

Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council Vision For Van Nuys Airport

Whereas, the Los Angeles City Council in CF 22-1127 requested that the Department of City Planning in consultation with Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) create a Specific Plan and/or other land use tools to replace the existing Van Nuys Airport (VNY) Airport Plan and zoning ordinance. As the initial step in this process LAWA is conducting a “Vision Study” to identify what land uses should be incorporated into the Specific Plan for VNY.

So far LAWA has only presented their own unilateral land use options which all involve the continued conversion of VNY to a major private jetport for the very wealthy. The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council (SONC) believes that there are better options for VNY that balance its role as a jetport along with its historic role as a general aviation airport for occasional use aircraft. SONC further believes that this more balanced approach would be significantly more compatible with the surrounding densely populated neighborhoods.

SONC also recognizes that this Vision Statement for VNY is of necessity constrained by both the 1949 Quitclaim deed transfer of the VNY site and the 1990 Airport Noise and Capacity Act (ANCA). It recognizes that in 1949, the US Government transferred much of the current VNY acreage to the City of Los Angeles via a Quitclaim deed, with the understanding that the property forever remains designated for “Airport Use” with any exceptions needing approval by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Further, the 1990 ANCA defines among other things what an airport owner can and can’t do to limit the type of aircraft, aircraft activities, and hours of operation.

Therefore, recognizing these major constraints SONC is offering this Alternative Vision for VNY’s future:

Immediate Actions:

1. Institute a moratorium on any further development or redevelopment Requests for Proposals (RFPs) at VNY until the Specific Plan/Updated Airport Plan is adopted by the LA City Council.
2. Establish runway usage fees based on aircraft weight with a surcharge for runway use during the VNY Quiet Nights Program (QNP) hours.
3. Add non-emergency helicopter flights to QNP.
4. Extend QNP hours from 10 PM to 9 AM on weekends and holidays.
5. Provide monthly reports to the VNY Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) and each San Fernando Valley Neighborhood Council documenting from which Fixed Base Operators (FBOs) late night/early morning flights are originating.

6. Establish measures that encourage non-emergency helicopters to use designated FAA flight path corridors rather than repeatedly flying over residential neighborhoods.
7. Require that all jets refrain from idling their engines and/or using on-board or ground based Auxillary Power Units (APUs) in areas directly adjacent to residences.
8. As specified in CF 22-1125 request that FAA amend the loopholes that allow scheduled flights and the selling of charters by the seat at VNY.
9. Initiate an Air Quality Study of VNY impacts to residential neighborhoods directly adjacent to the airport.

Longer Term Vision:

1. Any redevelopment of parcels and/or modernization of existing facilities must be done without increasing overall parcel acreage or facility square footage allocated to jet aircraft at VNY.
2. Replace air and noise polluting activities/facilities directly adjacent to residences with landscaping and/or other buffers acceptable to the affected neighborhoods.
3. Keep sites currently designated "Aviation Area - Propeller Aircraft" for prop planes only, and increase acreage for prop planes as needed to accommodate potential future growth.
4. Retain sites currently designated for "Aviation Related Areas" for non-Fixed Based Operations uses.
5. Set aside land in reserve so that it can be phased at a future date into a site(s) for Advanced Aviation technologies (e.g. eVTOL) and/or other low impact aviation uses.
6. Since they are a generator of jobs and revenue, retain current sites designated for Airport Commercial and seek FAA concurrence to convert some acreage currently designated as "Aviation Related Areas" to "Airport Commercial" uses. Revenue from the added Airport Commercial should be used to subsidize use of biofuel, unleaded fuel, and other sustainability goals at VNY.
7. Require all new facilities and modernization of existing facilities to be built using US Green Building Council LEED certification standards including installation of fixed electric ground hook-ups for Ground Power Units (GPUs) to replace use of on-board and ground based APUs.

