They also cater and offer takeout.



Margarita Lovers, Rejoice – Daisy Margarita Bar, 14633 Ventura Blvd, www.DaisyLA.com. If margaritas are your love language, you need to meet Daisy. Bartender Max Reis and partner Matt Egan have completely transformed the old Sherman spot into a sleek, vibey, and downright addictive margarita bar. Daisy is more than just cocktails – it's an experience. Together with chef Alan Sanz, the team has crafted a Norteño-inspired cantina menu featuring everything from oysters and aguachile to ceviche and tuna tostadas. Word on the street? Daisy has been packed since day one. Trendy, buzzing, and right in the heart of Sherman Oaks, this is a must-visit.

Sushi Worth Anticipating – Zen Toro, 13573 Ventura Blvd, www.ZenTorola.com. Ventura Blvd has no shortage of stellar sushi, but there's new buzz around – Zen Toro. Locals are already talking about its fresh flavors and inviting vibe, and it's high on the must-try list. Stay tuned – we'll report back once we've had a proper roll (or three).

A Blooming Return – Mark's Garden, 13838 Ventura Blvd, www.MarksGarden.com. Great news for flower lovers – Mark's Garden is blooming again! Their brand-new shop is open and it's absolutely stunning. Whether you're after a show-stopping arrangement or just want to browse their gorgeous displays, this is a reopening worth celebrating.

That's the September roundup. It may be a slower month for openings, but the highlights – from sizzling Indian curries to icy margaritas – prove that Sherman Oaks is still full of flavor.

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IN THIS ISSUE OF SOHA NEWS

- DON'T MISS OUR COMMUNITY MEETING -

**Hear new Assemblymember Nick Schultz's plans to
bring local experience and fresh eyes to LA challenges**

**Also...Guess who is stealing your American Dream;
What's happening with SB79; Nithya's selfish video;
Directionless Sepulveda Mass Transit; and
the Fight Over Sound and Fumes at Van Nuys Airport.**