

## Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project PDA LASRE Briefing – Sherman Oaks Homeowners’ Association Stakeholder Meeting Minutes

### **Meeting Information:**

Date:	Time:
April 10, 2024	7:15 PM – 8:30 PM
Location:	
<b>Join with Google Meet:</b>  <a href="https://meet.google.com/hcj-eyisi-gwd">meet.google.com/hcj-eyisi-gwd</a>  <i>Join by phone</i> (US) <a href="tel:+12407046983">+1 240-704-6983</a> PIN: 406459628	

### **Attendee List:**

Metro	LASRE Project Team
Mat Antonelli – Deputy Chief Program Mgmt Officer	Mark Waier – Project Communications
Bob Masys - PM & PMSS Lead	Michael Hoghooghi - Project Manager
Nikhil Damle - PDA Oversight Manager, LASRE	Girair Kotchian – Design Manager
Eimon Smith – Metro PgM Support	Marie Campbell – Environmental Support
Community Stakeholders	
Bob Anderson – Vice President, Board of Directors	Jon Burk
Jeff Kalban	Jonathan Reff
Maria Kalban	Joshua Englander
Amy Pell	Joyce Page
Andrew Hass	Jaren Perea Gannon
Ann O’Connor	Mark Perloe
Annie-Marrie Esser	Maureen Levinson
Bob Blue	Norman Emerson
Debbie Nussbaum	Patti Russo
Dena Jackels	Penny Johnson
Gail Polevoi	Richard Mayer
Geraldine Cronin	Robert Rieth
Irene Sandler	Shirley Isen
Jason Walley	

### ***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. Briefing Items**

#### **1.0 Introductions**

#### **2.0 Briefing**

- Project Overview
- Monorail/SkyRail Overview
- Alignment Alternatives
- Station Concepts
- Why LASRE is proposing SkyRail

#### **3.0 Q & A:** Sherman Oaks Homeowners’ Association (SOHOA) principals posed these questions following the presentation:

**SOHOA Comment:** We are disappointed to hear that Alternative 2 is being removed by Metro, because we voiced our support for Alternative 2.

*LASRE response:* We put significant time and energy into developing several design options particularly for Alternative 2 in order to (at some point) garner UCLA support. At one point, we were at about 24 to 25 distinctively different design options for Alternative 2. Eventually, we came up with a compelling design, but relative to Alternative 1 or 3, the environmental impacts were greater for Alternative 2.

**Question:** How do you construct in the middle of the freeway?

*LASRE response:* To construct in the middle of the freeway, we would need to shift lanes to make space for construction. Then we would drill the piles. Relatively speaking, the biggest time for our construction of the line will be taken up by drilling the piles. We will have multiple crews working in tandem to provide the foundation for the columns.

This type of construction can be done very quickly because it can be done in multiple segments concurrently.

**Question:** How noisy is this monorail? Can I still hear someone talking if it were to pass me?

*LASRE response:* Monorails are similar in this respect to an electric bus passing you by. The noise is distance-sensitive: every time you double the distance from the noise source, the noise energy (dbA) drops by half. The monorail is elevated 30-40 feet, and in the 405 corridor predominantly. So, any noise from the monorail will be drowned out by the ambient I-405 traffic noise.

**Question:** What is an APM?

*LASRE response:* APM stands for Automated People Mover. It is similar to a monorail but is different because of the wheel-to-track or guideway interface; however, speed and capacity differentiate these technology in terms of being fit for particular purposes. Los Angeles has an APM system; LAX has constructed an APM to operate between the terminals and the ConRAC.

**Question:** When I look at the monorail images in the presentation deck, there looks like there are four cars that are tied together in most images. So, there can be 100 people per section meaning that the train will carry 400 passengers- is that correct?

*LASRE response:* Yes, in a 4-car consist, the train could carry 400 passengers (simplistically, 100 passengers in each car).

**Question:** In Albuquerque, [BYD] built a monorail that broke down so much that they took down the tracks and now run buses where the monorail was supposed to be. They haven't been successful [in building] a working monorail. Skyrail is paid for by the Chinese government. Why would we spend billions on a company that has not proven [it] can build a working system?

*LASRE response:* This is not true. We never had any monorail project in Albuquerque, and at the moment, BYD is not involved in any other monorail projects in the United States.

**Question:** Bechtel (who has built working subways) has a stop at UCLA, one of the largest universities and largest public employers in California. This seems far superior to a more remote stop. With [an emphasis] on last-mile transport why would we want a model that doesn't directly address this with a prime stop directly on campus?

**SOHOA Comment:** There's no need for an answer here since the presentation clearly shows Alternative 3 having a one-seat ride with a direct on campus stop at UCLA at the Luskin Center.

*LASRE response:* This is not a competition as far as we see it. We have immense respect for the other PDA team. We are well aware of what the benefits are for all the other configurations that could be had here and frankly why our team has strived from the start to give the maximum range of options to serve the ridership to UCLA – Alternative 2 was a remarkable example of how much effort LASRE put into addressing this. In fact all our Alternatives from the start only differ from one another in terms of how UCLA is served.

**Question:** While monorails have been around for a long time with varying degrees of success, what is BYD's track record specifically? They were contracted for a project in Albuquerque that needed to be removed, how do we know it would work here?

*LASRE response:* In terms of BYD projects, we're happy to provide you with information about the 17 [other] projects that we've built. We are currently involved in building the Sao Paulo Metro Line-17, after the remarkable success of Sao Paulo Line-15 which has been in operation for the past dozen years with the most pleasant passenger experience as reported by the Sao Paulo Metro operator. The expediency of its construction schedule can be replicated here, and even be improved. For instance, Line-15 went into service earlier than it was planned for its initial segments. BYD has been a transit entity for less than 2 decades so it's a company that is fairly young but has accomplished a lot. We're all for innovation and differentiation based on what we bring to LA Metro.

**Question:** How do you address the fact that the subway will have a higher capacity & frequency as cited by Metro?

**Bob Anderson Comment:** This is an untrue statement. People have to be careful when talking about capacity and frequencies. Data shows that the monorail will have 35% more passengers per direction. People are mistaken when they claim that the ridership will be higher on the subway. This is based on modeling, and I have personally asked Metro's CEO for the modeling assumptions that were made that resulted in their ridership analysis, but they refused to give them to me. I personally do not trust Metro's ridership analysis. I do believe the simple calculations that show the 35% higher rate for monorail vs subway. A higher frequency is good and [the monorail] has higher passenger capacity. This is a point of fact.

*LASRE response:* A model is only as good as its assumptions. If you favor one parameter more heavily, you will have different answers. In the transit world generally, frequency of service and reliability are what matter. We have designed our Alternatives for a 2-

minute frequency of service (headway). That's a game-changer in SoCal and the Metro system. Red Line, for example, is (at peak) 10 minutes.

**Question:** I am excited about this, but will there be any extra space built in cars for bicycles?

*LASRE response:* Yes, there is space designated for bikes and scooters on the trains and we are accommodating many amenities at our stations, including bike parking.

**Question:** I attended the SOHOA Betchel presentation last month. There was a big push to connect by heavy rail with the UCLA campus. I think the public transit's best use would be to connect to the People Mover at LAX. Personally, I don't want to go to the UCLA campus — I want to get to and from LAX. When this connection with LAX was addressed with Bechtel, the presenter stated that was a "Phase 2" and that Metro just wants to solve the Phase 1 aspect to connect with the Purple Line and that Phase 2 will be solved at a later date. Will someone from Metro please explain how this makes any sense when the monorail can directly connect to LAX and the People Mover without any "Phase 2?"

*LASRE response:* The decision to build this in phases is completely up to Metro. Theoretically, if Metro were to move forward with the monorail for Phase 2 monorail connection to LAX, this could be done within the same construction window as Phase 1. This is because it only requires additional crews to build the additional segments as we would do with Phase 1. This is something that only the monorail can [do].

**Question:** How will anticipated work on the I-405 Express Lanes project impact and be coordinated with the project(s) discussed tonight?

*LASRE response:* Metro is looking at two separate projects for the express lane project from the I-10 to the 101. SkyRail has unique advantages in construction staging and freeway. So although these are two distinctly separate projects, we are still considering each other in environmental impact and design and coordinate with [each other] heavily. We can work together and build both at the same time. Also, when the draft environmental impact report is released, we are going to see an analysis of each of the alternatives. We will see the direct effects of what it will take to build each of those projects and the cumulative impact analysis of what it will look like if both projects were undertaken (at the same time or in sequence).

**Question:** So the west side gets "underground" monorail stations and the valley gets above-ground stations? Just build the subway which is the superior option.

**Bob Anderson comment/response:** Three of the monorail stations are underground for Alternative 3 and most of the elevated portion is along the 405 right of way. The answer is that you have to be careful of what you ask for. Alternative 4 is not all subway, there is a segment in the valley that is elevated and we have asked Metro to stop studying this alternative because of the noise and impacts to our community.

**Question:** Along the 405 between UCLA and Ventura, where would the track actually be? To the left, right or in the center of the freeway?

*LASRE response:* Over the hill up to the Getty, we're generally in the middle of the freeway. And then we go off to the west side of the freeway where Getty is providing space for a dedicated station. Then we go back in the median all the way up to the Galleria area, where we then go off to the side again and connect to a station that will be located to the south of the Galleria. Then we would stay on the east side of the freeway for the remainder of the project until we get to the Metrolink/Amtrak rail corridor, where we make that right turn and follow the rail corridor there. Again, one of the benefits of the technology is that we can surgically place this construction in the roadway to minimize the impact on local streets, properties, and utilities as much as possible. We veer back and forth on the corridor to miss these key parts. The guideway alignment is made to be as least impactful as possible.

**Question:** Will Metro have parking available at the Monorail stations and if yes, for how many vehicles? Also, will they have pickup/dropoff areas for Uber/Lyft/Taxi (like the LAXIT system at LAX)?

*LASRE response:* Yes, there will be parking and pick-up/drop-off areas for rideshare/other transit modes. At transfer stations, where there is existing parking used for the Metro system, the parking lots will be maintained and we won't provide additional parking to encourage other modes of transportation to get to the stations.

**Question:** Another bike-related question. I wouldn't want this to slow down the process. But, since you have to create space for the bases of those rails can you leave some space for bikes to travel there, too?

*LASRE response:* We've located these on the side of the freeway so that it won't affect local streets/circulation. So it's not physically possible to build a bike line with this project.

**Question:** During the I-405 widening project over a decade ago, the work done for pilings caused shaking and vibration that was felt by residents. How are you addressing construction activity impacts on residents and organizations such as the Getty, Day Care, and the Church?

*LASRE response:* Our construction techniques don't involve hammering steel piles. The columns are drilled holes, which is less vibratory than hammering in steel piles. So in sensitive areas, the construction process is to have monitoring devices and different noise and vibration sensors. We will have other building protection techniques to minimize vibrations and noise.

**Question:** Environmental impact is greatest during construction. The construction process is much quicker than any of the more standard subway constructions. In your environmental impact report, does that show up considerably (the strength of your proposal?)

*LASRE response:* Yes, it shows up in our construction schedule, which defines the amount of impact felt by the community, especially things that we worry about the most (i.e. pollution).

**Question:** Nobody wants to see an overhead track. Ultimately there isn't a way to beautify that. Speed of construction does not outweigh the long term legacy of such a large project. Build correctly for long term- not on the cheap.

**Bob Anderson comment/response:** I have talked to a lot of people and I disagree with that statement. Many have said they like it, while some like the subway.

**Question:** A comment was made that once you go north of the Galleria, the monorail is going to go on the east side and the shoulder of the 405. Why would it not stay down the middle of the 405?

*LASRE response:* You can do both but going in the median north of the 101 presented some challenges as far as some of the existing interchanges that are there. We would have to reconfigure the whole south side of the freeway to be able to accommodate. Even though eight additional feet is not much, given the tight constraint of the 405 it would have a design disruption to the freeway. Also, there is a potential for Caltrans and other agencies to expand the Express lanes beyond our HOV lanes, beyond north of the 101, all of these were taken into consideration when we chose the alignment we did.

**Question:** I am concerned about graffiti that will deface the columns of the monorail. Has this been considered?

*LASRE response:* Yes, and it goes well beyond graffiti that presents safety issues and we have provisions to monitor for that. We have systems that could alert the Operation Control Center or the people charged with safeguarding those kinds of things. These are details that will be embellished even further as the design process continues.

**Question:** You mentioned a higher frequency of monorail vs subway. What is the difference in the speed (mph) between the two? Forgive me if this was already stated.

**Bob Anderson comment/response:** I never mentioned speed because frequency doesn't have much to do with speed. The number [SkyRail] talked about is headway, which is the time between trains, and it's 2 minutes for SkyRail. This means there are 30 trains passing a point in an hour. I forget what the subway is, but I think it's two and a half minutes for alternative 4 and 5. I think it's much slower than that for alternative six. But speed doesn't factor into that.

**LASRE response:** For speed, you have the vehicle design speed, you have the line speed, and you have the average travel time. So, in this context what matters to the passengers generally is the service frequency, then the travel time. We have already covered the 'headway' or the service frequency. The travel time for the monorail will always be longer because we incorporate those difficult curves/turns that other technologies cannot maneuver; in order to have something that's constructible above ground quickly and more affordably. So, we regularly and deliberately trade off speed to have a constructible and affordable solution, while meeting all of Metro's state requirements – including a travel time not exceeding 30 minutes end to end.

**Question:** How much time do you allow for passengers to get off the train?

**LASRE response:** During peak vs. normal operational hours, somewhere between 20-30 seconds. This is an operational consideration. This is a discussion about signaling and how any technology can assure passenger and asset safety (how close you can have trains traveling one after the other). Most driverless systems are designed to operate down to 60 seconds headway; but in practice, the lowest they operate is 90 seconds. SkyRail has a 2 minute (120 seconds) to meet/exceed the passenger demand in LA, as per Metro's stated requirements.