

8.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

8.1 Executive Summary

Over the past 30 years tremendous population and employment growth, worsening congestion, changing land use and traffic patterns, as well as Metro’s challenge to meet transit demand, have led to the need to improve mobility in the Westside Corridor. Against this background, in the fall of 2007 the Metro Board of Directors authorized an Alternatives Analysis Study for the Westside Extension Transit Corridor to look at ways to address the region’s growing mobility challenges. The study considered various modes, including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) with dedicated bus lanes, as well as at-grade, below-grade, and above-grade rail options, and at least two alignments respectively along Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards.

This chapter of the Alternatives Analysis study recaps the early scoping process and ongoing community outreach utilized during the Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study. It provides documentation of the scoping process, an archive of public scoping and community meetings, as well as comments received as input to the development of alternatives for further study. In short, this chapter documents how the public involvement effort informed the development and refinement of the alternatives recommended for further study during the environmental process.

The Metro Westside Extension study enjoyed considerable stakeholder interest and support over the approximately 12-month Alternatives Analysis Study. The community outreach effort successfully raised awareness about the study, engaged stakeholders on an ongoing basis and, most importantly, garnered public input at key decision points that demonstrated widespread consensus about the study recommendations that require Board approval in order to move forward into the environmental process.

Recognizing the size and diversity of the study area, Metro employed a thorough yet creative approach to ensuring an inclusive and transparent outreach effort. Elements of this outreach program included though were not limited to:

- Public meetings, including one series of early public and agency scoping meetings, and three series of public update meetings (17 meetings in total) at key study milestones
- Targeted stakeholder meetings to address specialized issues and localized concerns
- Multi-lingual outreach to include Korean, Russian and Spanish-speaking stakeholders
- Multi-tiered meeting notifications including direct mail, print and broadcast media, advertisements, internet based distribution via e-mail and on board Metro buses and trains
- Employment of “new” media tools such as blogs, social networks and other internet or web-based tools to involve a wider audience in the decision-making process

Through the early scoping process, the project team learned that the overwhelming majority of stakeholders supported the need for a transit improvement in the Westside Extension Transit Corridor study area, with a Wilshire Boulevard subway identified as the most favored route and mode. While the Santa Monica alignment also received noticeable support, many stakeholders suggested that Metro consider a project that would include both a Wilshire Boulevard and a Santa Monica Boulevard alignment. In many cases, where the public was in favor of both these alignments,

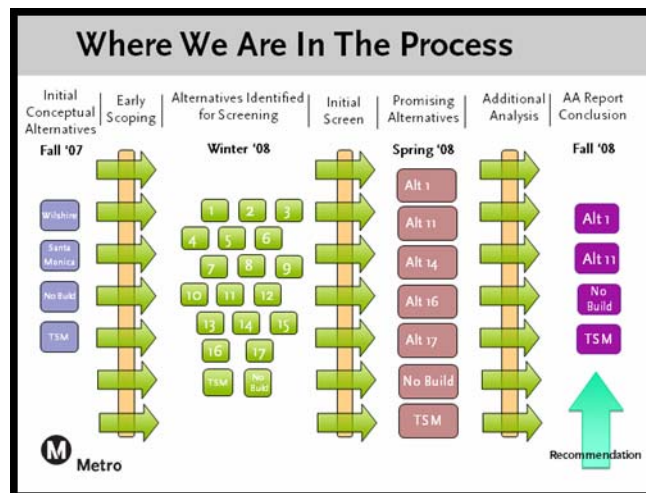
most thought that the Wilshire alternative should take precedence. Limited backing was voiced for aerial/monorail, light rail or bus rapid transit modes.

After completion of the early scoping meetings, Metro conducted three subsequent series of community meetings to keep stakeholders informed of the project’s progress at each decision-making milestone. At these subsequent public update meetings, Metro consistently heard from stakeholders that their preferred mode of transit is a heavy-rail subway, with over 90% of comments received favoring a Wilshire alignment.

The collateral material that accompanies the public involvement process (public notices, lists of locations where posters were displayed, media contacted for the study, blog entries, list of community organizations, notices sent to the Federal Register, etc.) can be found in the *Public Involvement Report*.

8.2 Study Background

In the fall of 2007 the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) initiated an Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study for the Westside Extension Transit Corridor. The successful completion of the Westside Extension AA Study will allow Metro to evaluate a range of alternative transit improvements for the Corridor and recommend the best alternative(s) to accommodate population growth and transit demand. These recommendations will be compatible with land use and future development opportunities in the region.



In order to define the appropriate range of issues and depth of analysis, Metro utilized an early public scoping process that was consistent with the Federal Transit Administration’s requirements for an AA. This “early scoping” process was designed to solicit from stakeholders the variety of possibilities regarding the modes of transportation, potential alignments and station locations prior to their further analysis in the AA. Formal public scoping will be conducted again at the start of the environmental analysis after a decision is reached about the alternatives that will proceed into the next phase for further study. This report documents the early public scoping process and results for the Westside Extension Transit Corridor in support of the AA.

8.3 Historical Context

The Metro Red Line subway was opened in segments starting from Downtown Los Angeles at Union Station. It began operations to Wilshire and Western Avenue in Koreatown in 1996. The last segment connecting to North Hollywood in the San Fernando Valley began operations in 2000. The Wilshire/Western segment has since been renamed the “Purple Line”.

In the 1980s and 1990s, extensive planning studies were conducted for a westward extension of the subway. This led to a Full Funding Grant Agreement with the federal government for a 2.3-mile

extension of the subway from Wilshire/Western to Pico/San Vicente in 1994. In 1998, due to funding constraints, Metro suspended the project and focused its attention on developing bus and light rail transit options for the Westside. This ultimately resulted in a decision that the area was too big to be served by a single project. The Exposition Light Rail Transit (LRT) project, currently under construction, was planned for the “southern” portion of the Westside, with Wilshire BRT slated to serve the area’s “northern” portion. Worsening traffic congestion and increased growth since then has prompted reconsideration of a possible rail extension to the Westside for the northern area.

In the fall of 2007, Metro initiated an AA Study for the Westside Extension Transit Corridor study to address these mobility challenges. Although the Westside Extension project has historically been defined as a heavy rail subway mode, various new alternatives emerging from the public scoping process could be considered. These could include looking at alignment options other than Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards. Other modes that may be considered include BRT with dedicated bus lanes, as well as at-grade, below-grade, and above-grade rail options. Additionally, funding constraints could dictate a series of phased extension segments that would need to be identified and evaluated with the goal of developing between two and four near-term operable segments.

8.4 The Study Area: Challenges and Opportunities

The Westside Extension Transit Corridor study area is in western Los Angeles County and encompasses a substantial geographic area of approximately 38 square miles. The study area is east-west oriented and includes portions of five jurisdictions: the cities of Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, Santa Monica and West Hollywood, as well as portions of unincorporated Los Angeles County. The boundaries of the study area generally extend north to the base of the Santa Monica Mountains along Hollywood, Sunset and San Vicente Boulevards, east to the Metro Rail stations at Hollywood/Highland and Wilshire/Western, south to Pico Boulevard, and west to the Pacific Ocean. The size of the study area precluded an extensive direct mail effort and required that project notifications be distributed through multiple channels and outlets.

In addition to the multi-jurisdictional characteristics of the study area, it includes diverse populations, a number of ethnic enclaves and numerous languages that required targeted and, where practical, language specific outreach. The Westside Extension’s study area also encompasses varying political, business, residential, economic and cultural interests where focused outreach was implemented to best engage these communities and stakeholder groups. Language needs of particular importance in portions of the study area were Korean (in Wilshire Center and the Miracle Mile), Russian (in West Hollywood) and Spanish (throughout the study area and beyond).

Another challenge to be addressed is the actual sphere of impact for this project. As a significant employment destination and jobs attractor, the benefits of the Westside Extension accrue far beyond the borders of the study area. Thus, outreach efforts included strategies for generating regional interest among all those likely to benefit from the project, including current and potential future transit users.

In addition to the outreach challenges posed by the size and diversity of the study area, there are some long-held perceptions about tunneling safety in mountainous, earthquake prone Southern California, as well as construction of a system in a geographic area known for high concentrations of potentially dangerous natural gases. Where appropriate, the outreach effort would address these concerns.

8.5 Community Outreach and Public Involvement Program

In order to ensure that all stakeholders were properly and actively engaged in the Westside Extension study and given numerous opportunities to provide necessary input at key milestones, a detailed Community Outreach and Public Involvement Plan was developed at the beginning of the project. This Plan included thorough stakeholder identification and database compilation efforts, communications protocols, public input tracking, and a proposed schedule for interfacing with the public and recommendations for how meetings should be conducted at various stages of the study. Additional recommendations for individual stakeholder briefings, inter-agency coordination, media involvement as well as creative ways to generate public interest and involvement were also addressed in the Plan.

8.6 Stakeholder Identification and Database Development

Comprehensive stakeholder identification efforts were initiated to coincide with the early scoping process. The size of the study area and changing communications methods suggested methods beyond a traditional radius mail to publicize the early scoping meetings. Efforts included the development of a comprehensive database for the purposes of targeted emails and direct mail, where recipients were asked to forward this information to their memberships, affinity groups, neighbors, friends and family to encourage widespread participation in the study. The database was inclusive of the following categories:

- Elected officials on the local, state and federal level
- Neighborhood Councils and other elected groups
- Homeowners Associations and Neighborhood Organizations
- Chambers of Commerce, BIDs and individual business leaders
- Community-based and civic organizations
- Key destinations and employers
- Transportation advocates and interest groups
- Print, broadcast and electronic media, including community-based publications and blogs
- Other interested groups and persons
- Individuals who attended public meetings or otherwise ask to be added to the database

This database was cross-referenced with information from the 2000 Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor Study. Elected representatives were also requested to provide contact information for community and business organizations in their districts, which led to an additional 120 contacts added to the database. Further, the study team contacted many of these stakeholders to request their proprietary contact lists for the purposes of outreach to their memberships. Several of these stakeholder organizations were responsive to these requests which provided a significant enhancement to the baseline database. Where lists remained proprietary, direct mailers were supplied to the jurisdictions to distribute to their lists.

For the purposes of the outreach related to the Early Scoping meetings, the stakeholder list contained approximately 1,500 entries. The database is updated on an ongoing basis via requests to the

information line, on the website, written requests and from sign-in sheets after each series of public or stakeholder meetings. The current database now includes 1,770 entries.

In addition, in the spring of 2008, Metro launched the “Metro Westside Extension” group on the Facebook social networking site. There are now more than 1,100 individuals who have joined this group and are informed about the Study progress and opportunities for input. Comments posted at the Facebook group are also part of the Study record.

8.7 Public Meetings

One series of 5 formal early scoping meetings, followed by three series of public update meetings (for a total of 17 AA public meetings) at key study milestones, were completed as part of the public outreach efforts during the Alternatives Analysis phase of the study. Meetings were held to coincide with each major project milestone; public comment informed the development and refinement of the alternatives recommended for further study in the environmental phase of the study.

8.8 Early Scoping Meetings

Early scoping meetings are the formal meetings required as part of the AA process. The early scoping process for the Westside Extension study included both identification of prospective participants and notification of the scoping meetings. The intention of public input during early scoping was to both inform the public about the study and to solicit feedback on whether transit improvements were necessary, what transit improvements should be studied and how transit improvements should be evaluated.

The early scoping process for the Westside Extension included one agency scoping meeting and five public scoping meetings where agency representatives and the general public were given the opportunity provide verbal and written comments. In addition those wishing to provide comments could view project information on Metro’s website and respond in writing or by email.

At the early scoping meetings, participants received information about the Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study area, the region’s transit needs, the range of transit modes considered and information about the two previously studied historical alignments (Wilshire Boulevard and Santa Monica Boulevard). During the early scoping process, stakeholders were invited to comment on transit modes, transit alignments, potential station locations, evaluation criteria and other general issues about the study. Nearly 400 comments were received as part of the early scoping outreach process.

8.9 Initiation of Scoping

The official notification process began with an early scoping notice published in *Federal Register* Volume 72 No. 189 on Monday October 1, 2007. An official scoping comment period of 30 days ended on November 1, 2007, but was extended until November 7, 2007 at the request of several stakeholders. Both the general public and agency representatives were notified of opportunities to attend public meetings and provide verbal and/or written comments through this *Federal Register* notice.



8.10 Early Scoping Meetings with Agencies & Jurisdictions

A series of meetings with stakeholders and elected officials were held prior to the public scoping and agency meetings conducted in October 2007. The meetings included:

- Meeting with Metro Board Deputies – August 30, 2007
- Meeting with Metro Chief Planning Officer and Westside Consultants’ team – September 4, 2007
- Meeting at City of Los Angeles Mayor’s office to brief elected officials and staff from throughout the Study area – September 6, 2007
- Meeting at West Hollywood City Hall to brief elected officials and staff from throughout the Study area – September 10, 2007

These meetings provided useful input as well as advanced notification and education about the Westside Extension AA to these stakeholders and elected officials.

8.11 Public Notices and Distribution

In addition to the Early Scoping Notice, a Public Notice was developed to notify the public about the Study, its associated Early Scoping Meetings as well as other opportunities for stakeholders to provide their input prior to the November 7, 2007 comment deadline.

The Public Notices were distributed in a number of ways:

- Via **email** to those with email addresses in the study database, and to those organizations distributing the Notice on Metro’s behalf where their lists were proprietary. It is estimated that an additional 3,100 individuals were contacted through these proprietary lists. Approximately 700 individuals with email addresses are included in the stakeholder database. Emails notices were sent out on September 27, 2007, with follow-up reminders sent again on October 2, 2007. A final reminder to the community to submit written comments was delivered on October 30, 2007.
- Via **US mail** or direct mail where no email contacts were available. Over 600 notices were mailed to residents, agencies, and organizations in the study area: in West Hollywood, the City distributed a notice to neighborhood organizations, and to those sitting on City Commissions and Committees, or approximately 200 individuals; and, in Beverly Hills, the City distributed meeting notices to its list of elected officials and Commissioners. Meeting notices were mailed on September 27, 2007.
- Notices were posted online at the project website www.metro.net/westside.
- Poster sized versions of the flyer were distributed to 43 locations throughout the study area, including Metro Service Centers, offices of local elected officials, and at community, recreation and senior centers.

8.12 Media and Blog Outreach

A comprehensive list of 83 media outlets specific to the study area was developed which included mainstream, community-based and ethnic/foreign language print and broadcast outlets.

A press release, developed in coordination with Metro staff, was distributed to all 83 outlets; for the community-based and ethnic print media, a specific request was made for inclusion of Scoping Meeting information in their community calendars.

In addition, display advertisements for the Scoping Meetings were placed in eight (8) newspapers in the study area and were selected based on their geographic focus, language needs and audited circulation numbers.

Paid newspaper advertisements for the Scoping Meetings were placed in the following newspapers:

- Beverly Hills Courier: advertisement ran 10/5; circulation 43,000
- Century City News: advertisement ran 10/5, circulation 10,000
- Jewish Journal: advertisement ran 10/5; circulation 50,000
- Korean Central Daily (Korean language): advertisement ran 10/5; circulation 100,000.
- La Opinion (Spanish language): advertisement ran 10/5, circulation 124,784
- Park La Brea/Beverly Press: advertisement ran 10/4, circulation 12,000
- Santa Monica Daily Press: advertisement ran 10/3; circulation 19,000
- The Wave (Los Angeles/West Hollywood Independent): advertisement ran 10/11; circulation 240,000

To ensure that the study addressed the growing prevalence of “new” media in this region, outreach was also conducted to “blogs” which are best described as an online continual open conversation. The Southern California region is host to thousands of blogs, and after some research, 34 key websites were located that discuss transit, traffic, community development, and neighborhood issues.

All of the 34 bloggers identified were sent a copy of Metro’s press release and the Public Notice — for the purposes of this study, bloggers were treated as if they were a typical media outlet. As far as we know, this is the first time that blogs have been considered as a part of the media outreach for a transit corridor study of this magnitude.

Many of these blogs posted comments about the study, and lively on-line “conversations” were initiated. Although it is difficult to ascertain how many “hits” each blog received about the study, the online conversation did contribute to raising awareness about the project and to generating turnout at the community meetings. Articles and comments posted on the blogs provided the study team with additional insight into public sentiment about the study.

8.13 Community Group and Agency Follow-Up

Individuals in the study database either received two (2) email notices about the Scoping Meetings i.e., an initial notice followed by a reminder, or one (1) piece of direct mail. The offices of local, state and federal elected officials representing portions of the project study area were also contacted and alerted about the meetings.

Multiple organizations were contacted requesting that they forward invitations to the Scoping Meetings to their memberships or constituents. These organizations included transportation advocacy groups, neighborhood and business organizations, civic groups, and academic institutions.

Follow-up calls were also made to agencies inviting them to attend the Agency Scoping Meeting. Calls were made to approximately 70 agencies between October 5 and 10, 2007.

8.14 Agency Scoping Meeting

One Public Agency Scoping Meeting was scheduled as follows:

- Thursday, October 10, 2007; 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Substation Briefing Room
720 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood

In attendance were 18 individuals representing the following agencies and jurisdictions:

- City of Beverly Hills
- California Public Utilities Commission
- Federal Transit Agency
- City of Los Angeles
- University of California, Los Angeles
- City of West Hollywood
- City of Los Angeles: Bureau of Street Lighting
- City of Los Angeles: Community Redevelopment Agency
- City of Santa Monica: Police Department
- City of Santa Monica: Big Blue Bus
- City of Beverly Hills: Fire Department
- City of Culver City: Fire Department
- City of Culver City: Community Development
- Los Angeles County: Sheriff's Department
- City of West Hollywood: Transportation Department



8.15 Public Scoping Meetings

A series of five (5) Early Scoping Meetings was scheduled for October 2007, ahead of the November 7 deadline for receipt of public comment. Locations were selected to reflect equitable geographic coverage, proximity to public transportation and to minimize overlap with other meetings scheduled in the study area.

The meeting format was as follows:

6:00 – 6:30 p.m.	Open House
6:30 – 7:00 p.m.	Presentation
7:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Public Comment

The public comment period was moderated, and speakers were asked to limit their comment to 2 minutes.

A total of 358 attended these meetings with 175 comments received at the meetings.

The Early Public Scoping Meetings were scheduled as follows:

- Scoping Meeting #1: Century City/Westwood area
Tuesday, October 9, 2007; 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Emerson Middle School
1650 Selby Avenue, Los Angeles

77 people signed in at this meeting, and 21 individuals elected to speak. Metro received 16 written comments at the end of this meeting.

- Scoping Meeting #2: West Hollywood, Hollywood and Fairfax District areas
Thursday, October 11, 2007; 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Pan Pacific Park Recreation Center
7600 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles

58 people signed in at this meeting, and 18 individuals elected to speak. Metro received 19 written comments at the end of this meeting.

- Public Scoping Meeting #3: Mid-Wilshire, Wilshire Center, Koreatown and Hancock Park/Windsor Square areas
Tuesday, October 16, 2007; 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Wilshire United Methodist Church
4350 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles

73 people signed in at this meeting, and 17 individuals elected to speak. Metro received 10 written comments at the end of this meeting.

- Public Scoping Meeting #4: City of Beverly Hills
Wednesday, October 17, 2007; 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
City of Beverly Hills Public Library
444 N Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills

69 people signed in at this meeting, and 17 individuals elected to speak. Metro received 13 written comments at the end of this meeting.

- Public Scoping Meeting #5: City of Santa Monica
Thursday, October 18, 2007; 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
City of Santa Monica Public Library
601 Santa Monica Boulevard, Santa Monica

81 people signed in at this meeting, and 29 individuals elected to speak. Metro received 15 written comments at the end of this meeting.

8.16 Other Community Meetings during Early Scoping Period

Several meetings were scheduled during the Early Scoping phase and before the official closing date of the public comment period where community input was accepted. These include:

- City of West Hollywood Supplemental Community Meeting
Monday, October 29, 2007; 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Plummer Park
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood

111 people signed in at this meeting, and 31 individuals elected to speak. Metro received 14 written comments at the end of this meeting.

In addition to the supplemental meeting, Metro conducted a series of meetings with project stakeholders during the early scoping period which are summarized in Table 8-1:

Table 8-1. Stakeholder Group/Association Meetings

Organization	Meeting Details	Key Issues	Follow-Up
Beverly Hills and Greater Los Angeles Association of Realtors	Special Meeting: October 26 Attendance: 70	Support for system expansion along both alignments. Would like to review information regarding how transit availability impacts property values.	None required at this juncture
Century City Chamber of Commerce	Study Update: September 20 Attendance: 25	Employers in Century City want improved transit service after peak hours to assist with employee retention. Support subway and want a Century City station. Interested in building a coalition to support the subway extension.	None required at this juncture
Hollywood Chamber of Commerce Legislative Committee.	Study Update: September 13 Attendance: 15	Support subway expansion. Has provided positive impacts to Hollywood.	None required at this juncture
Metro Westside/Central Governance Council	Study Update: October 10 Attendance: 25	Interest in following study progress and outcomes.	Provide periodic updates.
Outpost Estates Homeowners Association	Study Update: October 30 Attendance: 69	Overwhelming support for subway extension, especially west from Hollywood & Highland. Some interest in LRT, but most preferred subway to avoid at-grade intersections. Little concern about cost as “politicians would find the money because this project has tremendous public support”. Explore developer fees to help cover cost.	Provide periodic updates..

Table 8-1. Stakeholder Group/Association Meetings (continued)

Organization	Meeting Details	Key Issues	Follow-Up
Southern California Transit Advocates	Study Update: October 29 Attendance: 25	Support for system expansion, however, the group questioned why Santa Monica Boulevard was being considered as a potential alignment. Additional questions about the construction process, tunneling techniques, and impacts of each mode and alignment. The group did not have a final recommendation on mode, alignment, or stations.	None required at this juncture
Traffic Committee, West Los Angeles Community Police Advisory Board	Study Update: September 11 Attendance: 35	Interest in improving transportation and transit options on the Westside and opportunities to participate.	Provide periodic updates.
Westside Cities Council of Governments (COG) & COG Transportation Committee	August 9: Transportation Committee: Study update and like meeting schedule September 20: COG: Study update and upcoming meeting schedule October 11: Transportation Committee, Study update and meeting status November 15: Study update and report on meeting participation Attendance: Varies	Support subway extension west: it's their second key priority after Exposition LRT.	Ongoing attendance at COG meetings.
Westside Transportation Partners	Study Update: August 28 Attendance: 30	Supportive of improved transit on the Westside. Key issues are connectivity to key business/employment centers. Also received presentation from Wilshire Monorail advocates.	Interested in periodic updates.

8.17 Summary of Early Scoping Public Comment

The overwhelming majority of comments received supported the urgent need for transit improvements on the Westside. A potential Wilshire heavy-rail subway alignment was the most favored route and mode, with nearly as many people advocating for subways on both the Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevard alignments. In many cases, where the public supported both the Wilshire and the Santa Monica alignments, most thought that the Wilshire alignment should take precedence. Some support was expressed for aerial/monorail, light rail, or bus rapid transit modes.

The community greatly supported a potential subway mode i.e. heavy rail below grade. Most of those in favor of a subway did not give a reason for their preference. Those that did express a reason for

this mode indicated speed of travel, ability to move large numbers of people, and limited impact to road traffic. Those favoring options other than subway cited cost and length of time to construct. Those preferring monorail or light rail expressed the view that these modes were less expensive and quicker to build. The public was presented with two potential alignment options, generally following Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards. In addition, 4 media outlets attended the meetings to report on the progress of the Westside Extension study. These included print, broadcast and online media. Overall, a Wilshire Boulevard alignment, extending westward from the Metro Purple Line at Wilshire/Western received the greatest amount of support. In summary, the public input received in the early scoping process strongly favors a subway extension along Wilshire Boulevard.

Prior to the close of the comment period 484 comments were received in five different ways:

- 133 Verbal comments at Public Scoping Meetings
- 87 Written comments at Public Scoping Meetings
- 152 Written comments and 1 digital audio comment via email
- 108 Written comments via US mail and hand delivered
- 4 Verbal comments on the Telephone Information Line

8.17.1 Comments Related to Purpose and Need

Public comments were received from 133 speakers at the five early scoping meetings. Comments focused on the difficulty associated with traveling by car or bus on the Westside due to extreme and often all-day congestion, and the growing recognition of the need for a mass transit alternative. There was also discussion of the need for local connections and shuttles as well as north-south connections and improvements to make the transit system more accessible to a wider range of residential and employment areas. A need for enhanced nighttime service, given the entertainment venues in the corridor was also expressed.

Comment forms were completed by 87 people and submitted at the early scoping meetings or returned to Metro after the meetings. The types of comments made with regard to the Purpose and Need for transit improvements in the study area focused on traffic congestion and extended travel times on existing bus transit routes including Rapid and Rapid Express lines.

Email comments were received from 152 people during the early scoping period. The types of comments made with regard to the Purpose and Need for transit improvements in the study area focused on existing traffic congestion and the need for system connectivity.

Letters were received from 108 persons and/or agencies. These letters focused on the alternatives to be studied and issues of concern to the authors, with little comment on the Purpose and Need for the project. The fact that the majority of the letter writers supported one or more of the alignments and modes, however, indicates that they perceive a need to provide a transit improvement in the study area.

The 4 messages left on the telephone information line did not reflect comments about the study's Purpose and Need.

8.17.2 Comments Related to Alternatives

Comments related to alternatives addressed preferred modes, potential station locations, and possible route alignments.

8.17.3 Comments Related to Modes

The comments provided by speakers at the early scoping meetings strongly supported the subway mode. Fifty speakers expressed a preference for the subway, with only two opposed. Eleven speakers spoke in favor of a potential monorail elevated alternative and one person was opposed to the monorail. Four people mentioned support for light rail transit and three were opposed to it, largely due to concerns about traffic congestion with an at-grade mode. Several of the people speaking in favor of either monorail or light rail indicated they felt these were less expensive alternatives and could therefore be built more quickly. Four people expressed a preference for additional bus rapid transit service, but ten people were opposed to dedicated bus lanes.

Comment forms submitted by meeting attendees indicated a strong preference for the subway mode. Of those who expressed a mode preference, 85 percent (59 people) supported the subway mode. Three people were opposed to the subway. Six expressed a preference for the aerial/monorail mode, one person suggested light rail and three supported bus rapid transit. Light rail was opposed by three people and bus rapid transit was opposed by eight.

Comments received via email were overwhelmingly in favor of the subway mode. Seventy-three people expressed support for the subway and only three were opposed to the subway mode. Support was expressed for light rail in 10 emails, with two people opposing light rail. The BRT mode with dedicated lanes was supported in five and opposed in three emails. Only one person emailed in support of a monorail alternative.

Almost 90 percent of the letter writers who expressed a preference for a mode supported the subway alternative. Seventy-one letters supported the subway mode, with only four supporting aerial/monorail, three in favor of light rail and two advocating bus rapid transit. Letter writers did not offer opinions in opposition to modes, rather only support for their preferred mode, which was overwhelmingly subway.

8.17.4 Comments Related to Stations

People who spoke at the Early Scoping Meetings generally supported the potential station locations that were shown on a board representing potential alignments and stations and on the PowerPoint presentation slide. However, some attendees suggested some additional stations as well. Five speakers suggested that a station near Cedars-Sinai Hospital and the Beverly Center was needed. Three people commented that the station in Century City should be south of Santa Monica Boulevard, closer to the center of Century City. There was support from two speakers for a station on the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) campus, or located close to campus at Westwood and Le Conte. Two submitted comments supporting placement of a station by the I-405 overpass, or close to the Veterans' Administration Hospital. Two others supported a station located at The Grove/Farmers Market. There were also comments in favor of a station on Wilshire at Bundy and on Wilshire between 17th and 20th Streets near the UCLA/Santa Monica Hospital. Opposition was also expressed by several speakers to a station on Wilshire at Crenshaw or elsewhere in the Park Mile area of Wilshire Boulevard.

The comment forms included a map on the reverse side of the form and suggested that commenter's sketch their preferred alignment and station locations. The station areas most frequently indicated on the comment forms included Century City (7), UCLA (6), Santa Monica (6) Beverly Hills (5), Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) or Burbank Airports (5), and a connection to the Expo Light Rail Line (4). The only station area for which opposition was expressed was a station at Sunset/Fairfax.

Comments received via email mentioned many potential station locations. Those locations that were mentioned in more than one email included: Century City (5), UCLA (5), Westwood/Wilshire (5), Beverly Hills (4), West Hollywood (3), VA Hospital (2), Sunset/Fairfax (2), Beverly Center (2), The Grove/Farmers Market (2), and LAX (2). One email expressed opposition to a station at Sunset/Fairfax.

The station location most frequently mentioned in letters received by Metro was a Century City station. Nineteen letters mentioned the need for a station in Century City. The next most-mentioned station location was UCLA (10 comments), followed by the need for a connection to the Exposition LRT Corridor.

8.17.5 Comments Related to Alignments

Speakers at the early scoping meetings generally favored the Wilshire alignment, many expressed support for the Santa Monica alignment or a combination of both Wilshire and Santa Monica alignments.

Speakers also suggested several north-south alignments. These included an alignment from the San Fernando Valley to LAX, a connection from Hollywood & Highland to the Exposition Corridor, and Burbank Airport to LAX via Hollywood & Highland. There were also comments suggesting an alignment under Burton Way, continuing east below Santa Monica Boulevard to Downtown, following Sunset Boulevard to La Cienega, and connections to the Exposition Line either via the Third Street Promenade or near the Water Garden on 26th Street in Santa Monica. A group of speakers from the community just east of Fairfax Avenue, between Hollywood and Sunset Boulevards, advocated an alignment under Fairfax as they were concerned potential tunneling would damage their 1920s era homes.

Persons who completed comment forms preferred the Wilshire alignment. Twenty-two comments supported Wilshire, but almost as many (17) expressed support for both the Wilshire and Santa Monica alignments. Eight comment cards indicated Santa Monica Boulevard as the preferred alignment. Some comments indicated the need for north-south connections.

The Wilshire Boulevard alignment was the preference for the majority of persons who commented by email. Thirty-four people expressed a preference for the Wilshire alignment and only one person was opposed to that alignment. Fifteen emails supported the Santa Monica Boulevard alignment and one opposed the Santa Monica alignment. Support was expressed for both alignments in eight emails and nine opposed building both. Several emails suggested the need for north-south connections, including an alignment on La Brea to serve LAX and in the I-405 corridor. Two emails suggested an alignment along Olympic Boulevard.

Letter writers strongly supported the Wilshire alignment as their first choice. Twenty-eight letters supported the Wilshire alignment. Twelve were received in support of studying the Santa Monica alignment. Eight letters suggested that both alignments were appropriate for inclusion in this

alternatives analysis. Other corridors that were mentioned included an alignment under Sunset Boulevard, Highland Avenue, San Vicente Boulevard, Lincoln, and Olympic Boulevards.

8.17.6 Comments Related to Evaluation Criteria

There were not very many speakers at the early scoping meetings who addressed specific evaluation criteria that they felt should be used to assess the alternatives. Those that did mention evaluation criteria expressed the need to assess community benefits, particularly for young people, the ability of the alternatives to absorb the growth from additional demand over time, accommodate pedestrians, affect on green house gas emissions, and the ability to generate ridership on other parts of the transit system. The overall capacity of the alternatives and the speed of the alternatives were also mentioned. The impacts of alternatives on bicycle safety were suggested as evaluation criteria, as was construction safety in earthquake zones.

Persons who completed comment cards suggested the need to evaluate noise and vibration of alternatives during construction and operations. Some also suggested that economic development opportunities and density around stations be considered.

Comments that were received in emails suggested that environmental concerns be key evaluation criteria. They also suggested that noise and vibration be considered in evaluating alternatives.

Evaluation criteria mentioned in letters included assessment of the area served by the alternative, noise and vibration, station area congestion, system connectivity, opportunities for additional land use.

8.17.7 Comments Related to Scope of the Analysis

Some of the issues that speakers at the scoping meetings said need to be addressed in the alternatives analysis included:

- The need for parking at stations
- Parallel arterials – their capacity and the affect of diverting traffic to them with dedicated bus lanes
- The affect of tunneling under homes, particularly older/historic homes
- Joint development potential and impacts of joint development
- Safety of drilling in the methane gas zones
- Evaluate segmentation that may be required due to funding constraints
- Consider the external costs (accidents, health) associated with the No Project Alternative
- Shadow and visual impacts associated with elevated structures
- Seismic safety

Some of the issues identified on comment forms as important to address in the alternatives analysis included:

- Bicycle access and amenities
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility



- Effects on property values
- Congestion caused by buses
- Parking at stations and park-and-ride lots
- Ease of transfers
- Power/energy requirements

Some of the issues identified in emails as important to address in the alternatives analysis included:

- Availability and timeliness of transit service
- Noise and vibration
- Economic development opportunities
- Need for system connectivity
- Need for bicycle amenities
- Potential for express service

The issues that were cited in letters included the following:

- Pedestrian and bicycle accessibility
- Affect on congestion, including around stations
- Crime (safety issues)
- Noise and vibration impacts
- Need for late night service
- Need for express service
- Construction impacts
- Street closures and impacts on community events
- Parking supply and demand
- Impacts on geology and ground water
- Impacts on underground utilities

8.17.8 Applicability of the Comments to the Alternatives Analysis

A significant majority of the comments received during the early scoping period were supportive of the Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study with participants expressing a high degree of knowledge with regard to the transportation needs in the study area and potential transit solutions.

From a transit mode perspective, it was clear that below grade heavy rail transit (HRT) (i.e., subway) is the overwhelming preference of all respondents. At the same time, there were some comments supporting consideration of other technologies including LRT, BRT and monorail. Suggestions for station locations also received considerable attention in the comments received. In addition to the station locations presented at the meetings, a number of other activity centers both within and

outside the study area were identified and documented for possible consideration. For the most part, those station locations identified outside the study area were intended to suggest a need for connections to the regional system as a whole. From an alignment perspective, the suggested Wilshire alignment had considerable support, but there was also positive support for a Santa Monica alignment and for a combination Wilshire and Santa Monica alignment. Stakeholders also expressed interest in a series of north-south alignments which are intended to link the study area with the San Fernando Valley, the Exposition corridor, and LAX and Burbank airports. The desire to serve these north-south linkages was also echoed in the station location suggestions.

There was general agreement on the list of potential evaluation criteria. Some comments indicated a desire to place special emphasis on air quality, system connectivity, safety, expandability to accommodate future demand, user safety (especially for bicyclists and pedestrians) and construction safety in earthquake zones.

All comments were considered in the subsequent analysis of alternatives. The alternatives for study in the next screening included modes, alignments and stations consistent with the comments received. The potential alternatives were evaluated with the criteria as presented, with comments added and results presented taking full note of the issues raised. The public was also given the opportunity to review the screened results and then provide further comment.

8.18 Community Update #1

Following the scoping meetings, Metro continued to engage the public on an ongoing basis during the Alternatives Analysis. In January and February 2008, Metro completed a first series of community meetings to update the public on its progress with the Alternatives Analysis for the Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study. The purpose of these meetings was to keep the public informed at key study milestones about how their comments were incorporated into the decision-making process as alternatives were developed and refined.

8.18.1 Pre-Meeting Activities

Prior to the January/February community update meetings, a series of briefings for elected officials and their staff was held. Information presented at the briefings included a preview of the public presentation and a new project fact sheet.

8.18.1.1 Elected Official Briefings

Two briefings were hosted for local elected officials and their staff as follows:

- Wednesday, January 23, 2008; 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
City of Beverly Hills, City Hall, Municipal Gallery
455 N. Rexford, Beverly Hills

Representatives from the following jurisdictions attended this briefing:

- ▶ City of Santa Monica: Councilman Kevin McKeown
- ▶ State of California: Office of State Senator Sheila Kuehl
- ▶ State of California: Office of Assemblyman Mike Feuer



- ▶ United States: Office of Congressman Henry Waxman
- ▶ United States: Office of Senator Dianne Feinstein
- ▶ City of Beverly Hills: Transportation Department

- Friday, January 25, 2008; 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.
City of Los Angeles, City Hall, Mayor’s Conference Room, 3rd Floor
200 N Spring St, Los Angeles

Representatives from the following offices attended this briefing:

- ▶ City of Los Angeles: Office of Mayor Villaraigosa
- ▶ City of Los Angeles: Office of Councilman LaBonge
- ▶ City of Los Angeles: City Planning Department
- ▶ City of Los Angeles: Office of Councilman Weiss
- ▶ City of Los Angeles: Community Redevelopment Agency
- ▶ City of Los Angeles: Department of Transportation
- ▶ City of Los Angeles: Office of Councilman Parks
- ▶ City of West Hollywood: Department of Transportation
- ▶ State of California: Office of Assembly Speaker Bass

Representatives from the elected offices continued to be supportive of the study, and were interested to learn about potential funding sources and phasing. City of Santa Monica Councilman McKeown expressed his interest in seeing the project ultimately serve that city.

8.18.1.2 Community Notices

Direct Mail

A postal mailer was distributed January 22, 2008 to approximately 1,040 addresses. Offices of local elected officials, governmental agencies, as well as individuals who previously submitted their mailing address were included in the distribution.

Email

The electronic distribution of the meeting notices was sent to 753 email addresses three times prior to the meetings. “Save the date” notices were distributed on January 18th and 21st, 2008. An additional distribution of the meeting notice took place January 30th. The content of the email was identical to the postal mailer. As in the past, Metro relied extensively on email distribution, requesting that email contacts forward meeting information to their memberships, friends and colleagues.

Media

Metro distributed a media release on January 22, 2008. The media release was then forwarded to a number of media contacts that had been made over the course of the project, including study area print media and on-line blogs.

8.18.2 Summary of Public Comment at Community Update Meeting #1

8.18.2.1 Summary of Comments

In January/February 2008 a second series of meetings was held to present the preliminary set of 17 build alternatives developed in response to comments heard during the early scoping period. These alternatives included various alignment options for a subway along the Wilshire Boulevard corridor, a subway along the Santa Monica Boulevard corridor, a combined subway along both the Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevard corridors, some aerial options (including elevated heavy rail, light rail & monorail), and a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) option. Metro is also required to study a No Build alternative as well as a Transportation Systems Management alternative that provides basic improvements to the existing transit system.

Approximately 327 people attended the community meetings in January and February, with about 116 people submitting either verbal or written comments. 150 comments were submitted outside of the community update meetings. Comments were submitted via postal mail, email, and through the project webpage. There was almost unanimous support to move forward with the study, even with noise and vibration concerns from Westwood and Spaulding Square residents. Submitted comments emphasized the need for transit connections to the Exposition Light Rail Transit line currently under construction to Culver City. In addition, 4 media outlets attended the meetings to report on the progress of the Westside Extension study. These included print, broadcast and online media.

The Community Update Meetings were scheduled as follows:

- Meeting #1: Mid-City
Los Angeles County Museum of Art – West
5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles
Thursday, January 31, 2008; 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
113 people signed in at this meeting, and 29 individuals elected to speak. Metro received 15 written comments at the end of this meeting.
- Meeting #2: Westwood
Westwood Presbyterian Church
10822 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles
Tuesday, February 5, 2008; 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
106 people signed in at this meeting, and 25 individuals elected to speak. Metro received 15 written comments at the end of this meeting.
- Meeting #3: West Hollywood
Plummer Park
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood
Wednesday, February 6, 2008; 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
108 people signed in at this meeting, and 23 individuals elected to speak. Metro received 9 written comments at the end of this meeting.

8.18.2.2 Comments Related to Purpose and Need

The types of comments made with regard to the Purpose and Need for transit improvements in the Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study Area focused on the difficulty associated with traveling by

car or bus on the Westside due to extreme and often all-day congestion, and the growing recognition of the need for a mass transit alternative.

8.18.2.3 Comments Related to Alternatives

The majority of comments supported the Combined Wilshire/Santa Monica Boulevard alignments (Alternatives 11 and 16). There was support for multi-modal transit connections, particularly connections to the Exposition Light Rail Transit line and to the San Fernando Valley. Many of the comments that voiced support for the combined alignments noted a clear priority for the Wilshire Boulevard alignment over the Santa Monica Boulevard alignment provided funding both projects is not possible.

8.18.2.4 Comments Related to Modes

There was strong support for heavy rail transit to be located below grade.

8.18.2.5 Comments Related to Stations

The majority of comments received supported Alternatives 1, 11, and 16. These alternatives include connections to Cedars-Sinai, the Beverly Center and the Grove and Farmers Market shopping area. A few people commented on the need for a Crenshaw station and/or a north south connection to Wilshire Boulevard from the Crenshaw corridor.

Transit stops were recommended at Federal, Wilshire/Western, Wilshire/La Brea, Wilshire/Fairfax, Wilshire/San Vicente, Wilshire/La Cienega, and Cedars Sinai.

8.18.2.6 Comments Related to Alignments

The majority of those who commented on the project supported alignments that follow both Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards. Both lines would extend respectively from the Wilshire/Western Purple line and Hollywood/Highland Red line. One person favored the alignment traveling through the Cahuenga pass to help San Fernando Valley commuters.

8.18.2.7 Comments Related to Evaluation Criteria

Residents of the Westwood/Comstock Hills and Spaulding Square communities expressed concerns regarding noise and vibration during construction and operation of a below-grade system.

There were no additional concerns directly related to the evaluation criteria.

8.18.2.8 Comments Related to Scope of the Analysis

There was overwhelming support for a heavy rail subway system for the Westside. From the speaker comments as well as the written comments received in support of the subway, about half of the people supported a subway alignment down Wilshire Boulevard (Alternative 1), while the other half wanted a combination alignment that would provide service to both Wilshire as well as Hollywood/West Hollywood (Alternatives 11 or 16). Of those supporting only the Wilshire alignment, most stated that this was due to funding challenges, and the need to get something built and operating relatively quickly. Of those supporting the combination alignment, it was well-understood that the Wilshire segment would likely have to be constructed first.



8.19 Community Update #2

8.19.1 Pre-Meeting Activities

Briefings for elected officials, their staff and city agencies were held prior to the May community meetings.

8.19.1.1 Elected Official Briefings

Two briefings were hosted for local elected official and their staff as follows:

- Monday, April 28, 2008; 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.
City of Beverly Hills, City Hall, Municipal Gallery
455 N. Rexford, Beverly Hills

Representatives from the following jurisdictions attended the April 28th briefing:

- ▶ State of California: Office of State Senator Sheila Kuehl
- ▶ State of California: Office of Assemblyman Mike Feuer
- ▶ United States: Office of Congressman Henry Waxman
- ▶ United States: Office of Senator Dianne Feinstein
- ▶ City of Beverly Hills: Transportation Department

- Wednesday, April 30, 2008; 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.
City of Los Angeles, City Hall, Mayor's Conference Room, 3rd Floor
200 N Spring St, Los Angeles

Representatives from the following offices attended the April 30th briefing:

- ▶ City of Los Angeles: Office of Mayor Villaraigosa
- ▶ City of Los Angeles: Office of Councilman LaBonge
- ▶ City of Los Angeles: City Planning Department
- ▶ City of Los Angeles: Office of Councilman Weiss
- ▶ City of Los Angeles: Community Redevelopment Agency
- ▶ City of Los Angeles: Department of Transportation
- ▶ City of Los Angeles: Office of Councilman Parks
- ▶ City of West Hollywood: Department of Transportation

8.19.1.2 Community Notices

Direct Mail

A postal mailer was distributed April 16, 2008 to approximately 1,001 addresses. Offices of local elected officials, governmental agencies, as well as individuals who previously submitted their mailing address at community meetings were included in the distribution.

Email

The electronic distribution of the meeting notices was sent to 801 email addresses two times prior to the meetings. A “save the date” was distributed on April 16, 2008. An additional distribution of the meeting notice took place April 28th. The content of the email was identical to the postal mailer. As in the past, Metro relied extensively on email distribution, requesting that email contacts forward meeting information to their memberships, friends and colleagues.

Media

Metro distributed a media release April 16, 2008. The media release was then forwarded to a number of media contacts that had been made over the course of the project, including study area print media and on-line blogs.

Facebook

By this time, Metro had established the “Metro Westside Extension” group on the social networking site, Facebook. Each of the 4 community meetings was added as an event on this site.

8.19.2 Summary of Comments

Metro continued to refine its project alternatives from the initial 17 identified for study after the scoping process to the seven alternatives presented to the public in May 2008. The five highest performing build alternatives were refined based on evaluation criteria which includes mobility improvements, transit-supportive land uses, cost effectiveness, feasibility, equity, environmental considerations and, very importantly, public acceptance. These alternatives have been narrowed to encompass two Wilshire Boulevard subway alternatives, two Combined Wilshire/Santa Monica Boulevard alternatives, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along with the required the Transportation System Management (TSM) and no-build alternatives.

The second round of Community Update Meetings was scheduled as follows:

- Meeting #1: Mid-City
Los Angeles County Museum of Art – West
5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles
Monday, May 5, 2008; 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
70 people signed in at this meeting, and 19 individuals elected to speak. Metro received 6 written comments at the end of this meeting.
- Meeting #2: Westwood
Westwood Presbyterian Church
10822 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles
Tuesday, May 6, 2008; 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
47 people signed in at this meeting, and 8 individuals elected to speak. Metro received 4 written comments at the end of this meeting.
- Meeting #3 Santa Monica:
Santa Monica Public Library – Multipurpose Room, 2nd Floor
601 Santa Monica Boulevard, Santa Monica
Thursday, May 8, 2008; 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
64 people signed in at this meeting, and 20 individuals elected to speak. Metro received 11 written comments at the end of this meeting.

- Meeting #4 West Hollywood
Plummer Park
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood
Monday, May 12, 2008; 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
69 people signed in at this meeting, and 19 individuals elected to speak. Metro received 8 written comments at the end of this meeting.

Approximately 250 people attended the May community update meetings. Public comments were provided by 66 speakers at four community update meetings.

Comment forms were completed by 29 people and submitted at the community update meetings or returned to Metro after the meetings. The types of comments made with regard to the Purpose and Need for transit improvements in the Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study Area focused on traffic congestion and extended travel times on existing bus transit routes including Rapid and Rapid Express lines.

Email comments were received from 141 people during the community update meetings. Typical comments focused on existing traffic congestion and the need for system connectivity. Four comments related to the project study were received via Facebook. These comments were in favor of the project, and in most cases cited support for Alternatives 11 and 16. In addition, 4 media outlets attended the meetings to report on the progress of the Westside Extension study. These included print, broadcast and online media.

8.19.2.1 Comments Related to Purpose and Need

The types of comments made with regard to transit improvements in the Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study Area focused on the difficulty associated with traveling by car or bus on the Westside due to extreme and often all-day congestion, and the growing recognition of the need for a mass transit alternative. There was also discussion of the need for local connections and shuttles to make the transit system more accessible to a wider range of residential and employment areas. Also mentioned was the need for enhanced nighttime service, given the entertainment venues in the study area.

8.19.2.2 Comments Related to Alternatives

The majority of comments continued to support the combined Wilshire/Santa Monica Boulevard alignments (Alternatives 11 and 16). Many of the comments that voiced support for the combined alignments noted a clear priority for the Wilshire Boulevard alignment over the Santa Monica Boulevard alignment, if funding both projects was not possible. If funding for both projects was not possible, Alternative 1 was the preferred alternative.

8.19.2.3 Comments Related to Modes

Consistently throughout the study, there has been nearly unanimous support for the chosen alignment to be located below grade.

8.19.2.4 Comments Related to Stations

There was agreement that stations identified during the alternatives analysis should satisfy the needs of the community. There was more support for a station at Cedars-Sinai Hospital and Beverly Center

than for the Grove and Farmers Market. There was concern that if both stations were included, or only the Grove/Farmers Market had a station that travel times could be compromised.

The Crenshaw/Wilshire potential station received more support than criticism. Advocates for a Crenshaw/Wilshire station highlighted the need for system connectivity, and the potential ridership for the station. Those not in support of the station cited concerns that a station would overwhelm the lower-density nature of the neighborhood.

The community noted a need for two stations to accommodate transit users in the Westwood neighborhoods close to UCLA. There were requests for stations to be located close to the UCLA campus as well as one at Wilshire/Westwood.

Finally, there were requests from the community to have the subway extension terminus at Ocean Boulevard in Santa Monica.

8.19.2.5 Comments Related to Alignments

The majority of those who commented on the project continued to support alignments that follow both Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards, extending respectively from the Wilshire/Western Purple line and Hollywood/Highland Red line stations.

8.19.2.6 Comments Related to Evaluation Criteria

Of the comments received, the community felt that creating more system connections should be a top priority for Metro. They would like to see a project that uses the most effective alignment and station locations to move the most amount of people as quickly as possible.

Concerns regarding noise and vibration during construction and operation remained. Residents are concerned about the potential impact of tunneling below their homes, and would like more information about possible mitigation measures.

8.19.2.7 Comments Related to Scope of the Analysis

There continues to be a tremendous amount of community support for the overall project. The community understands the need for the project as traffic congestion continues to be problematic throughout the project study area. The majority of those submitting comments prefer that extensions from both the Red and Purple lines take place. However, given that funding may only be available for one project, the community appears to prefer the Purple line be extended first.

Additionally, there were several comments received regarding the need to support a ½ cent sales tax increase to raise revenue to build the subway and that could be utilized as matching local funds to secure federal funding. Comments also noted support for station amenities, north-south connectors, and a station at Crenshaw (which is currently considered optional). Further comments noted competition for funding with the Exposition Light Rail line, support for a connection between the subway and the Exposition Light Rail line, and the need to service employment and shopping areas at Cedars-Sinai, the Grove and the Beverly Center. Westwood also was mentioned as possibly needing additional stops to serve both the employment areas and the UCLA campus. Tunneling through the Santa Monica Mountains on the Westside was also mentioned. Several people felt that ridership would increase with access to the Westside by people living in the San Fernando Valley who would benefit with a connection to the existing Red Line.



8.20 Community Update #3

8.20.1 Pre-Meeting Activities

Prior to the September community update meetings, a series of briefings for elected officials and their staff was held. A preview of the PowerPoint presentation was shared and Metro obtained feedback from the various cities and elected officials involved related to their preferred alignments, station locations, and parking. All of the elected officials, their staff and city staff in attendance were supportive of the project.

8.20.1.1 Elected Official Briefings

Two meetings were held for elected officials, their deputies and city staff as follows:

August 21, 2008; 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

West Hollywood City Hall, Emergency Operations Center
8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood

Tuesday, August 26, 2008; 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

City of Los Angeles, City Hall, Mayor's Conference Room, 3rd Floor
200 N Spring St, Los Angeles

Representatives from the August 21st meeting included the following:

- City of West Hollywood
- City of Beverly Hills
- Office of Representative Henry Waxman
- Office of Speaker Karen Bass
- Office of Metro Board Member Pam O'Connor
- Office of City of Los Angeles Councilmember Jack Weiss
- Office of California Senator Mark Ridley Thomas
- Office of US Senator Diane Feinstein

Representatives from the August 26th meeting included the following:

- City of Los Angeles (Community Redevelopment Agency, Department of Transportation)
- Office of City of Los Angeles Councilmember Jack Weiss
- Office of City of Los Angeles Councilmember Bill Rosendahl
- Office of the Mayor, City of Los Angeles
- Office of City of Los Angeles Councilmember Bernard Parks

8.20.1.2 Community Notices

Direct Mail

On August 20th, 2008 an invitation to attend a meeting announcing the Alternatives Analysis results was mailed to approximately 1,000 addresses. Included in the mailing were local elected officials, government agencies, as well as individuals who previously submitted their mailing address at community meetings were included in the distribution.

Email

The electronic distribution of the meeting notices was sent to 1,084 email addresses. In mid-August a save the date notice was sent out and on August 20th, a more detailed notice was e-mailed to both the project database as well as the databases of key organizations and elected officials that are actively participating in the project.

Media

Metro distributed a media release April 20, 2008. The media release was then forwarded to a number of media contacts that had been made over the course of the project, including study area print media and on-line blogs.

Facebook

Metro posted information about all five of the community update meetings as events on “Metro Westside Extension” group on the social networking site Facebook.

8.20.2 Summary of Comments

In September, 2008, Metro held the final round of community meetings for the Alternatives Analysis phase of the Westside Extension study to provide stakeholders with its preliminary recommendations based on public input and technical analysis conducted over the past 12 months. Most public input was in support of Alternative 1 and Alternative 11 which will be presented to the Metro Board of Directors in fall 2008 to obtain approval for moving into the next Draft Environmental Impact Report/Draft Environmental Impact Study phase of the project.

Approximately 330 people attended the 5 workshops held throughout the study area on September 3, 4, 6, 8 and 10. Public comments were made verbally at the meetings by 92 speakers and 38 people submitted written comments at the meetings, while an additional 13 people submitted their comments via e-mail and over 100 people sent in their comments via regular mail. In addition, 10 media outlets attended the meetings to report on the progress of the Westside Extension study. These included print, broadcast and online media. Two comments were left on Facebook while over one hundred others signed up to join the Metro Westside Extension Facebook Group. Comments focused on stakeholders’ alignment preferences, station locations and connectivity issues. In addition, there were numerous comments in support of building the project as soon as possible because of the extreme congestion faced by Westside residents and commuters, as well as many comments related to the need for this project to make Los Angeles a more competitive destination with other large cities throughout the world that have efficient transit systems.

The public meetings were held as follows:

- Meeting #1: City of Santa Monica
Wednesday, September 3, 6 – 8 p.m.
Santa Monica Public Library, Auditorium, 1st Floor
601 Santa Monica Boulevard, Santa Monica

75 people signed into the Santa Monica meeting; there were 17 speakers and 13 written comments submitted.
- Meeting #2: City of West Hollywood
Thursday, September 4, 6 – 8pm
Plummer Park
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood

66 people signed into the West Hollywood meeting; there were 18 speakers and 5 written comments submitted.
- Meeting #3: City of Beverly Hills
Saturday, September 6, 2 – 4 p.m.
Beverly Hills Public Library – Auditorium, 2nd Floor
444 N Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills

52 people signed into the Beverly Hills meeting; there were 18 speakers and 6 written comments turned in.
- Meeting #4: Wilshire/Fairfax area
Monday, September 8, 6 – 8 p.m.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) West - Terrace Room, 5th Floor
5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles

66 people signed into the LACMA meeting; there were 18 speakers and 5 written comments submitted.
- Meeting #5: Westwood area
Wednesday, September 10, 6 – 8 p.m.
Westwood Presbyterian Church
10822 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles

71 people signed into the Westwood meeting; there were 21 speakers and 9 written comments submitted.

8.20.2.1 Comments Related to Purpose and Need

Westside residents, and those traveling to the Westside for work or pleasure, repeatedly asked for the Westside Extension project to be built quickly. They reiterated how the congestion on this side of town is unmanageable and that this project would provide options for those who wish to get out of their cars. In addition, stakeholders believe that since Los Angeles is the second largest city in the United States, an efficient public transit system is needed in order for the City and the County to continue to attract jobs, tourists and other economic drivers of the local economy.

8.20.2.2 Comments Related to Alternatives

Support for both Alternative 1 and 11 were provided at the public meetings. While most community members are in favor of both alignments being built, they recognize that it makes more sense to build Alternative 1 before proceeding with Alternative 11. Still other community members were interested in seeing both alignments built simultaneously.

8.20.2.3 Comments Related to Modes

Most all of the stakeholders that provided comment were in agreement that Metro had narrowed the modes to subway only. Stakeholders overwhelmingly supported that this is the only option that could effectively manage Westside congestion, and is the system needed by a world class city such as Los Angeles. However, there were a few select stakeholders who were still interested in seeing Personal Rapid Transit, monorail and Bus Rapid Transit being carried through the environmental study process.

8.20.2.4 Comments Related to Stations

Stakeholders frequently commented on providing stations that make the most sense for north and south connections to the line. Many stated that a connection with the Crenshaw area was necessary as well as a connection to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). Metro received mixed comments about parking at the stations. Some were very interested in seeing parking at stations to allow residents who couldn't walk or easily take a bus to the line to have access, while others believe that the Westside is congested enough and that providing parking would only increase congestion. In addition, participants provided their personal preferences for a variety of stations.

8.20.2.5 Comments Related to Alignments

Community members were significantly in favor of moving both Alternative 1 and Alternative 11 forward into the environmental process and would like to have both alignments built. Attendees felt that ridership on both alignments is extremely high. Others commented on the need for having an alignment that goes to LAX and alignments that plan for future growth of the Metro rail system.

8.20.2.6 Comments Related to Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria which were used to narrow the Alternatives have remained the same throughout the study. No additional comments related to evaluation criteria were mentioned in this round of meetings.

8.20.2.7 Comments Related to Scope of the Analysis

Community members were pleased overall with the progress that Metro has made in the Alternatives Analysis Study. Most all individuals were in favor of subway and in favor of one of the Alternatives or both Alternative 1 and 11. They commented that they were pleased Metro had listened to what they had been saying throughout the study process and it was reflected in the Alternatives Analysis results. Community members also commented on the regional benefits that this project would bring to all of Los Angeles County and they stressed how important it is to move it forward as quickly as possible.

Many community members commented on the need for Measure R, the ½ sales tax initiative on the November 2008 ballot, to provide funding for this as well as other transit projects in Los Angeles

County. Most everyone who commented was in favor of Measure R, though there were a few community members who were in opposition of Measure R.

In addition, various comments were received related to the need for north and south connections to this subway and there were mixed comments about the need for parking at stations.

8.21 Collateral Materials

In order to inform and update stakeholders about the project's progress, the outreach team developed numerous pieces of collateral materials for distribution through various channels and mediums of communication. All collateral materials are posted to the project website and updated on an as-needed basis.

The following collateral materials have been developed to date:

- Frequently Asked Questions – The FAQs provide stakeholders with a project description and basic project facts.
- Project Schedule – A project schedule was developed to keep stakeholders apprised of the study's progress and key milestones.
- Summary Newsletters – One newsletter summarizing the results of the study will be developed and circulated at the culmination of the AA providing stakeholders with the results of the process and a schedule for next steps.

Fact Sheets – Metro has developed three Fact Sheets and will develop a fourth Fact Sheet for the Study as follows:

- Fact Sheet # 1 is a summary of background, purpose and need for the Westside Extension, a project overview and schedule for the study period.
- Fact Sheet # 2 is a summary of the early scoping process, including the public meetings, and comments received at the meetings.
- Fact Sheet #3 presents a re-cap of the project thus far and sets for the schedule for narrowing the alternatives and details of the analysis process.
- Fact Sheet #4 will present a recap of the study, its conclusions and the alternatives recommended for further study.

Business Cards – Small, informational and easily distributed business cards containing the project's website address, info-line telephone number and Facebook group name were produced and distributed at both public update and stakeholder meetings.

8.22 Project Website

The project website www.metro.net/westside serves as a central clearing house where the public can go to obtain all project-related information. The website is updated frequently and also contains maps of the alignments being studied and graphics of how the potential routes and stations may appear. All collateral materials can be found at the website as well as the scoping report, scoping comments and PowerPoint presentations made at public meetings. The website also contains a

“Contact Us” section where people can give their input to the Study, ask questions, and have themselves added to the Study data base to be notified of future meetings and Study progress.

8.23 Project Information Line

In addition to the other forms of communication made available to stakeholders, such as e-mail, regular mail and the internet, a project telephone information line was set up for the public. This telephone line is available to English, and Spanish speaking callers and checked on a daily basis. Calls and requests are returned promptly upon receiving a message. A log of all incoming calls, subject of the calls and responses to the callers is being maintained. The project line is 213.922.6934.

8.24 Project Video

A 16-minute video featuring Metro staff was developed to coincide with and reflect the content of the early scoping meetings. This video provides historical background on the study, its need and purpose as well as explains the Alternatives Analysis process. It also solicits stakeholders’ opinions and encourages them to submit comments on the project modes and alignments. This video was posted on Metro’s website during the early scoping meetings and may be viewed on Metro’s website at www.metro.net/westside

8.25 Media Relations

8.25.1 Print and Broadcast Media

Prior to each series of scoping and public update meetings, press releases were sent out to over 100 media outlets made up of regional and local print media, broadcast media and online media including blogs. In addition, advertisements were placed in local and ethnic media throughout the Westside Extension Corridor and posted in community calendars when available. For the second and third public update meetings, Metro used Facebook to publicize its meetings among the Metro Westside Extension (MWE) group members.

Around key study milestones, there was generally a pronounced up-tick in news stories. Because of the nature of online media and blogs, these stories generated significant online discussion from the public. Monitoring this “virtual” discussion allowed Metro to see how the public was reacting to Study developments in real time. As warranted, Metro would participate in these online discussions if an important technical correction was needed. However, we noted that members of the public were usually quick to provide the accurate information from the Study. As the Study progressed, Metro participated with greater frequency in these discussions to invite participants to view the official Study material on the Metro website, send their views and questions in to be part of the official Study record, to become part of the Study data base, and to invite them to join the Metro Westside Extension group on the social networking site Facebook.

8.25.2 New Media

New media is an ever-changing but widely used medium for communicating vital information quickly and effectively. Utilizing new media broadens public awareness and participation, and allows the efficient engagement of its stakeholders on familiar territory. In addition to blogs, tech savvy stakeholders are employing online tools such as Facebook to disseminate information.

Recognizing that the use of new media tools is relatively new to many government agencies, Metro committed itself to exploring and pursuing appropriate online media to proactively engage a full range of stakeholders. To this end, Metro established the Metro Westside Extension (MWE) Facebook group designed to reach out to a relatively untapped audience of college students and young adults. Facebook is a prime example of a communications need meeting a technological opportunity. Launched in April 2008, the MWE Facebook site has registered over 1,100 unique users that are actively engaged in conversation about the project.

Facebook is a social network that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. People use Facebook to keep up with friends, upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, and learn more about the people they meet. Facebook has served as an online compliment to the Study website. Additionally, this new media element of outreach expands current visibility encouraging any demographic we target to access/join.



Assigned administrators updated the site with events, reports, videos and presentations. The Facebook group is monitored daily by the project team and all comments left on group’s “discussion board,” “wall,” and on links provided were captured in a tracking matrix as well as page PDFs. The content was refreshed frequently to ensure our viral stakeholders were provided with the most accurate information possible. Members of the MWE were also able to RSVP to Metro events such as the community update meetings and converse with each other about the project.