

Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project PDA LASRE Briefing – Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils Stakeholder Meeting Minutes

Meeting Information:

Date:	Time:
April 11, 2024	6:30 PM – 7:30 PM
Location:	
Join Zoom Meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/98759241651 Meeting ID: 987 5924 1651	

Attendee List:

Metro	LASRE Project Team
Nikhil Damle - PDA Oversight Manager, LASRE	Mark Waier – Project Communications
Eimon Smith – Metro PgM Support	Michael Hoghooghi - Project Manager
	Girair Kotchian – Design Manager
Community Stakeholders	
Linda Gravani - Chair	
<i>(and approximately 55 attendees)</i>	

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

Question: The only way this thing is going to work is if people are going to ride it, and I'm not hearing much about parking. What is your morning capacity, and how are people going to park for this?

LASRE response: The way Metro structured this and the vision of the station is to provide transit connection, bus connection, first-last mile connection and access to the system in key locations. There is parking at the Van Nuys location that we are hoping to expand to attract riders from the Valley. The Orange line has a large Metro parking lot. The Expo line has a parking garage that is currently underutilized which is something that the Sepulveda Transit Corridor will use. In terms of morning capacity and more information on the parking spots, these will be available in the environmental document.

Question: Based on the climb of the 405 into the Sepulveda Transit Corridor, how far back will you have to begin to make that grade acceptable to your monorail?

LASRE response: We've kept the alignment itself, to compensate for the vertical height of the guideway as well as for the height of the vehicle, to 6% (far below the capabilities of the vehicles). Our stations are also elevated. So we're never coming to street level, and we're not climbing in the traditional sense. We continuously follow the grade through the Sepulveda Pass.

Question: Will the stations have bathrooms? Many Metro stations lack bathrooms.

LASRE response: We will have bathrooms and other amenities needed for a modern monorail station.

Question: You will be getting a lot of the riders coming from the west that are not connecting from these other lines (i.e. Thousand Oaks). I'm thinking that parking is going to be an issue in these cases, even if it's for the purpose of dissuading car use.

LASRE response: We appreciate the comment. That is why we are doing these stakeholder meetings. We'll take that under consideration with Metro.

Question: How noisy will it be?

LASRE response: Monorails are very quiet because we operate using a rubber tire fleet. It's very similar to an electric bus or 78 dB, and this is from a reasonable distance. There is a criteria that modern monorails have to meet, and we will be better than that criteria. Also, the majority of the route is through the 405, so a lot of the noise is masked by already-existing traffic.

Question: You're talking about 25,000 commuters in the morning. If that's a single rider, we're talking about 25,000+ cars. How do you base your ridership to require parking?

LASRE response: When we're talking about the commuters in the morning, we're talking about the theoretical capacity of the monorail. The ridership report that we got from Metro is far below that, which is the upper end of what the Red Line has, which is around 3,000 passengers per hour per direction. As for parking, that is a valid concern. The parking considerations have been deferred for now as the designs mature post-LPA selection.

As for the parking plans, Metro looks at multiple factors in their model, such as pick-up and drop-off numbers. We don't own that model but we can certainly take that question back to Metro.

Question/comment: I like Alternative 3. I know it costs more to go underground but that's the way you're going to get the ridership with a one-seat ride to UCLA. If people have to transfer to electric buses, it's not going to work.

LASRE response: We will build whatever Metro wishes to deploy.

Question: Can you elaborate on the LAX connection?

LASRE response: As for the connection to LAX, or the extensions in either direction, I'm only presenting the facts as best as we know. This project is very much scalable, so we can build routes concurrently as our construction process allows for us to build in multiple segments at the same time. This is one of the benefits of the monorail.

Question: What happens if there's an electric failure or an earthquake. What happens in these cases?

LASRE response: Monorail trains have a battery back-up that would kick in even in the unlikely event of total power failure. Also, these are vehicles used in places like Japan, which have a lot of seismic activity. In a seismic event, you stop everything and inspect the system. Monorails are able to re-start much faster because you can see any defects since it's aboveground.

Question: What is the ramp-up cost for the City of LA to onboard this new transportation system, such as new training, expendables, etc?

LASRE response: Metro has not daylighted this information yet. All the PDA teams have provided the life-cycle costs to Metro. In terms of how this project is configured, it's not just the construction but the operation costs. As a P3, the contractor that builds this also gets a maintenance and operation contract for 30 years. If they go over that amount, that's the risk that the private entities take on.

Question: I'm a UCLA alum so I actually have taken the trip from UCLA to East Valley. Speaking as a former student, it's obvious that the students prefer the hard rail option because the Metro station will be on the Luskin Center. The only con is the cost. My question is, what is your projected time from the bus from the Luskin Center to the station?

LASRE response: We have heard that comment from the UCLA students. So that's why Alternative 3 does have that one-seat connection. We are doing traffic studies to see the length of the bus, so these will be divulged when the environmental documents are completed. Also, we could have chosen to have the entire alignment entirely underground so that we could maximize the speed of the train. However, this would have come at the expense of giving up all the advantages of the monorail and incurring considerable costs.

Question: I'm a 36-year insurance veteran. From a risk-management perspective, what risk-management measures are taken given the damage that could occur during the construction phase?

LASRE response: We have done these projects around the globe and are experienced with managing these risks. We have noise and vibration mitigation measures. One of the plans we put together is a building protection plan, which looks at the alignment and its proximity to other structures. There are various techniques to monitor noise and vibration and protect other properties. Also, one of the technologies we're proposing in

terms of the foundation is to use a drill shaft instead of steel piles. This will help mitigate vibration and noise during construction.

Comment: I'm a former engineer and I want to talk about disasters. Disasters are unpredictable. We have no idea what monorails will fall or what tunnel will collapse. If you want transit, you build them, and you try to fix them if the inevitable happens. That's why it's called a disaster. I love the plans, I hope to ride them.