

## ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ COMMUNITY MEETING ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 2025 - 7:15 PM — SOCIAL HOUR/DINNER - 6:15 PM

SHERMAN OAKS EAST VALLEY ADULT CENTER • 5056 VAN NUYS BLVD

### ARE YOU PREPARED? LAFD COMMANDER JAIME MOORE AND FIRE EXPERTS TELL YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW



- Are You In a Fire Zone?
- Is Your Property Properly Cleared of Brush and Hazards?
- Is Your Home Hardened and Ready?
- Is Your Family Ready?

Deputy Chief Jaime Moore is the Commander of LAFD Operations Valley Bureau and proud to lead the five Battalions, 39 fire stations, and 980+ sworn personnel/civilian Bureau staff. He spent his entire life in Southern California, raised in LA's Venice/Mar Vista area in a Mexican-American household. He was raised speaking English and Spanish and is very proud of his Hispanic heritage. He graduated from Santa Monica High School, earned a bachelor's degree from UCLA and master's degree in public administration and emergency management from Cal State Long Beach. He joined LAFD in 1995 and has been assigned to all four LAFD Geographic Bureaus.

Chief Moore earned the prestigious Executive Fire Officer Certification from the National Fire Academy, completed Cornell University's certificate program in Conflict Resolution, and was awarded the designation of Chief Fire Officer by the Center of Public Safety Excellence. He is also a California State Certified Fire Prevention Officer, Hazardous Materials Technician, Strike Team Leader, Field Incident Commander, and Public Information Officer.

Don't miss our live meeting and the opportunity to ask your questions directly to fire prevention experts. You can also email questions to [SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com](mailto:SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com) no later than noon Tuesday June 17th. Streaming starts at 7:15 pm. Zoom link posted on [SOHA914.com](http://SOHA914.com); Zoom ID: 876 7050 9461; Zoom Passcode: SOHA914.



**RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH - PIZZANA**  
**FIND OUT MORE ON PAGE 5 - SOHA SOCIAL HOUR @ 6:15 PM**

### PREVIEW NEW SOHA WEBSITE

Thanks to the hard work of volunteer Jane Sacon, SOHA will soon have a new website. We're putting the finishing touches on it now. It won't be fully functional for a month or so, but you can preview the new website at [www.ShermanOaksHomeownersAssociation.com](http://www.ShermanOaksHomeownersAssociation.com).

# **NITHYA RAMAN'S AGENDA: PROGRESSIVE IDEALS, REAL-WORLD CONSEQUENCES – WHEN DO YOUR CONSTITUENTS GET A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE?**

*by Matt Epstein, SOHA President*

Los Angeles is in crisis: a billion-dollar budget deficit, stretched-thin public safety services, and a growing homelessness crisis. Yet, amid this fiscal and social breakdown, LA City Councilmember Nithya Raman remains more committed to her ideological alignment with the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) than to the people who live in her district.

As the elected representative of Council District 4, CM Raman owes her constituents – not a national political movement – her focus, her engagement, and her accountability. But as SOHA President, representing thousands of CD4 residents, I can attest to the widening disconnect between her office and the communities she was elected to serve. We've asked her for a seat at the table. We've received silence.

**Who Is She Really Representing?** – CM Raman campaigned on a platform of bold change, inspired by progressive DSA ideals: defunding police, reimagining public safety, and redirecting funding to social services. These concepts sound compassionate and transformative in theory – but in practice, they've led to dysfunction and frustration.

Her support for the city's recent budget – one that cuts funding to both the police and fire departments while the city faces a \$1 billion deficit – perfectly captures the problem. These cuts aren't just abstract numbers; they affect emergency response times, neighborhood safety, and basic resident services. Meanwhile, promised improvements in homelessness services and outreach remain elusive, unmeasured, and unaccountable. At a recent budget-approval meeting, CM Traci Park voiced her very strong opinion about LA's budget process – it's worth watching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=sRA2d-hcuRk>.

Sherman Oaks residents across CD4 are living the consequences. Encampments expand. Crime rises. Parks, sidewalks, and public spaces feel less safe. And through it all, CM Raman shows more concern for defending ideology than addressing the lived reality of her constituents.

**Firsthand Encounter with a Troubling Response** – Just two weeks ago, during our Sherman Oaks Clean-Up Day event, I witnessed a conversation that perfectly illustrated this disconnect. A concerned resident spoke directly to CM Raman about how much homelessness money is being misused – specifically ending up in the hands of individuals buying and selling drugs. Rather than disputing the claim or offering a plan to address it, she agreed that this was, in fact, happening. Yet, CM Raman continues to push for increased funding toward these same programs – without implementing new oversight or demanding results. She can't provide a clear answer to a simple question: how many people has she actually taken off the streets and placed into permanent housing?

This isn't just a failure of policy – it's a failure of leadership. When an elected official admits publicly that public funds are being misused, then doubles down on pouring more money into the same broken system while cutting police and fire budgets, something is deeply wrong.

**Closed-Door Council Office** – For the last three months, I have written critical articles about CD4 and to date have received zero calls from CM Raman or her staff. I have reached out. I have asked for meetings. I have offered to collaborate. Our concerns are not radical – we want safety, services, and an opportunity to be heard before decisions are made. And today we are notified that her District Director Emma Taylor is leaving ... Why?

But CM Raman's office has treated our efforts with indifference. No meaningful engagement. No proactive outreach. Not even the basic courtesy of consistent communication. She has my cell number and email. She knows how to reach me. Tom Glick, one of our board members, recently made a California Public Records Act request for the CM's calendar – to see exactly who she is meeting with – we know it's not us.

This is not how democracy is supposed to work. Councilmembers are elected to serve the public, not shield themselves behind movements or talking points. It should not be controversial to ask for inclusion in decisions that shape our neighborhoods. And yet, that basic principle has been ignored again and again.

**No Sacrifice, No Accountability** – If CM Raman truly believes the city must tighten its belt and rethink how resources are used, why hasn't she volunteered to take a pay cut – like Mayor Karen Bass who reduced her salary by 30% amid the budget crisis? CM Raman is actively voting for a budget that forces layoffs and department cuts, yet she remains untouched by the consequences. If she believes in shared sacrifice, where's hers? Leadership is not just about pushing policy – it's about modeling values. The values of responsibility, service, and humility seem to be missing in action from her office.

**Idealism Isn't Governance** – Let's be clear: LA does need reform – better solutions to homelessness, more effective public safety, and stronger oversight of how taxpayer money is spent. But we also need our elected officials to be practical, responsive, and grounded in reality.

CM Raman's policies have thus far failed to produce measurable results. Her rhetoric about "reimagining systems" hasn't led to safer streets, fewer encampments, or more trust in government. Instead, her ideological rigidity has created a vacuum of accountability, where progressive slogans substitute for real governance. Meanwhile, residents in CD4 must fend for themselves.

**Where Do We Go From Here?** – This is not about partisanship. It's about effectiveness. It's about whether CM Raman is doing the job she was elected to do – representing her constituents, engaging with communities, and being accountable for her decisions.

As SOHA President, I don't expect to agree with every CD4 policy. But I do expect dialogue, transparency, and respect. So far, we've received none of that. All we've asked for is a seat at the table. That's not political – it's democratic. If CM Raman continues to put ideology above constituents, symbolism above substance, and politics above neighborhood realities, then CD4 voters may have no choice but to reconsider whether she deserves to remain in office. Because at the end of the day, elected officials work for the people – not the platform.

I continue to receive a lot of calls and emails from frustrated residents and business owners. I ask you to send your thoughts directly to CM Raman at [ContactCD4@LACity.org](mailto>ContactCD4@LACity.org) and ask for a seat at her table.

## OUR NEIGHBORHOODS ARE ON THE LINE

by Maria Kalban, SOHA Housing Committee Chair

Just a quick update on Senate Bill 79. As you all know, if passed, SB79 would allow 6- to 7-story apartments anywhere within a half-mile radius of a commuter rail or bus stop in a dedicated bus lane. Currently this would impact a lot of Sherman Oaks. In the years to come, even more impact will be felt through HLA, an initiative passed by voters that requires LA to add dedicated bus lanes anytime they repave 1/8-mile of any major street.

SB79 passed all CA Senate committee hearings and heads for a senate floor vote in early June. It had lots of opposition. If passed by the Senate, it moves quickly to the Assembly. We will let you know how our Senator Stern voted and will ask all of you to email our Assemblymember Nick Schultz to oppose SB79: [assemblymember.schultz@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:assemblymember.schultz@assembly.ca.gov).

We are fighting SB79 because LA has enough housing capacity on transit and commercial corridors to more than meet our needs without ending single-family or low-density multi-family neighborhoods. By mid-July we will know the fate of our neighborhoods. Please get involved.

## CALFIRE ZONE ZERO

by Jay Weitzler, SOHA Hillside Federation Representative

As a result of the Camp Fire that destroyed the town of Paradise, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) is proposing regulations to protect homes from burning. The highest risk of fire is "Zone Zero" and is aimed at reducing wildfire risk by requiring homeowners to clear all combustible materials within five feet of their homes. The state originally required a five-foot area on all sides of a home to be "ember resistant" but CalFire is now in the process of changing that to "ember proof" meaning nothing that can burn at all is allowed in this area – no vegetation, wood fences, or anything else that might burn. All homes south of Ventura Blvd and certain areas north are in Zone Zero. CalFire's intent is great and meant to enhance fire safety, but many unintended consequences have emerged.

**Financial Burden** – A major concern is that it will cost many thousands of dollars to remove and replace all vegetation, wood fences, and other structures deemed combustible. After all plants are gone, they must be replaced with concrete or gravel. For many, these costs are prohibitive.

**Aesthetics** – Most of us will have difficulty accepting the loss of privacy and aesthetics plus the environmental impacts of removing all plants and trees. Envision a neighborhood without any landscaping within five feet of homes! The character of entire neighborhoods will change – and not for the better.

**Environmental** – The loss of green cover in a time of rising temperatures is counterproductive and will result in other environmental concerns. Removing greenery would have adverse impacts on greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, and water quality. Urban forests provide habitat for wildlife, especially birds and small animals. Loss of trees and shrubs require more fuel to heat and cool homes. Trees remove pollutants including ozone, carbon monoxide, and cancer-causing particulates. Vegetation reduces stormwater runoff and improves water quality by allowing infiltration into the soil.

**Insurance** – Zone Zero regulations may influence homeowners' insurance premiums. Insurance companies assess risk based on factors such as proximity to fire hazards, property features, and mitigation measures. Homeowners who can invest in fireproof landscaping may be able to get insurance while those who cannot invest could face higher rates or be denied coverage entirely.

SOHA and the Hillside Federation appreciate that while Zone Zero regulations aim to enhance fire safety, they also present challenges that could unreasonably affect homeowners in high-risk areas. Addressing these concerns requires a balanced approach that considers financial assistance, environmental preservation, and community involvement to create effective and equitable fire safety solutions.

## METRO SUBWAYS WILL COST \$25+ BILLION

by Bob Anderson, SOHA Transportation Committee Chair

Metro's recent public meetings on the Sepulveda Pass Transit Corridor project revealed some new cost and schedule information, and the Draft Environmental Impact Report Metro released on June 2nd provides further details. But we now know what many, including SOHA, have been saying for years. The two real subways, called Alternative 5 under Sepulveda Blvd and Alternative 6 under Van Nuys Blvd, will each cost more than \$25 billion and not be ready until at least 2040. Metro positively confirmed that they are still considering two monorails (Alternatives 1 and 3) but sadly also considering the ridiculous Alternative 4 "half-way" that is subway on the Westside but elevated above Sepulveda Blvd in Sherman Oaks and Van Nuys. For years, we have all told Metro that they should never have considered Alternative 4 – but Metro pays no attention to the public – we just live here.



## SOHA'S NEW BOARD MEMBER

Congratulations to Kelly Lynch, SOHA's newest Board Member. Kelly is a native Californian born in Burbank! She grew up in Granada Hills before moving to Sherman Oaks in 1995. She is the owner and broker of KPL Select Mortgage, KPL Select Property Management, and Madison Capital Escrow with offices in Sherman Oaks since 2003. As a long time Sherman Oaks resident, she wanted to give back to her community and volunteered as SOHA's Beautification Committee Chair. With her can-do attitude and enthusiasm, it didn't take us long to realize Kelly had to be on our Board. We're thrilled!

## GREAT SHERMAN OAKS BEAUTIFICATION EVENT

by Kelly Lynch, SOHA Beautification Committee Chair

Thanks to SOHA, SFV Community Partners, Sherman Oaks businesses, residents, and everyone else who made our May 17 Service/Shine LA Day event such a huge success! We had more than 250 participants – members and community partners from the Sherman Oaks/Encino Chamber of Commerce, Volunteers Cleaning Communities, The Village, Paint Sherman Oaks, CD4, and the Mayor's office – who all came out to make Sherman Oaks shine.

We planted 15 trees along Ventura Blvd with Mayor Bass personally planting two, and Paint Sherman Oaks worked with local artists to paint four utility boxes. Dozens of volunteers picked up more than 80 bags of trash and cleared overgrown weeds along Ventura Blvd. It was inspiring to work alongside so many neighbors who helped clean their city! If you missed joining us, stay tuned for our next SOHA Beautification Event. Thank you!



## RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH

# PIZZANA

by Jane Kaplan, SOHA Restaurant Chair – **World-Class Pizza in Sherman Oaks**  
In 2022, Pizzana opened its doors in Sherman Oaks on Ventura Blvd, offering handcrafted Neapolitan-style pizza made with only the finest ingredients – such as San Marzano tomatoes and fresh mozzarella shipped directly from Italy. Their menu also has a variety of antipasti, salads, and desserts.

Pizzana showcases Chef Daniele Uditi's modern take on traditional Neapolitan pizza. His creations blend classic techniques with consciously sourced, unexpected toppings. Signature flavors include the Cacio e Pepe and the Neo Margherita. A key part of Pizzana's success is Chef Daniele's signature "slow dough" – carefully prepared and fermented for two days for optimal flavor and texture. Recognized globally, Pizzana has earned a place on the prestigious list of the Top 50 Pizzerias in the World and has been awarded a Michelin Bib Gourmand for outstanding quality and value.

The dessert menu, curated by Candace Nelson, founder of Sprinkles Cupcakes, adds a sweet finish to the dining experience. Impressed by Chef Daniele's pizza, Nelson co-founded Pizzana with him. Today, it has seven locations.

Guests rave not only about the pizza but also Pizzana's acclaimed Caesar salad. At our next SOHA Meeting, we'll have the pleasure of enjoying both. As a special treat, Pizzana is offering one free pizza to each SOHA member who dines in and spends \$25 or more – coupon to right.



## COMINGS AND GOINGS

by Matt Epstein, SOHA President

The *Sunkist* building on Riverside holds a special place in my heart – it was the longtime home of our SOHA meetings. Over the past year, we've all watched the corner of Hazeltine and Riverside transform into a beautiful mixed-use development. The new apartment buildings look fantastic, and the first store to open here will be Trader Joe's on June 6th. A new coffee shop is also expected to open here soon, and a few storefronts are still available. I've heard that the Trader Joe's across the street will remain open for another two years due to an active lease. Still, the new location looks amazing, and I can't wait to shop for my favorite items.

Just down the road, *Mark's Garden* has made progress rebuilding after its devastating 2023 fire. They're expected to reopen by the end of June. In the meantime, they've been operating out of a pop-up shop on Ventura Blvd and their Tarzana location. The exterior is looking beautiful, and I'm eager to see the new space and pick up their stunning floral arrangements.

Next door to the Juvenile Shop, you'll find the newly opened *Top Beauty Center and Aesthetic Med Spa*. Specializing in advanced non-surgical cosmetic treatments, they offer services like Botox, fillers, laser hair removal, carbon peels, micro-dermabrasion facials, B12 injections, and PRP hair restoration. This is their 2nd location, with the original in Topanga Canyon.

If you're a sushi lover, you'll be pleased to know that a new restaurant, *Zen Toro*, has officially opened on Ventura Blvd near Steve's Coffee Roaster. After a soft opening period, they're now welcoming guests and it's a great addition to our growing list of sushi spots. While I still love *Iroha*, I'm always excited to try something new.

Also new to the neighborhood is *Billa*, an Indian restaurant located at Ventura and Beverly Glen. They recently held their grand opening, and as a fan of Indian cuisine, I'm looking forward to trying it.

While it's exciting to welcome new businesses, it's also important to celebrate those that have stood the test of time. This month I'd like to spotlight *Lazars Luggage* on Ventura Blvd. Open since 1962, Lazars is a classic, family-owned luggage store packed with name-brand suitcases, travel accessories, and unique gifts. Owner Jay Friedman has grown the business into a successful online retailer as well, now known as *Lazars Luggage Superstore*. It's a shining example of a local business with deep roots and staying power.

Finally, if all this change has you feeling overwhelmed, consider visiting the *Pure Heart Collective* near Fulton on Ventura. This newly opened wellness space offers spiritually enriching classes, including sound baths and other experiences designed to uplift, heal, and inspire. It's refreshing to see a place dedicated to personal growth and well-being right here in our community. *Sherman Oaks continues to grow and evolve – and I'm thrilled to share this journey with you.*

# 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.

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# soha

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## IN THIS ISSUE OF SOHA NEWS

**- DON'T MISS OUR COMMUNITY MEETING -**

**Are you prepared for fire? Find out everything you  
need to know from LAFD Commander Jaime Moore.**

**Find out about the real consequences of Councilmember  
Raman's narrow agenda, your neighborhood on the line,  
Calfire Zone Zero, Metro's \$25+ billion subway, and a  
great Sherman Oaks beautification event.**