



## **COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

**March 2023**

**Re: CF 22-1127**

The Encino Neighborhood Council supports CF 22-1127: This motion supports the need for a VNY Specific or Master Plan, with the following amendments:

The Encino Neighborhood Council supports CF22-1127 as approved by the Los Angeles City Council on March 3, 2023, along with the following go-forward implementation suggestions and background contextual commentary for Council reference:

Go-Forward Qualifications/Modifications/Additions:

I. Given the unchecked growth in airport jet operations that has gone well beyond healthy and safe community compatibility, there should be no additional hangar space approved, only in-kind modernization and/or replacement of outdated facilities should be allowed.

II. The “luring” of new commercial activity must be a focused upon businesses that will diversify the economic footprint of the airport property (retail, recreation, dining, film production, entertainment, etc.) as opposed to additional Fixed Based Operators (FBO), Aircraft Maintenance Hubs, Flight School or any other similar functions that would contribute to increased flight operations, noise, and air pollution.

III. Any noise barriers to be constructed should be thoughtfully designed and aesthetically pleasing so as to improve, not detract from, the appearance of the surrounding neighborhoods.

IV. As part of the planning process, the need for a Customs Office at VNY should also be re-evaluated given that its presence attracts air traffic and associated risk factors seemingly better suited for the more robust port-of-entry facilities at LAX.

V. As an adjunct to the Plan itself, an updated economic impact study should be sourced to a credible organization such as an academic institution so the City and its residents have a non-biased analysis of the airport’s economic/social value-add to as well as a view of comparative valuations of potential land use alternatives. (The existing economic impact study previously commissioned by LAWA is out of date (2015) and reads like a public relations document written on behalf of the Van Nuys Airport Association).

VI. There should be a moratorium on any new RFPs being issued or those previously issued but not yet approved by City Council that would allow growth at VNY until an updated Airport Plan has been vetted by the community and approved by the LA City Council. This includes the Bonseph Helinet lease currently being considered, as it would allow for an increase in jet operations at VNY.

Contextual Commentary to Community Impact Statement (As originally authored by the Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council and submitted along with their own Community Impact Statement, the following thoughts are hereby copied/adopted/submitted on behalf of the Encino Neighborhood Council as well).

Historically Van Nuys Airport (VNY) was primarily utilized for general aviation enthusiasts and generally welcomed within the limited community opposition due to negligible impact on surrounding neighborhoods. Today, VNY is unrecognizable relative to its original footprint – it has morphed over the last 5 -10+ years to such an extent that its adverse impacts on the community are now felt by thousands of residents up to 10 miles away. Resident complaints about aircraft traffic, noise, and pollution have increased a thousand-fold from a trickle of residents in the immediate vicinity to thousands of complaints per month. Its' impacts have encroached on new communities, not previously impacted by the airport operations. Communities that are increasingly sensitive to climate change, many of whom live in a very high fire hazard zone, and are subject to the pollution from not just VNY but also BUR Airport and other air traffic.

Airport management has seized every opportunity to transform this small general aviation airport into an international commercial enterprise on a size and scale as to rival any public company in the region. The expansion was done on a piecemeal basis with no accounting of the cumulative impacts on surrounding residents this growth would produce. It has multiplied its' hangar space at VNY has multiplied to ~700,000's square feet, and have built many Terminal FBO Westcoast maintenance facilities for Gulfstream jets. VNY now serves multiple charter jet vendors and hosts Boeing 737's and MD-87's with 150+ seat passenger jets. International Customs Services were introduced for the ultra-wealthy seeking to avoid LAX on-ground delays and demand from the billionaire 1% for private jet travel have contributed to a sky-rocketing and unfettered increase in traffic volume and land-use expansion. Additionally, millions of FAA funds (from taxpaying residents) have been utilized to shore up runways to support yet larger and heavier jets; and increased traffic volume. VNY and LAWA are now planning even more development with Bonseph Helinet's expansion that will further encroach on a land-locked community with nowhere for the pollution, noise and impacts to escape but into the surrounding communities.

While millions of dollars are exchanging hands with ever lucrative business operations for a privileged few and preferred vendors at VNY, the community demands for an Airport Plan update, additional traffic mitigation and input continues to be ignored and consultation on critical airport operation growth impacting their quality of life is grossly deficient.

When the FAA changed flight paths impacting VNY during SoCal Metroplex – Nextgen - that had a significant impact on the Encino community (among many others) the Airport LAWA and FAA did not even host a community presentation in the West Valley to inform or solicit our feedback. Instead, instantly overnight and continuing today, thousands of residents in Encino who were not previously impacted by VNY air traffic in any noticeable way are now inundated with rumbling, whistling low-altitude jets that resonate for miles. Low flying Helicopters cut through neighborhoods, failing to abide by regulated paths in the immediate vicinity of the airport and create an unlivable situation with homes shaking and windows audibly vibrating under the impacts of low-altitude helicopters at all hours of the day.

The community also was not consulted in advance about the hangar expansions, the FBOs and maintenance facilities, the Customs Facilities and they sure didn't sign up to have Boeing 737's rattling their homes. Jets idling at the airport due to excessive traffic have created an untenable situation for local residents all the while leaded gas has continued to be used and is polluting our environment. Lead was banned from cars over 30 years ago. Encino residents demand mitigation and protection from the adverse impacts of the VNY Airport operations on their health, their homes and their quality of life. We ask that action be taken now to course correct and reign in the explosive growth in Van Nuys Airport operations of the last few years to restore and ensure a safe and secure future for our families.