

Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project PDA LASRE – Congressman Sherman Introductory Meeting – Notes

Meeting Information:

Date:	Time:
August 25, 2022	1:00 – 2:00PM
Location:	Call Info:
This meeting will be in person at Congressman Brad Sherman District Office, 5000 Van Nuys Blvd. #420, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403 <i>(Teams link provided so that Metro staff can participate remotely)</i>	Microsoft Teams meeting Join on your computer or mobile app Click here to join the meeting Meeting ID: 288 016 135 993 Passcode: NpAfdt Or call in (audio only) +1 209-645-3082,,269075737# United States, Stockton Phone Conference ID: 269 075 737#

Attendee List:

Metro	LASRE Project Team
Charlie Nakamoto – PgM	Michael Hoghooghi – Project Manager
Carolina Coppolo – Compliance Monitor (Virtual)	Greg Zwiep – Construction Lead
	Girair Kotchian – Design Manager (Virtual)
Congressman Sherman’s Office	
Congressman Brad Sherman	
John Alford	

Disclaimer:

Because Metro has not completed a CEQA review, the information contained herein does not constitute or evidence an approval by Metro of, or commitment of Metro to, any action for which prior environmental review is required under CEQA. Metro retains the absolute sole discretion to make decisions under CEQA, which discretion includes, without limitation (i) deciding not to proceed with the Project (known as the “no build” alternative) and (ii) deciding to approve the Project. There will be no approval or commitment by Metro regarding the development of the Project, unless and until Metro, as the Lead Agency, and based upon information resulting from the CEQA environmental review process, considers the impacts of the Project.

For official information regarding the Project, please visit Metro’s project website:
<https://www.metro.net/projects/sepulvedacorridor/>



Agenda:

A. Discussion Items

- 1.0 Introductions:** Michael Hoghooghi and Greg Zwiep (LASRE) and Charlie Nakamoto (Metro) introduced themselves to Congressman Sherman in his office. Carolina Coppolo (Metro) and Girair Kotchian (LASRE) introduced themselves via MS Teams.
- 2.0 Project Understanding:** Congressman Sherman opened the meeting by noting that he had been seeking a meeting for months with Metro on this project. Congressman Sherman asked if the LASRE team had any representation in Washington DC; LASRE responded that BYD employs a government relation person in DC, but that person does not specifically represent the LASRE team, although he is aware of the project. Greg Zwiep discussed Skanska Construction and their international and U.S. presence. Congressman Sherman requested that the meeting participants exchange cell phone numbers.

Congressman Sherman indicated that he would decide who attends meetings he convenes in his office, not Metro, and he expressed concern about Metro adding/subtracting attendees to his meeting with LASRE representatives and noted that he did not like people listening in remotely. Carolina Coppolo noted that she was participating in a listening capacity only as the Compliance Monitor for Metro and that Charlie was attending to take meeting notes for Metro.

Congressman Sherman emphasized that there should be no limit on who communicates with or what they say to a congressperson; Michael Hoghooghi indicated that LASRE's contract with Metro does place some limitations on what LASRE can share publicly. Congressman Sherman suggested that since Metro is seeking federal funding for this project the LASRE team should be able to openly discuss the project with him. Michael noted that the general public does not fully understand monorail as a public transit technology and there is a need for a public information campaign to level people's understanding. Congressman Sherman reiterated that he wanted LASRE to be able to speak freely and wanted to know what would limit LASRE from sharing information; Congressman Sherman threatened to end the meeting if LASRE is prevented from discussing the project openly. Carolina confirmed that there was no legal mandate for Metro to participate in this meeting, but she expressed the requirement for LASRE to follow the contract guidelines. Carolina requested that LASRE read aloud the disclaimer statement provided on the agenda that defines the limitations at this time; Congressman Sherman read the disclaimer statement and declared that he wanted the statement waived for anyone meeting with him. Carolina indicated that Metro was going through the environmental approval process and does manage the project information revealed to the public and when. Congressman Sherman reiterated that LASRE should not have limitations placed upon them while speaking with him and he

indicated that he would reach out to the LA Metro Executive Director and Metro Board Members to discuss further what he perceived as a violation of First Amendment rights. Carolina noted that LASRE could share their prepared presentation. Congressman Sherman stated that he was not meeting with LASRE to look at slides, but wanted instead to ask LASRE direct questions and receive straight, frank responses. At this point, Carolina indicated that she would log out of the meeting to allow the parties to continue their discussion (Charlie remained in the Congressman’s office).

- Sepulveda Transit Corridor Goals and Objectives: LASRE wanted to ensure that they are able to serve UCLA. LASRE noted that modern monorail technology is designed for insertion into dense urban environments because of the smaller structures and lighter vehicles – making the technology more environmentally sustainable. Congressman’s staff, Mr. John Alford, asked the comparisons to be made relative to other projects – to provide a basis for comparison. LASRE stated that monorail vehicles are typically 30% lighter than guided-transit vehicles running on traditional heavier viaduct structures. In addition, the monorail guideway technology is less costly and faster to construct than other transit modes such as subways. Monorail construction can also easily avoid utility impacts since span lengths are adjustable. The technology offers significant environmental benefits (e.g., reduced fuel & energy consumption) for the life of the project. When the Congressman inquired about the relative construction speed of monorail vs. tunneling, LASRE noted that tunnel construction may yield 40-50 feet per day (based on their experience globally using state-of-the-art Tunnel Boring Machines (TBM), while monorail construction can average 400-500 feet per day per Michael’s previous experience working on other monorail projects internationally. The construction sequencing of the monorail system can occur simultaneously in several segments. This would enable erecting multiple beams (standard 80 feet long) per day at various locations. Congressman Sherman will inquire from the other PDA team the rate of construction progress they expect to achieve for tunneling. Congressman Sherman asked LASRE to compare the monorail ride experience in contrast to the heavy rail offering a one-seat ride from the Valley to the Purple Line and proceeding on to Century City (Blue Line). LASRE noted that almost all rail systems run on a “pinched loop” operation and that it was unlikely that trains could be injected into the system from peripheral line(s). The ‘transfer station’ concept therefore equally applies to monorail (in this case), as it would to other technologies. LASRE noted that Metro intends to reach selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) by February 2024 in accordance with the environmental approval process and the PDA Contract. Congressman Sherman believes that Bel Air residents will arm themselves with attorneys to protect their interests and thereby the tunnel alignments could be in jeopardy.

Congressman Sherman noted that the advantage of the monorail APM, or bus, connection is that passengers can be delivered to various locations on campus.

Congressman Sherman suggested that LASRE select two to three campus locations and calculate and compare the travel time to reach those locations. Congressman Sherman also asked LASRE to delineate the differences between the electric bus and APM connection to the UCLA campus. LASRE noted that the electric bus connection in Alternative-1 is via surface street and is perceived as inferior to the APM in terms of travel time and convenience. However, the electric bus could run underground, which would alleviate traffic and travel time issues, daylighting at the UCLA campus from a proposed station near UCLA's Lot 36. The elevated (or underground) APM in Alternative-2 can move up to 50 mph and would have an additional operations and maintenance facility (OMSF), whereas the electric bus does not impose such a requirement in a particular location on/near the campus. Congressman Sherman suggested that LASRE could rename the electric bus to make it more appealing to the public.

Per Congressman Sherman, there are two groups opposed to tunneling: the Bel Air residents (against tunneling under Bel Air) and Sherman Oaks residents, who are concerned that Metro may run out of money before the project is completed and would run the system above ground in the Valley, since the Valley does not have the same power as the Westside. Congressman Sherman stated that any tunneling should therefore start in the Valley. Congressman Sherman considers affordability for starting-and-finishing the project per the plan as key.

When asked by the Congressman, Greg Zwiep (LASRE) indicated that based on his experience the rule-of-thumb in the industry is that for every dollar spent at-grade, \$4 would be spent on aerial alignment and \$10 would be spent for underground alignment; this would have to be looked at in the context of like-for-like technology whereas the monorails have an additional cost advantage over subway technologies as stated earlier. Congressman Sherman noted that if this is true, then the monorail system would be significantly less expensive to construct, almost 1/2 the cost of tunneling, which could be greatly advantageous. Congressman Sherman stated that the original estimates provided to him regarding costs indicated that monorail would only be 10-15% less expensive. LASRE noted that their original cost estimate for construction of the baseline monorail system was \$6.1 billion. LASRE noted that the project cost estimates would be completed towards the end of this year for submission to LA Metro. LASRE noted that in large infrastructure projects globally, the cost of the project is also significantly influenced as a function of the construction duration.

In response to the Congressman's queries, LASRE confirmed that they have committed to building vehicles in Los Angeles County with Union labor. Congressman Sherman asked if the monorail system has the capability of expanding its ridership capacity, citing that the Metro Orange Line doubled, or tripled, their

original projected ridership. LASRE noted that the ridership report from Metro would be provided to the PDA teams later this year. However, Metro’s initial capacity figures have been understood to be 12,000 passengers per hour per direction (pphpd) later increasing to 19,000 pphpd for the horizon year. These figures are likely to be confirmed upon the release of the ridership report from LA Metro. LASRE added that when the horizon year ridership figures are made available, the PDA teams would have the opportunity to resize, or dimension, their designs accordingly.

LASRE confirmed that their monorail system is being designed to initially accommodate well over 14,000 pphpd with a six-car consist, at AW2* – comfortably allowing for four passengers per square meter – with a 120-sec. headway. And it would ultimately switch to an 8-car consist, being able to serve well over 20,000 pphpd. Stations would be configured for the ultimate configuration of the trains (about 320 feet long to accommodate the larger consists). The system would have additional design margin should there be further capacity demand – for instance, by decreasing the headway (to 90 seconds, if needed). Congressman Sherman suggested that LASRE contact the Department of Transportation to obtain data from other rail systems nationwide to see how their numbers for passenger per square meter compare.

Congressman Sherman asked about air filtration systems and soundproofing both in the vehicles (trains) and at stations and whether Wi-Fi would be available. LASRE noted that Wi-Fi is considered a ‘checklist item’ in modern transit systems and therefore, there is no technical reason why it couldn't be made available. As for stations and vehicles’ air quality and noise performance, they will both meet very strict performance specifications in compliance with comfort and health standards. LASRE further clarified that all stations are designed to be on the shoulders of I-405, or outside of the corridor; no stations are envisaged in the median of the freeway. John Alford asked if lanes would need to be shut down during construction; LASRE indicated that lanes would not be shut down for construction during peak traffic periods. LASRE stated that Caltrans has a lane closure system in place which would be utilized. Congressman Sherman suggested that LASRE consider creating a 20- to 30-page informational document to educate stakeholders and highlighting benefits of monorail technology.

- SkyRail Monorail Rapid Transit: Congressman Sherman asked how long the trip from the Valley to UCLA would be, noting that UCLA is LASRE’s biggest opposition. LASRE noted that they have multiple alternatives and design options on the table for Metro review at this time hoping to better serve UCLA. All these alternatives and design options are purposely developed to provide an acceptable connection to UCLA – the remainder of the proposed monorail alignment is common outside of the UCLA

- connection. The total travel time will be determined dependent upon which alternative is advanced; however, all would meet Metro’s stated objective.
- Alignment Alternatives: LASRE described the three proposed Alternatives with Congressman Sherman, noting that the primary difference between them is how each connects to UCLA; all monorail alternatives are predominantly elevated throughout the corridor – with some exceptions in the area serving UCLA. Alternative-1 utilizes an electric bus connection to UCLA; Alternative-2 uses an Automated People Mover (APM) connection to UCLA; and Alternative-3 travels via underground tunnel to connect with UCLA. Congressman Sherman noted that tunneling under the nearby communities would be of serious concern to the Bel Air residents. LASRE noted that even in the tunnel sections the monorail trains running on rubber tires have significantly less noise or vibration compared to traditional guided-rail (subway) vehicles.
 - Station Concepts: Congressman Sherman inquired if every LASRE alternative had a station stop at the Getty Center – main concern being the added travel time (for those not intending to go to the Getty) and cost – the Congressman asked for an estimated cost for the Getty Station based on prior experiences for such. LASRE responded by citing the ridership demands along this corridor and explained that the Ridership Report expected from Metro would help crystalize the need and sizing for any given stop. Until then, a station at the Getty Center is being considered in the designs in order to preserve all options. The estimated typical costs of such a station may range between \$20 and \$50 million per aerial station, subject to design maturation. The additional travel time due to the placement of a station at Getty Center is estimated at approximately 90-120 seconds. Congressman Sherman asked what the daily passenger demand is forecast for the Getty Center; John Alford suggested a number of 4,000 visitors per day, which he calculated by dividing the annual visitor numbers by days/year; this number could rise to 10,000 to 20,000 when Getty has events. LASRE added that the ‘horizon year’ ridership projections would help crystalize the demand at this station. Congressman Sherman asked for current ridership data and the number of parking spots available at the Getty Center to justify building a station at this location; LASRE noted that they do not yet have the ridership study from Metro (expected to be provided sometime this Fall); however, LASRE would research the number of annual visitors and the number of parking spaces available at the Getty.

3.0 Q & A: *See above for topic discussion*

4.0 Next Steps: Congressman Sherman suggested that LASRE speak with the Bel Air Neighborhood Council as well as the Bel Air HOA. LASRE noted that many of the concerns expressed by these residents to-date revolved around noise and vibration, but the monorail runs on rubber tires which minimizes those issues. However, LASRE added that their ongoing efforts are focused on finding an acceptable balance for serving the UCLA as a major destination while working with the respective neighborhoods regarding

their concerns with tunneling or other issues.

Congressman Sherman will review the presentation provided by LASRE.

Congressman Sherman noted that there may be a need for follow-up given that some of the time allotted to LASRE was consumed by the initial debates, as captured in this summary.

B. Action Items

Task/ Data	Responsible Party	Details	Status	Due Date
Determine total number of visitors and number of parking spaces available at the Getty Center	LASRE	Determine total number of visitors and number of parking spaces available at the Getty Center and update Congressman Sherman	New	TBD
Provide the travel time between the MRT stations and various campus locations	LASRE	Calculate and compare travel time to the center of campus as well as two to three additional locations on campus	New	TBD
Research the passenger carrying capacity of different transit modes	LASRE	LASRE to contact the Department of Transportation to obtain data from other rail systems nationwide to see how their numbers for passenger per square meter compare to Monorail	New	TBD

C. Next Meeting

- TBD

**Note:*

AW0: The empty vehicle (train) weight ‘without’ passengers

AW1: The vehicle passenger load only considering ‘seated passengers’

AW2: AW1 + standees at 4 passengers per m²

AW3: AW1 + standees at 6 passengers per m²

AW4: AW1 + standees at 8 passengers per m², also known as “Crush Loading”