

Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project PDA LASRE Briefing – Westwood Neighborhood Council Stakeholder Meeting Minutes

Meeting Information:

Date:	Time:
June 12, 2024	7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Location/Call Info:	
In Person: 10475 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90024	

Attendee List:

Metro	LASRE Project Team
Nikhil Damle - PDA Oversight Manager, LASRE	Mark Waier – Project Communications
Eimon Smith – Metro PgM Support	Marie Campbell – Environmental Consultant
Community Stakeholders	
Lisa Chapman – President, At Large Director	
Philip Gabriel – Owner Residential Area 2 Director	
Tracey Fitzgerald – Owner Residential Area 3 Director	
Roosbeh Farahanipour – Chamber of Commerce Director	
Laura Winikow - Non-Profit / Faith Based / Education Community Director	

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: Is this [proposal] in place of the underground [option]?

LASRE response: We're presenting on Alternatives 1, 2 and 3. There is another team doing Alternatives 4 and 5. Metro is leading Alternative 6.

Question: How does this tie into UCLA?

LASRE response: We have three alternatives that connect with UCLA in a variety of different ways. The three alternatives will have different construction timelines and costs that Metro will consider when making a decision. One of our Alternatives has a one-seat ride to UCLA, that is Alternative 3.

Question: How does Alternative 1 get from the 405?

LASRE response: The alignment does go through the center of the freeway and over to the VA on the western side of the 405 freeway.

Question: So the station stop is over the freeway with cars whizzing by?

LASRE response: No, all the stations are on either side of the freeway. We do not have any stations in the center of the freeway.

Question: How does Alternative 3 go from the UCLA station to Getty Center?

LASRE response: It goes underground under Bel-Air.

Comment: There's a threat of a lawsuit for the heavy rail going under Bel-Air.

Question: You talked about 24,000 passengers per hour per direction. How does the monorail capacity compare to the underground option? We have heard that the heavy rail is better because it is faster and has more volume.

LASRE response: The Metro Red Line has 3000 passengers per hour per direction and that line has been in existence for nearly 20 years. The monorail operation design can serve up to 24,000 passengers per hour per direction. We have a lot of work to do to get that level of ridership. The capacity question is not really an issue here.

Question: The other question is the speed.

LASRE response: It's just simple engineering. A straight line is the advantage of the heavy rail system. We have curves and an additional station stop at the Getty. The end-to-end run times are not an apples to apples comparison. The monorail alternatives are 28-32 minutes end-to-end travel with all the stops including the Getty Center. We're giving up 2.5 minutes to be able to serve the Getty Center. The estimated time that Metro gives in their public workshops indicates that it's much faster [than driving from the Valley to LA].

Question: What about the Skirball Center? How is that connected?

LASRE response: We met with Skirball. They can operate a circular to get to and from the Getty Center Station.

Question: How does monorail incline look like?

LASRE response: This is a rubber tire on a guideway, similar to car tires going up the Sepulveda Pass. That's not really a concern. It doesn't slow down.

Question: 65,000 people are at the UCLA campus every day. That's a lot of cars. 24,000 won't be realistic for that campus.

LASRE response: The 24,000 refers to the number of passengers per hour per direction. We would love for us to get anywhere near that number of passengers per hour per direction.

Question: What type of security measures have been set up?

LASRE response: Our stations do have the capability of bathrooms and spaces for LAPD substations. We will work with Metro, Sheriff, and LAPD, and coordination on safety and security. The fare gates will again be integrated with the overall system for LA

County. Personal safety and security is one of our top priorities. Design decisions have been made to make the stations all open.

Question: Is this a similar product to what is being built at LAX?

LASRE response: That's a People Mover and this is a monorail but yes, they're very similar.

Question: What is the price difference between Option 3 of SkyRail and underground options?

LASRE response: We have cost estimates developed for all of the alternatives but cannot disclose that information at this time. At some point, these will be disclosed to the public. What I am able to say is that tunneling construction is much more expensive than an elevated system. That's why it's more attractive in an urban environment to build a monorail. Many monorails are used in cities that are denser and have similar seismic situations to ours.

Question: Have you met with UCLA about Alternative 3?

LASRE response: Yes, we have. We have heard from multiple UCLA representatives at stakeholder meetings that they support any option with a one-seat ride to UCLA.

Question: How much will the fares be?

LASRE response: I wish we had the answer to that. That's a Metro decision that will come at a much later date.

Question: Do you know the capacity for the underground option?

LASRE response: We don't know.

Question: When do we get to LAX?

LASRE response: I know in Measure M, it's slated for after 2050. This environmental document is only evaluating the three alternatives, not the extension to LAX.

Question: You mentioned CEQA and NEPA are separated. Is there a reason why?

LASRE response: That's a better question posed to Metro directly. We have the FAST Act, which puts more pressure on federal agencies to complete their NEPA in two years.

Question: The dotted line in Alternative 3. Is it different from what the 4, 5, and 6 options are going underground? Do you know where the underground options go?

LASRE response: Yes, our underground area is different. It's easier to see the alignments if you go online.

Question: Any disruptions to the 405?

LASRE response: We're not taking any lanes. If we have to do lane closures, they'll be during the night. No full-length closures.

Question: We really like Alternative 3 and wish we would have known more about it earlier when people were encouraged to submit comments about the alternatives.

LASRE response: That's why we go through a scoping process. Then we do an assessment of the alternatives considering all these comments that were received.

Question: When do the comments regarding these options go to Metro?

LASRE response: All the comments and questions from tonight are submitted to Metro and posted online.

Question: Neighborhood councils and homeowners' associations have all taken a position and Alternative 3 was not communicated as clearly as we have heard tonight. This presentation has really shed light on the monorail and the one-seat ride to UCLA that the monorail can deliver.

LASRE response: This council only took a position that we support any alternative that can deliver a one-seat ride to UCLA.

Question: For councils such as ours, is it helpful for us to be more specific on what we support?

LASRE response: Yes, please state your position and include reasons why you took that position and share that in a formal letter to Metro.

Question: Where is the Valley, Sherman Oaks, etc. on this?

LASRE response: The Sherman Oaks Homeowners' Association endorsed all three of the monorail options and so has the Getty Center.

Comment: What's the group that UCLA heads? We all endorsed their position. To me, it's up to that group to change their position that they support 3.

Comment: They won't do that until the EIR is done.

Question: How is it in terms of ADA accessibility?

LASRE response: We're abiding by all ADA standards.

Question: Will there be space for drop-offs?

LASRE response: Yes, stations have kiss-and-ride areas.

Comment: If this is cheaper, stops at Luskin, faster to build, then this is better.

Comment: It's slower than [the underground option] but not slow.

Question: When you say it's a direct connection, it's not really direct. You still have to change cars.

LASRE response: There was a belief shared in the media that you could take a purple line train from downtown and curve north at UCLA and go to the Valley. That type of operation was never part of the planning for Metro. The Sepulveda Transit Corridor always started in the valley and connected west Los Angeles to the airport with multiple lines that run east to west (Orange, Metrolink, Purple and Expo). We're hoping that these stakeholder updates are helping dispel the confusion.