

Appendix A
Public Participation Plan

Westside Subway Extension

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

1. Project Background and Purpose

Over the past two decades, the converging dynamics of unprecedented population growth, subsequent demand for employment and housing, and the resultant traffic congestion, have residents throughout Los Angeles County – and especially on the Westside – advocating for feasible, efficient transportation options that will better connect people throughout the region from their homes to employment, and to educational, commercial, cultural and social destinations.

After many years of grappling with ever-increasing traffic congestion and recognizing Angelenos' growing frustration with commute times, Metro initiated the Alternatives Analysis phase of the Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study in September 2007 to fully explore possible regional solutions. This Study, one of the most ambitious and anticipated transportation planning efforts currently underway in the nation, builds upon several plans that have been conducted and completed over recent years.

During the course of these earlier studies, no single solution emerged and, as technical challenges were encountered, enthusiasm for costly construction projects waned. Yet, in recent years, the reality of ever-worsening traffic, escalating gas prices, scientific advances which now allow for safe tunneling through concentrated methane zones and, most importantly, proactive civic leadership and changing public perceptions, have generated the needed momentum to identify and analyze 21st century transportation solutions that will keep pace with the region's anticipated population growth and changing land uses.

In January 2009, Metro's Board of Directors approved the Westside Extension Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis and authorized staff to proceed with the next phase of the project. This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/ Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Advanced Conceptual Engineering (ACE) phase follows the 12-month Alternatives Analysis that recommended two Build Alternatives for further study along with the No Build and Transportation System Management (TSM) alternatives. The Alternatives Analysis encompassed an in-depth public participation process that included scoping meetings, community update meetings, key stakeholder meetings and elected officials' briefings, as well as development and dissemination of informational materials, a project website, project information line and media relations.

The Draft EIS/EIR phase of the project, now known as the Westside Subway Extension, will involve an extensive and inclusive community outreach process that builds upon, and enhances the public engagement efforts developed during the Alternatives Analysis phase of the project. The Public Participation Plan that follows includes outreach not only to Westside stakeholders, but also to current and potential subway riders and a wider population of transit users in Los Angeles County. This effort will also re-engage targeted stakeholder outreach efforts during the Alternatives Analysis while, at the same time, identify and involve potential new interested stakeholders who may now, more than before, have a special interest in this project. This Plan builds upon Metro's experience with the Alternatives Analysis, including lessons learned and identification of potential opportunity areas as well as Metro's best practices in public outreach.

II. Study Area

The Westside Subway Extension study area is in western Los Angeles County and encompasses approximately 38 square miles. The study area is east-west oriented and includes portions of five jurisdictions: the Cities of Los Angeles, West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Santa Monica, as well as portions of unincorporated Los Angeles County. Approximately 310,000 people travel into the Westside for work every day from throughout the region, and this project would have the potential to add 95,000 to 115,000 new boardings onto the Metro Rail system from all over Los Angeles County.

Representative of greater Los Angeles County, this project area is extremely diverse both socioeconomically as well as culturally. Some of the wealthiest and poorest communities in Los Angeles make up the study area ranging from Beverly Hills to Wilshire Center/Koreatown. Amongst others, enclaves English, Spanish, Korean, Russian and Persian language groups are represented in the project area.

III. Compliance with Federal Requirements (SAFETEA-LU)

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) was subsequently succeeded by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) on August 10, 2005 by Congress. TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU continue the strong federal emphasis on public participation, requiring that the public participation plans of metropolitan planning processes “*be developed in consultation with all interested parties and ... provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents of the transportation plan*”. As outlined in the bill, methods to accommodate these goals, to the maximum extent possible, include:

- Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- Employing visualization techniques to describe plans;
- Making public information available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the internet, as appropriate, to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information.
- Coordinating local public participation/involvement processes with statewide public involvement processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans, and programs, and reduce redundancies and costs.

SAFETEA-LU also expanded the definition of participation by “interested parties”. Broadly defined it now includes as its partners, groups and individuals who are affected by or involved with transportation in the appropriate County and the surrounding region. Examples stated include citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan.

SAFETEA-LU also requires that public meetings be held at convenient and accessible times and locations, that all plans be available by website and documents be written in easy, understandable language utilizing visual components.

This Public Participation Plan was developed cognizant of compliance with SAFETEA-LU and conforms to the public participation requirements of NEPA, CEQA and the FTA New Starts program.

IV. Public Participation Plan

The public engagement effort during the Alternatives Analysis phase of the Metro Westside Extension Transit Corridor project showed clearly that the public is supportive of enhanced transit opportunities to serve the study area. Overwhelmingly, community members want an efficient and rapid system, specifically a subway, to help them reach Westside destinations as well as connect to transit that will take them throughout Los Angeles County. As the Draft EIS/EIR phase of the project moves forward, Metro will again work closely with the diverse communities in the project area and beyond to hear feedback about developing a transit system for the Westside that will ultimately best serve the entire County.

The following Public Participation Plan (PPP) for the Westside Subway Extension project provides a proactive and comprehensive guide to community outreach efforts throughout the Draft EIS/EIR phase of the project. Building on the foundation of the public involvement and consensus public effort developed during the Alternatives Analysis, the PPP will:

- Utilize an inclusive outreach strategy that maximizes input from a broad range of project stakeholders;
- Provide forums for residents, businesses and community leaders to participate in the planning of a new transit system;
- Create multiple opportunities for the generation of ideas, comments and possible mitigation measures; and,
- Establish a forum for informing stakeholders on a regular basis as the project evolves.

During the Draft EIS/EIR process, the public will have ongoing opportunities to provide input into the project on issues such as further refinement of the alternatives, station locations, bus/rail interface, other transit issues, urban design, land use development issues, neighborhood and community impacts, environmental impacts, and mitigation measures. The intent of the public involvement process is to work cooperatively with the community toward the development of a preferred alternative that meets the purpose and need of the project.

a. Schedule Summary

The approximately 22-month schedule for the Draft EIS/EIR is summarized below. A series of scoping meetings, community update meetings and formal public hearings will be held at key milestones. In addition, the project team will continue to meet with stakeholder groups. The public engagement effort will continue throughout the study as urban design proceeds and targeted stakeholders are involved in the planning process.

April 2009	Summer 2009	Fall 2009	Early Winter 2009	Summer 2010	Early Fall 2010	Fall 2010
• Scoping Period	• Project Update Meetings	• Project Update Meetings	• Project Update Meetings	• Project Update Meetings	• Circulate Draft EIS/EIR	• Metro Board FEIR Decision (Anticipated)

b. Stakeholder Identification

Metro will maintain and update the stakeholder database developed during the Alternatives Analysis to track interested individuals and groups, their areas of interest, communication, and other pertinent information for the duration of the project. Building on the database developed during the Alternatives Analysis phase of the study, Metro will continue to provide ongoing maintenance and updates to keep the information current. Stakeholders for this study include, but are not limited to:

- Local, County, Federal & State Elected Officials
- Neighborhood Councils, Associations and Community Councils
- Business and Labor Associations and Groups
- Retail & Entertainment Centers/Key Destinations
- Education, Cultural, Religious and Health Care Institutions along the proposed alignment(s)
- Transit Advocacy and Environmental Groups
- Public Agencies/Officials
- Cities along all existing and proposed alignments

Communication with individuals and organizations beyond the physical study area will be addressed during this phase given the regional significance of the project. Special effort will be made to include non-English speaking communities on the database, and to engage underrepresented populations.

c. Public Scoping Meetings, Community Updates and Public Hearings

Metro recommends the timeline described in section IVa for scheduling, coordinating and facilitating public meetings during the approximately 22-month Draft EIS/EIR phase of the study, including the project Scoping meetings, additional Community Update meetings and the formal Public Hearings. Metro anticipates six (6) sets of community meetings to coincide with the project milestones. Based on past experience with the Alternatives Analysis phase, these meetings will be held approximately quarterly during this phase of the project. As in the past, most community meetings would be preceded by briefing key Metro Board members, as well as local elected officials. Translation service (in Spanish for all meetings and in Korean for 1 meeting) will be provided; hearing impaired support is provided as requested.

c1. Facilitation of Draft EIS/EIR Scoping Meetings

Metro will conduct six (6) Public Scoping meetings, one (1) Agency meeting and two (2) briefings for local elected officials within the scoping period of the project to solicit comment and input for the Draft EIS/EIR prior to the May 7, 2009 deadline for public scoping comments. The scoping meetings will be held throughout the project area, typically in Wilshire Center/Koreatown, Miracle Mile, Beverly Hills, West Hollywood, Westwood and Santa Monica. The purpose of these meetings is to inform the public about the study, solicit input on the alternatives to be considered and identify issues and areas of concern that will need to be addressed further in the Draft EIS/EIR. The formal Scoping meetings will be recorded by a court reporter and documented as a part of the Draft EIS/EIR planning effort

c2. Public Update Meeting Coordination and Facilitation

Four (4) rounds of community update meetings will be held during the Draft EIS/EIR and will coincide with key milestones. Metro will schedule and facilitate these public meetings, in up to five (5) locations, for a total of 20 community update meetings. A detailed summary of comments and meeting notes will be prepared after each round of meetings. Prior to each round of community update meetings, Metro will schedule two briefing meetings for local elected officials. All presentation materials and meeting handouts will be posted to the Westside Subway Extension website and translated as appropriate.

c3. Public Hearings

Metro anticipates five (5) formal Public Hearings, coordinated with the Draft EIS/DEIR formal public comment period and consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), FTA, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines. As for the scoping meetings, Metro will schedule a briefing meeting for elected officials prior to the hearings. At the conclusion of the public hearings, Metro will develop a written summary which will include the number of attendees, major issues, and concerns raised, and recommended actions to address the issues. All written comments submitted at the public hearing and via email and US mail will be electronically scanned and included in the project documentation.

d. Additional Public and Stakeholder Meetings

As was undertaken during the Alternatives Analysis, Metro will meet with groups and individuals including but not limited to Homeowner Associations, Neighborhood Councils, businesses and business associations, and other stakeholders and interested parties. Metro will proactively continue to coordinate with these important project stakeholder groups in the area to engage them in the planning process. At the same time, Metro will respond to requests from community groups and other organizations to participate in their meetings.

e. Formation of Working Groups and Committees

A very effective tool for soliciting substantive community input is to establish working groups or ad-hoc advisory committees where key stakeholders could roll up their sleeves to address focused localized issues, urban design guidelines or specific geographic concerns. These groups contribute effectively towards finding compromises, identifying acceptable mitigation measures and ultimately building consensus.

e.1 Formation of Westside Subway Extension Urban Design Working Group

Building on the success of the urban design effort in the Alternatives Analysis phase, Metro will establish an Urban Design Working Group to address details of station location and design. This group will primarily be made up of officials from the 5 local jurisdictions.

e.2 Other Working Groups and Committees

Special Study Working Groups or Committees will also be formed around specific issues, geographic interests or other concerns that may be apparent now or might emerge during the Draft EIS/EIR phase. These Committees may meet regularly, sporadically or to proactively address emerging issues.

f. Events

To reach out to those not active in civic issues or who do not typically attend community meetings, Metro will participate in local events such as festivals, fairs and other grassroots outreach opportunities. In addition to the events that Metro already participates in, other local opportunities to raise the project's visibility and awareness within the study area will be explored such as farmers markets, mall or shopping center booths and other more community-focused events.

g. Briefings for Elected Officials and Government Agencies

Metro will continue to brief the offices of elected officials prior to all key milestones.

h. Public Notices and Meeting Publicity

Public notices and meeting publicity for the Westside Subway Extension will include, but are not limited to:

- Placement of display advertisements prior to the scoping meetings, community update meetings and public hearings in local, ethnic and multi-lingual publications.
- Mail-out of meeting notice to project database.
- Email notification to all in the project database with email addresses prior to all meetings as well as email reminders for upcoming meetings
- Post meeting information on the Metro website (www.metro.net/westside)
- Update Westside Subway Extension Facebook page and distribute meeting invitations via Facebook
- Placement of "Take One" meeting notices on Metro trains and buses serving the project area including the Metro Red and Purple lines, as well as buses serving Wilshire Boulevard
- Distribution of meeting notices at key gathering places such as libraries, community recreational buildings, and local offices of elected officials
- Development of Project Scoping Presentation Materials in multimedia, easy-to-understand, and multi-language formats
- Publicity for the meetings will be consistent with FTA requirements.

i. Collateral Materials Development

Metro will continue to develop text and visuals for collateral materials, specifically Mailers, Brochures, Fact Sheets, "Take Ones", Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and other pieces as needed, as well as a quarterly e-bulletin/newsletter during the Draft EIS/EIR phase. Materials will be translated, at minimum, into Spanish and, as requested Korean. Metro will also develop an easy-to-read and quick-reference project e-bulletin/newsletter to be distributed approximately quarterly.

j. Website

The project website (www.metro.net/westside) will be regularly updated to coincide with key milestones. In addition to serving as a source for public information, the website will also serve as a way to gather information. The webpage will facilitate ongoing database additions and provide a means for the community to provide input, ask questions, receive responses and distribute study materials. Metro will monitor web page use, track activity through the project database and respond to inquiries within one business day. Metro will also utilize the web page as a means to grow the regional presence of this project. Approaches to accomplishing this may include encouraging feedback from non-Westside residents by publicizing the website and seeking feedback via tools such as on-line surveys and comment forms.

k. Print and Broadcast Media

Metro takes a proactive role working with the mainstream media to publicize all community meetings and to raise awareness of the Westside Subway Extension project. This includes the development of press releases and placement of display advertisements. This effort is complemented by outreach to grassroots, ethnic and niche print, broadcast and new media. For the Draft EIS/EIR phase, Metro will outreach to wider media such as traffic reporters, as well as the Spanish and Korean-language media.

l. Use of New Media for Study Outreach

Metro will continue to utilize “new” media such as blogs, electronic news outlets, chat rooms, discussion boards, etc. to raise awareness of its projects. Metro will continue to use Facebook and other new media resources (social networking forums) to inform and educate project stakeholders about the study. A complete record of all blogging and other electronic communications on the project will also be maintained.

m. Project Telephone Information Line

Metro will continue to develop and regularly update outgoing messages for its dedicated project telephone Information Line located at 213.922.6934. This Information Line will provide basic study information and allow callers to leave recorded questions and requests for information. Metro will monitor the Information Line and provide ongoing tracking via a phone log. The Information Line is maintained in English and Spanish.

n. Development of Graphics, Photography and Video

Metro will continue to develop graphics, provide a visual history of the project with photographs and create short video clips for this phase of the project. All graphics are designed to be user friendly, easily understandable and to show complex issues as simply as possible. Videos, in particular, will be utilized to provide updates, address topics and focused areas. This is a way to keep the website fresh, interesting and engaging, and to reach out to those who may not be able to attend public meetings.

VI. Public Participation Measures of Effectiveness

On a periodic basis, the Public Participation process will be reviewed to determine if modification of any particular strategy is necessary or if additional strategies need to be incorporated into the Plan to reach desired demographic groups.