



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: October 5, 2010
To: Honorable Mayor & City Council
From: Susan Healy Keene, AICP, Director of Community Development
David Gustavson, Director of Public Works
Subject: Metro Westside Subway Extension Draft Environmental Impact
Statement/ Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR)
Attachments:

INTRODUCTION

Metro has released a combined Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) for the Westside Subway Extension with proposed stops in Beverly Hills near Wilshire/La Cienega, and Wilshire/Beverly (referred to as Wilshire/Rodeo in the document), and a proposed station near Beverly Hills in Century City. The City Council last discussed the Westside Subway Extension as part of the study session on August 3. This report frames a discussion of the greater policy considerations relating to the proposed subway station locations and potential rail alignments in and near the City of Beverly Hills.

City staff, along with the geological consulting firm Shannon & Wilson, Inc. are reviewing the DEIS/DEIR. A comment letter outlining the City's position on options studied in the document is being drafted. This letter, along with a list of technical comments on the environmental analysis will be sent to Metro. Direction provided during this study session will inform the final letter, which will be provided to the City Council in the October 19 meeting packet, and submitted to Metro on October 20.

On Monday, September 27, Metro held a public meeting at Roxbury Park to hear comments on the environmental document including the proposed station location and alignment options. The meeting was attended by approximately 200 residents who overwhelmingly supported a track alignment on Wilshire and Santa Monica between the Wilshire/Rodeo station and the Century City station and did not support a track alignment that would place the subway line beneath the Beverly Hills High School or residential property.

On October 28, the Metro Board plans to select a "locally preferred alternative". This alternative will be one of the five alternatives outlined in the DEIS/DEIR. While the overall alignment will be selected as part of the "locally preferred alternative," the Metro Board may chose to select more than one option for station location and track alignment

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in specific areas to be included in the FEIS/FEIR and studied further in the preliminary engineering process. This would defer the final selection of certain station locations until additional study and analysis has been conducted.

DISCUSSION

The Westside Subway Extension DEIS/DEIR studies alternatives for extending the existing Purple Line subway from the existing Wilshire/ Western station through the City of Beverly Hills. Five alternatives, two segmented build-outs, and a series of options for station locations and track alignments were studied in the report.

City staff and the geological consulting firm Shannon & Wilson are reviewing the combined draft document, with the City's consultant focusing on geological aspects of the project such as tunneling technology, seismic issues, and noise and vibration. The consultant's report will be available before the October 19 meeting.

Alternatives Studied

All five alternatives analyzed in the report would follow the same general alignment through Beverly Hills, with stations proposed in the City at Wilshire/La Cienega, and Wilshire/Rodeo. These proposed station locations are consistent with City's Mass Transit Committee recommendations adopted by the City Council in August 2009. All alignments analyzed assume that the track alignment would be located underneath Wilshire Boulevard from the City limit on the east, through the City and then veer southward and follow Santa Monica to the Century City station that would be located at Santa Monica and Avenue of the Stars. An additional line is proposed in two of the alternatives (Alternatives 4 & 5) that would connect the Westside Subway Extension (near La Cienega Blvd) to the Red Line at the Hollywood/Highland Station.

Alternatives Studied in the DEIS/DEIR

	Name	Description
	No Build Alternative	No new infrastructure or transit service.
	Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative	More frequent bus service and existing subway service.
Alternative 1	Wilshire/Western to Westwood/UCLA Extension	Extends Purple Line from Wilshire/Western to Westwood/UCLA along Wilshire Blvd.
Alternative 2	Wilshire/Western to VA Hospital Campus Extension	Extends Purple Line from Wilshire/Western to VA Hospital Campus along Wilshire Blvd.
Alternative 3	Wilshire/Western to Santa Monica Extension	Extends Purple Line from Wilshire/Western to Santa Monica along Wilshire Blvd.
Alternative 4	West Hollywood Extension and Wilshire/Western to Westwood/UCLA Extension	Extends the Purple Line from Wilshire/Western to Westwood/UCLA along Wilshire Blvd and adds a line connecting the Red Line at Hollywood/Highland to the Purple Line in Beverly Hills.
Alternative 5	West Hollywood Extension and Wilshire/Western to Santa Monica Extension	Extends the Purple Line from Wilshire/Western to Santa Monica and adds a line connecting the Red Line at Hollywood/Highland to the Purple Line in Beverly Hills.

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Possible Build Segments

In addition to the final subway extension lengths considered in the DEIS/DEIR, the document considers two scenarios in which Alternative 1 is built in segments. These two interim scenarios are studied to determine which would be the best terminus for an initial phase of implementation in the event that the project must be built in phases over time (page S-32). The first, MOS 1, would stop east of Beverly Hills at Fairfax, and the second, MOS 2, would extend through the City to Century City.

Build Segments Studied in the DEIS/DEIR

	Name	Description
MOS 1	Minimal Operating Segment 1	Considers a scenario in which Alternative 1 is built in segments. This segment would end at Wilshire/Fairfax.
MOS 2	Minimal Operating Segment 2	Considers a scenario in which Alternative 1 is built in segments. This segment would end at Century City.

Options for Stations and Track Alignments

Within the five alternatives, options are analyzed for alignments and station locations. This section summarizes options studied for stations in and near Beverly Hills. A single option for the Wilshire/ Rodeo station was studied in the document; however two possible location options were studied for both the Century City station and the La Cienega station:

- Wilshire/La Cienega Station – Options are to locate station on the eastside, or the westside of the intersection.
- Wilshire/Rodeo Station – One option is proposed. This option is consistent with past community support
- Century City Station – Options are to locate station at Santa Monica Boulevard, or at Constellation Avenue. If located at Constellation Avenue, two options were studied for aligning the tracks between the Wilshire/Rodeo station and this station. Both alignments would place the subway beneath the Beverly Hills High School property. One alignment (“Constellation South”) also places the subway beneath homes.

Wilshire/La Cienega Station

<i>Options Studied</i>	<i>Description</i>
Station East of La Cienega Entrances on north and south sides of Wilshire (Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5)	Locates the proposed station on Wilshire at La Cienega on the east side of the Wilshire/La Cienega intersection. The West Hollywood line would connect to the Purple Line via a junction box to be located beneath the Wilshire/Robertson Blvds intersection. Transfers along the line would occur at the Wilshire/Rodeo Station.

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Station West of La Cienega Entrances on north side of Wilshire (“Option 3 - La Cienega Station West of La Cienega with Transfer”)	Locates the proposed station on Wilshire at La Cienega on the west side of the Wilshire/La Cienega intersection rather than the eastside. Connects the West Hollywood line proposed in Alternative 4 and Alternative 5 directly into the La Cienega station and avoids a junction box at Wilshire/ Robertson.
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Considerations: On November 4, 2009, Metro held a station planning meeting at Beverly Hills City Hall. The meeting was well attended and achieved strong consensus that the station should be located on the east side of La Cienega Boulevard due to higher concentration of commercial buildings and multiple family residences. Locating the station on the eastside of the La Cienega intersection, with proposed station entrances on both the north and south sides of Wilshire Boulevard (considered in the document) is consistent with the outcome of this community meeting.

Locating the below ground loading platform on the western side of the intersection would allow transfers between a potential West Hollywood line without a connecting structure at Robertson Boulevard, and would also reduce the number of residential properties that the possible West Hollywood line (Alternatives 4 & 5) would need to go beneath. At this time the West Hollywood line is unfunded and has not been included in Metro’s Long Range Transportation Plan.

Wilshire/Rodeo Station

<i>Option Studied</i>	<i>Description</i>
Station located beneath Wilshire between Beverly and Camden Drives Entrances on all sides of the Wilshire/Beverly intersection (Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5)	A single option is studied in the environmental document. This location is consistent with the recommendation of the Mass Transit Committee and past City Council support.

Considerations: This station is proposed consistent with past community support. Once the subway project enters the preliminary engineering phase of the process it is anticipated that considerations for this station area will involve construction aspects, such as staging areas, construction hours, haul routes, detours, and other construction phase related issues.

Century City Station

<i>Options Studied</i>	<i>Description</i>
Santa Monica Boulevard (Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5)	Locate station on Santa Monica Blvd at Avenue of the Stars. Train tracks would be aligned beneath existing roadways and commercial properties.
Constellation Avenue (Option 4)	Locate station at Constellation Avenue and Avenue of the Stars (Option 4). Two possible train track alignments were studied for this option. Both alignments would be located beneath the Beverly

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Hills High School property, and the “Constellation South” alignment would be located beneath residential properties in the Beverly Hills.

- “Constellation North” Alignment – (Constellation via Lasky Drive) Aligns the train tracks from the Wilshire/Rodeo Station to the Constellation Station via Lasky Drive.
 - “Constellation South” Alignment – Aligns the train tracks from the Wilshire/Rodeo Station to the Constellation Station following a direct route.
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The DEIS/DEIR presents two different options for the Century City station location. The first option would locate the station at Santa Monica and Avenue of the Stars, with the rail alignment following the Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevard roadways. The second option would locate the station at Constellation Avenue and Avenue of the Stars. This second option would require the train tracks to run below the Beverly Hills High School, and depending on the alignment, potentially beneath residential properties in the City of Beverly Hills.

The DEIS/DEIR states that locating the station at Constellation would save \$4.1 million in costs for building the station. The amount of track needed to reach the Constellation location however would be greater and therefore a station at Constellation could increase the overall capital cost by \$60.4 million (Page S-62).

The DEIS/DEIR does not consider differences in ridership between the two station location options for Century City. Ridership counts are estimated for a station located at Santa Monica Boulevard and Avenue of the Stars for Alternative 5 (where the extension reaches City of Santa Monica, and the West Hollywood line is built), and for Alternative 1 (where the extension reaches Westwood/UCLA and the West Hollywood line is not built) but under a scenario where the subway extension must be built in phases (Minimal Operating Segments, or “MOS”) and the subway extension temporarily ends at Century City (MOS 2) (Pages 3-52 & 3-53)

Considerations. There are several aspects to consider regarding the location of the Century City station and the alignment of the tracks between that station and the Wilshire/ Rodeo station in Beverly Hills. Aspects include the following:

- Safety
- Property Values
- Potential for Noise and Vibration
- Potential Limitations to Future Development
- Use of Beverly Hills High School during Emergencies.

The Beverly Hills High School is designated as a potential shelter in the City’s Emergency Operations Plan; however the school is one of several possible shelter sites (all schools and recreation and parks facilities are designated shelters). Use of a site as a shelter after a disaster is based on many variables, including the type and magnitude of the disaster and the shelter needs of the community.

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NEXT STEPS

Staff will finalize the letter being drafted based on direction from the City Council and will provide that letter in the October 19 meeting packet before submitting it to Metro on October 20. On October 28, the Metro Board plans to select a “locally preferred alternative”. This is the alternative that will be further studied in the Final environmental document (FEIS/FEIR) and that will enter the preliminary engineering phase of the project. The locally preferred alternative will include one of the five alternatives studied in the DEIS/DEIR, one of the two Minimal Operating Segments (MOS) studied in case the Westside Subway Extension is not able to be built all at once, and one or more of the options considered for specific station areas. Including more than one option for station location and track alignment in the locally preferred alternative would defer final selection of certain station locations until additional study and analysis has been conducted.

Once the project enters the preliminary engineering phase more detailed analysis of the station areas will be conducted, including entrance locations, materials staging, and construction hours. The City will continue to work with Metro to assure that stations are designed for the community and to assure that construction related issues are addressed and impacts to the community are limited to the greatest extent possible. In the preliminary engineering phase the City has the opportunity to plan the above ground portions of the stations collaboratively with Metro.

CITY POSITION

The following positions on key concerns are recommended for inclusion in the letter to Metro on the Westside Subway Extension:

- The City Strongly Supports the Westside Subway Extension. On several occasions the City Council has endorsed the extension of the subway through the City of Beverly Hills along Wilshire Boulevard with stations at Wilshire/ La Cienega and Wilshire/Beverly-Rodeo.
- Extend the Subway through the City in the Initial Phase. Staff recommends that the letter state “if the subway project must be built in phases that the initial phase be built to Century City”.
- Santa Monica Blvd Track Alignment to Century City. The City’s adoption of the Mass Transit Committee recommendations includes a preference for the Santa Monica Boulevard alignment. Staff proposes that the letter strongly support the Santa Monica Boulevard alignment and oppose the Constellation South alignment. Staff recommends that the letter indicate that further studies should be conducted for a Constellation North alignment, in the event that the Metro Board chooses to analyze two options as part of the FEIS/FEIR.
- Concerns Regarding Tunneling Under Residential Properties. Noise, vibration, property values
- Concerns Regarding Tunneling Under the Beverly Hills High School. Emergency response, liability, potential future site development
- Eastside of Intersection Station Location, Station Entrances on North and South side of Wilshire at LA Cienega. There is community support for locating the

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station on the east side of La Cienega Boulevard with station entrances on both the north and south sides of Wilshire Boulevard.

- Station Entrances on North and South side of Wilshire at Rodeo (Beverly) Station.
- Robertson Connection Box not Located in the Wilshire/Robertson Intersection. If the West Hollywood line were constructed, and the Wilshire/ La Cienega station loading platform was located on the eastside of the La Cienega intersection, a below ground connection structure would need to be built to connect the West Hollywood line to the Purple Line in Beverly Hills. The DEIS/DEIR locates this structure beneath the intersection of Wilshire and Robertson Boulevards. Staff is concerned that construction of the structure may close both Robertson and Wilshire Boulevards for certain periods of time, and proposes a recommendation that if the structure is needed, to locate it under Wilshire, on one side, or the other, of the intersection with Robertson.
- Minimize Potential Construction Impacts during Construction. Construction of the stations will require materials staging, and in the initial phase of construction will require street closures. Staff recommends that the letter state that “the City will continue to work with Metro to assure that potential impacts to the community during construction are minimized.”

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Consider the options proposed in the draft environmental document, the considerations discussed in this report, and provide direction for finalizing the City’s comment letter to Metro.

Susan Healy Keene, AICP
 Director of Community Development

 Approved By