

Van Nuys Neighborhood Council



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Report on Park Needs of the Van Nuys Neighborhood Council Community

(approved October 8, 2025)

Van Nuys is a "park poor" area of the City of Los Angeles

In the *Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Park & Recreation Needs Assessment*, the Study Area Profile for the Van Nuys/N Sherman Oaks community (designated Area 44) covered a geographical area that included Van Nuys as well as areas just to the west and south of Van Nuys. The conclusion was that this area "has a very high park need." Specific statistics included:

- .2 park acres per 1000 people (vs. County average of 3.3 park acres per 1000 people).
- 17% of the population living within ½ mile of a park (vs. County average of 49%)

Within the geographic boundaries of the Van Nuys Neighborhood Council, there are only two relatively small Recreation Centers – Delano Recreation Center and Van Nuys Recreation Center. Each center has a small playground space for small children. Most of the space is devoted to structured recreation fields. The two centers have a limited capacity (in relation to the population of children in the community) to offer after-school programs and summer camp programs. The subsidized Play LA programs have been a bright spot – allowing families to pay \$10 per child for team sports. (However, this subsidy will only last until 2028.)

Recreation fields are made of artificial turf. Current science reveals that such fields get dangerously hot in the direct sun. In addition,

these fields are composed of dangerous PFAS chemicals and have a lining that does not allow water to soak into the ground. (One of the artificial turf soccer Fields at Van Nuys Recreation Center had a dangerous dip that filled with water and had potential for player injury. Park personnel asked for repairs. It took over a year to get a temporary fix.)

Amenities not available in Van Nuys include:

- No public swimming pool
- No off-leash dog park
- No walking trails.
- No parks with unstructured tree-shaded areas natural areas/green space for general enjoyment of the outdoors and/or exploration of nature.

A high percentage of Van Nuys residents are renters and live on properties with almost no significant outdoor green space. This makes it even more important to provide more park/natural green spaces for family gatherings, picnics, unstructured play, etc.

How can more park space be made available?

One concept would be designation of **Community School Parks** (shared use of local public school recreation space on weekends and during summer break). While such parks have been opened in other areas of the City, we are not aware of any local school that is currently under consideration for this program. There are two LAUSD public school complexes that should be given priority consideration: Van Nuys High School and Robert Fulton Preparatory School.

Another concept is to develop **Pocket Parks** on vacant plots of land in family-oriented neighborhoods. The Kester Ridge Collective has identified a few locations that might be suitable to be developed into a pocket park.

Another attractive space that could be revitalized with park-like elements is the **Van Nuys Civic Center** on Van Nuys Blvd. between Sylvan and Delano. In 2016, a Council Motion¹ was introduced (CF 16-4011) to initiate a Civic Center Revitalization Plan. While this project did not move forward, we would like to see this concept revived. A new reading garden will open in October between the Police Station and the Van Nuys Branch Library. It includes benches and attractive landscaping. Adding more community gathering spaces to the Civic Center would be a welcome addition. We would also like to see the Civic Center plaza decorated with art works and planted with more CA Native trees and plants.

The City Council approved a motion on 11/20/24 (CF 12-1549-S2²)-to study potential alternative uses for **six DOT-owned parking lots around the Van Nuys Civic Center**. Potential alternative uses could include housing. Instructions are to “to determine the suitability for development of affordable and/or supportive housing and replacement parking, as well as commercial and retail space and open space in conformance with the procedures outlined in the City's Asset Management Evaluation Framework and Affordable Housing Opportunity Site Review Process.” The VNNC wants to advocate that one or more of these lots be converted into a park with tree canopy and community gathering spaces.

The VNNC would also like to advocate that the City explore other opportunities to utilize **other City-owned properties** in Van Nuys as park spaces.

The **SE Valley Community Plan** covering Van Nuys should try to identify opportunities for adding green spaces and spaces for community gathering.

As more development occurs **along Van Nuys Blvd.** and the G Line in association with Metro transportation projects, the VNNC advocates for more inclusion of green space and locations for community gathering.

The VNNC would also like to advocate that consideration be given to providing free public transportation that would enable young people and their families to take advantage of the neighboring **Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area** and its amenities, including the LA River, the Wildlife Refuge, Lake Balboa, the Japanese Garden, and a variety of specialized sports programs.

¹**CF 16-4011** - Assess and coordinate revitalization opportunities / Van Nuys Civic Center / Van Nuys Boulevard between Victory Boulevard and Oxnard Street
<https://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm?fa=ccfi.viewrecord&cfnumber=16-0411>

²**CF 12-1549-S2** - 14401 Friar Street / 14521 Friar Street / 14532 Gilmore Street / 14607 Sylvan Street / 14517 Erwin Street, etc. / City-Owned Parking Lots / Affordable and Permanent Supportive Housing / Housing Opportunity / Asset Evaluation Framework / Site Review
<https://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm?fa=ccfi.viewrecord&cfnumber=12-1549-S20>