



Press Release

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Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council Position on Van Nuys Airport Development Projects and Leases Awarded Recently By the Board of Airport Commissioners In Defiance of City Council, CEQA and Stakeholder Feedback

Over the past 7 years, the Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council has filed multiple Community Impact Statements (CIS) in support of LA City Council motions intended to guide the Van Nuys airport management to conduct activities that are balanced to properly address the community needs and not to favor the private interests of business entities that operate out of that City of LA managed airport facility.

In November 2023 motions were presented by CD 6 Councilmember Imelda Padilla, to the Los Angeles City Council to review and implement new policies and development standards for Van Nuys Airport (VNY) future aviation development projects to better protect communities, including critically needed criteria in the development of a new Specific Airport Plan for VNY which has not been updated in 20 years. These motions were created to mandate that the Van Nuys Airport management work in conjunction with the LA City Planning Department and with involvement of a Citizens Advisory Committee to create a Van Nuys Airport Specific Plan to inform future development and airport business expansion plans. These motions are noted in City Council Files [CF 23-1338](#) & [CF 23-1339](#) from 2023.

Councilmember Nithya Raman (CD4) seconded both motions, and they were subsequently passed by City Council after passing both the Planning & Land Use Committee and the Trade, Travel and Tourism Committee.

As stated in the original motion, "A Specific Plan will help PROTECT the residents of CD2, CD3, CD4, CD6 and CD12 and everyone surrounding the Van Nuys Airport."

The Los Angeles World Airport Authority (LAWA) is a self-supporting department of the City of Los Angeles. It manages and operates public airports in the Los Angeles area primarily the largest commercial one - LAX. LAWA's response to Council File 23-1338 demonstrates an unimpressive outreach effort—with nearly 90% of the nineteen disclosed groups only having between 1-3 participants. To put that into perspective, the Census records put the San Fernando Valley population at nearly 2 million (population 1,811,671). The VNY Specific Plan is still in early stages, with the Citizens Advisory Committee non-existent to date.

In December of 2025 SONC filed an additional CIS to the very same council files requesting that, "no new development or planning for projects at VNY take place until there is significant action and progress achieved on the aforementioned and cited City Councils motions".

Sadly, the Board of Airport Commissioners (BOAC) at its most recent meeting conducted on September 23, 2026 at the Van Nuys City Hall, voted unanimously to approve the awarding of 5 leases to development companies for updating and expansion of facilities at Van Nuys airport despite the lack of any environmental study or analysis to inform their decisions and, despite the objections of dozens of residents and some business operators who appeared at the meeting or submitted public comments via the on-line portal. You can watch the full video of that meeting [here](#).

You are probably wondering how this can be possible. So are we. It has been brought to SONC's attention that a legal precedent, *Save Tara v. West Hollywood* 45 Cal.4th 116 (2008), suggests the BOAC may have violated the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) with those approvals. In *Save Tara*, the California Supreme Court ruled that the City of West Hollywood had committed itself to a definite course of action as a practical matter by, in part, entering into conditional development agreements and making public statements supporting the project before completing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)—actions that have parallels in some of BOAC's Sept. 23 lease approvals requiring rezoning and LAWA's actions supporting the proposed projects.

It seems apparent that there exists several problems the LA City Council needs to address regarding long standing shortcomings of the current system that have come to wider public attention as the Van Nuys Airport management has failed to provide a long term plan as requested by the City Council well over 3 years ago, but continues its efforts to develop the airport so that it can house and service an increase of operations—including private jet aircraft.

Sherman Oaks, Van Nuys, Reseda, Encino, Tarzana, Woodland Hills, Lake Balboa neighborhoods and the entire San Fernando Valley are under attack from an uninformed city appointed Board of Airport Commissioners (BOAC); the elected city council and the mayor are doing absolutely nothing about it.

Why does quality of life for the residents of the San Fernando Valley and especially for the residents of the communities immediately surrounding the Van Nuys Airport, have to suffer at the hands of politicians and appointed commissioners who do not live here or prove to be completely uninformed? Why should the greed and quest for profits of business operators take precedence over the right of homeowners and residents to have peaceful and quiet enjoyment of their property? Who is protecting us from the health hazards and environmental consequences of a facility that serves less than 1% of the population and has outgrown compatibility with the Valley's dense population?

Some facts to be aware of:

A typical private jet emits about 2 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per hour of flight, or roughly 810 to 880 tons of greenhouse gases annually. [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#)]

Per-Hour and Annual Impact

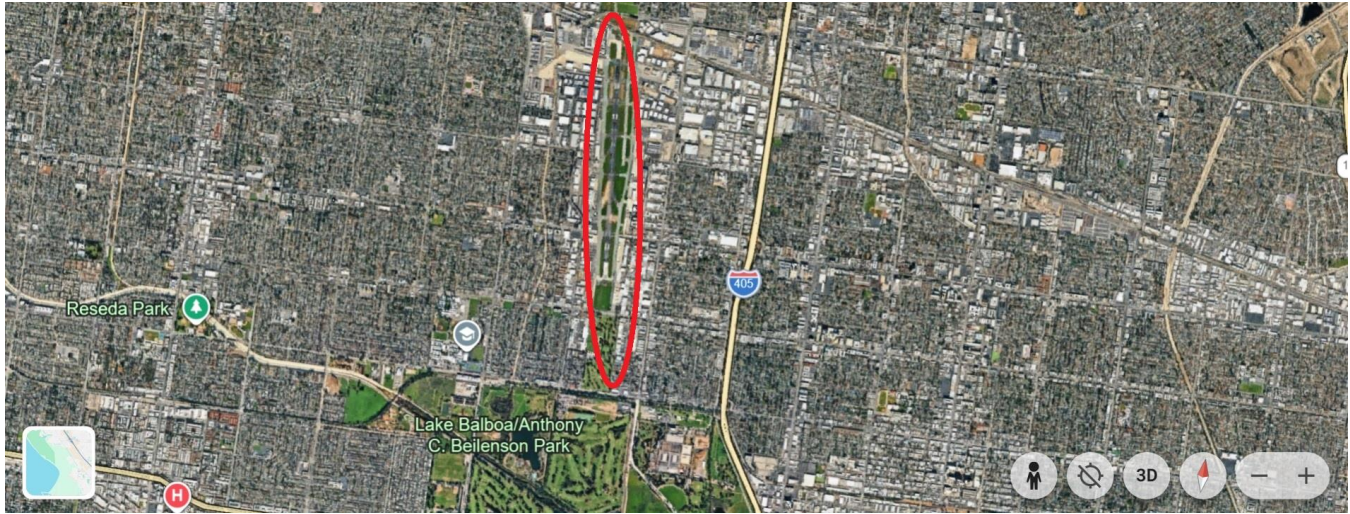
- Hourly Emissions: Just one hour of flying a private jet can release more CO₂ than an average person in many parts of the world produces in an entire year. [[1](#), [2](#)]
- Annual Comparison: A single private jet's yearly greenhouse gas output is roughly equal to the emissions of 177 passenger cars or 9 heavy-duty highway trucks. [[1](#), [2](#)]
- Per-Passenger Inefficiency: Private jets pollute 5 to 14 times more per passenger than commercial flights because they burn massive amounts of fuel while carrying only a tiny fraction of the passengers (often just 2 to 4 people). [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#)]

Global Context

- Total Output: Globally, private jets emit over 15 to 17 million tonnes of CO₂ per year, accounting for roughly 1.7% to 1.8% of all civil aviation emissions. [[1](#), [2](#)]
- Usage Patterns: Research highlighted by sources like [The ICCT](#) shows that more than half of global private jet emissions originate from flights departing from U.S. airports. Nearly half of all private

flights travel less than 500 kilometers (310 miles), meaning short-distance trips and empty "repositioning" legs drive a large share of the pollution. [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)]

- 136,000 tons of CO₂ — that's what it cost the planet to fly private jets to this year's World Cup. And here's the part that should make you angry: you're helping pay for it. [[1](#)]



Keep in mind that Van Nuys airport is supposed to be a General Aviation Airport (GA). A general aviation airport is a public-use facility that does not have scheduled commercial airline service or handles fewer than 2,500 annual passenger boardings. A GA airport traditionally has flight schools that utilize propeller aircraft for training pilots, they also house fire and police helicopters and aircraft for emergency response, and they house small private aircraft. The BOAC and LAWA appears to have desires to turn Van Nuys Airport into the next LAX—but not for the masses, just a small fraction of elite.

Van Nuys Airport began as a small airport many years ago before World War II when there was hardly any housing development and only a small population of residents living in the San Fernando Valley. Over the past 85 years, the number of people residing in the valley has increased greatly. If you look at the aerial map presented above of the area of the San Fernando Valley surrounding the Van Nuys airport facility today, you will see that the airport is a very narrow strip of land surrounded by millions of homes and residences. Having an airport facility located in the heart of residential neighborhoods is a dangerous proposition when it comes to air and noise pollution concerns and human safety concerns. The value of this airport has diminished greatly over time.

Independent studies may demonstrate that the value of the land would be better suited to provide housing, green space and educational facilities for the expanding population. Sadly, instead, Van Nuys Airport is now servicing scheduled flights and permitting private jets that are as big as Boeing 737's. These are larger jets that emit more than 10x the CO₂ gasses than the smaller private jets.

Online statistics published by VNY Airport:

Van Nuys Airport (VNY) [see [About Van Nuys Airport](#)] handles more than 600 total non-commercial aircraft operations (takeoffs and landings) daily, with specific busy periods or individual months recording around **180 daily jet operations** alone. Annually, the airport averages over 230,000 to 300,000 total takeoffs and landings across all general aviation aircraft. [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)]

Key Statistics

- Daily Total Flights: More than 600 total aircraft take off and land each day.
- Daily Jet Operations: Approximately 180 jet operations per day during active monthly periods (about one every eight minutes).
- Annual Volume: Over 230,000 annual movements overall.

- Based Aircraft: Around 619 aircraft are based at the facility, including roughly 282 jets, 307 propeller planes, and 30 helicopters. [1, 2, 3, 4]

It is very very important that CD4 Council Member Nithya Raman be apprised of what is happening. Her office suggests that CD6 should take the lead. However, no district is more impacted by VNY operations than CD4 due to the aircraft departure routes, and arrivals during high wind events. LAWA's plans will substantially expand Van Nuys airport's operations--dramatically impacting CD4 and the entire San Fernando Valley.

LAWA is attempting to EXPAND the Airport via Land Acquisition

Residents need to understand how LAWA is seeking to expand aviation land at VNY; rezoning at least six commercial and restricted-aviation parcels to full aviation use, predominantly for jet charter operations. The parcels include but are not limited to: the Airtel Hotel property, Aviation Plaza—home to LAWA's offices, plus three development leases that contain embedded rezoning ambitions, two of which were approved by the BOAC on September 23.

The city is not obligated in any way shape or form to approve rezoning of airport land to facilitate land swaps, development or updates to existing facilities. We maintain that the data demonstrates rezoning will not meet the city's carbon reduction or green plans and will substantially harm the growing population of the San Fernando Valley.

It should also be known, that LAWA staff has never presented any of these airport plans to our VNY Airport Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for discussion or action. The CAC Chair is a Mayor appointed Van Nuys Airport tenant, despite the advisory council being tasked with reviewing operation and development issues affecting surrounding communities (by community members). In fact, LAWA has been avoiding the CAC for nearly a decade, while continuing to present and get support from the Van Nuys Airport Association (VNAA) on this and similar other issues related to airport jet growth. The VNAA is an organization consisting of businesses that operate at Van Nuys Airport.

The San Fernando Valley is being subjected to decisions by seven unelected bureaucrats (BOAC) that appear to be operating in a vacuum and accepting LAWA's representations as fact despite public records that contradict the agency, legal precedent that challenges them and exposure of critical information missing from LAWA's reports. Whether through defiance, indifference, or willful ignorance, the result is the same: the BOAC is making decisions without knowing—or apparently caring about—the facts.

A temporary moratorium on all and any development taking place at Van Nuys airport would provide an opportunity for the City Council to address serious deficits in the current City Development Code relating to VNY and aviation activity. However, because the City accepts federal grants, an extended moratorium would violate the City's federal obligations. This is why it's critical that City Council deny any attempt to rezone land at the airport or otherwise modify Ordinance 177327. At least until after the completion of the VNY Specific Plan and full Environmental Impact Reviews accounting for cumulative impact. This approach can potentially create an avenue for robust community engagement in the process.

Every one of us who resides in this community should be very concerned about the proposed airport expansion and the amount of pollution being created on a daily basis by the VNY airport and its jet aircraft activity. As well, we should also be highly concerned about the lack of response to the citizenry by our elected officials on this topic of safety (or lack of) and protection for us all. And don't forget, the San Fernando Valley also contains the Burbank Airport, which services both private and commercial jet aircraft traffic of even greater numbers of takeoffs and landings that contributes even greater amounts of the noise and polluted air we are forced to hear and breathe!