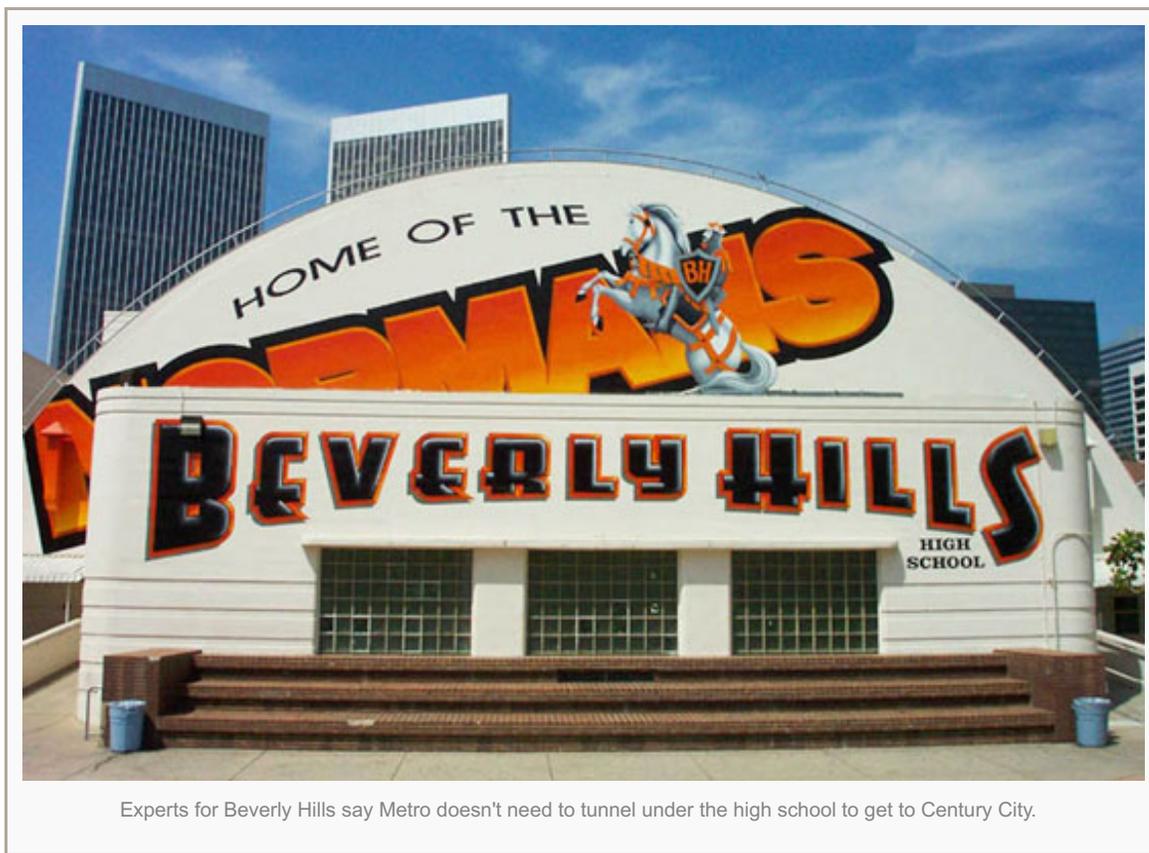


Beverly Hills urges more subway study

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Experts for Beverly Hills say Metro doesn't need to tunnel under the high school to get to Century City.

Scientific experts and lawyers representing the city of Beverly Hills and its school district told the Metro board on Thursday that the agency's research into placement of a Century City subway station is flawed and inadequate, and urged the board to delay making a final decision until extensive new testing can be performed.

"We implore you to take the time—because you have the time—to make the right choice," Beverly Hills City Attorney Larry Wiener said toward the end of a special hearing the city had requested under a rarely-used provision of the state Public Utilities Code.

The city has objected to plans to tunnel under Beverly Hills High School in order to build a Century City station at Constellation Boulevard as part of the Westside Subway project, saying it is potentially unsafe for students and would interfere with future campus development.

Metro's own experts—including noted earthquake authority Lucy Jones, part of an [independent review panel](#) that assessed the agency's findings—say the Constellation location would be safe. They say that an alternate location on Santa Monica Boulevard—which would avoid tunneling under the high school—is unsuitable for a station because of active earthquake faults there.

Beverly Hills' experts disagreed on a number of key points.

They said there is evidence that earthquake faults along Santa Monica Boulevard are inactive and thus pose no threat. They also contend that Metro has not performed adequate scientific testing and risk analysis to determine whether the Constellation location is safe.

Beverly Hills commissioned its own trenching studies on the high school campus and its experts have produced a series of reports intended to challenge Metro's findings on the route the subway should take to get to Century City. (The Beverly Hills reports are [here](#); Metro's responses to the reports are [here](#), along with other scientific and environmental documents.)

On Thursday, Beverly Hills experts testified that their trenching method was more extensive and produced more accurate results than Metro's method of boring into the earth and taking samples at the high school site. The Beverly Hills experts said they found no earthquake faults on the campus. And they said they found it curious that Metro's experts, who had determined that there are faults on the campus, changed the mapped location of those faults after reviewing the Beverly Hills findings.

One of the consultants testifying for Beverly Hills, Tim Buresh, said that Metro's tunneling plans could interfere with future underground development on the high school campus—which prompted some skeptical questions from Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, a member of Metro's board of directors.

"There is no way in the world that the school district is going to build a six-story building underground, is there, Mr. Buresh?" Yaroslavsky asked.

Buresh insisted it was "entirely possible" that the school might eventually do so.

Buresh, a former executive with the California High-Speed Rail Authority, also drew skeptical questions from another Metro director, Richard Katz.

After Buresh told the Metro board that "you don't gamble with children's safety, ever—period," Katz asked him why he had once advocated running a [high speed train under another school, Miramar College in San Diego](#), saying it would have only "insignificant impacts."

Buresh replied that he left the rail agency before he had a chance to change his position on that, but said he would have ultimately advocated another route that avoided the college.

Other than a handful of questions from the Metro board, the hearing was devoted entirely to speakers representing Beverly Hills.

The Metro board has [approved](#) the Westside Subway's final environmental documents, but has deferred a decision on placement of the Century City station until after the Beverly Hills hearing could be held. The earliest the board could take up the matter would be at its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on May 24.

Toward the end of Thursday's 3½-hour-long hearing, an attorney representing Beverly Hills, Robert McMurry, presented the Metro board with three alternate routes that he said would make it possible to build a station at Constellation without going under the high school. He urged the Metro board to hold off on any decision about the siting of a Century City station until it can gather more information.

"Now is not the time to make that decision. Otherwise, you're going to shortchange us, you're going to subject Metro to greater delays due to litigation and even worse consequences if you lose the litigation," McMurry said.

Yaroslavsky said the Metro board will consider the experts' opinions on both sides of the issue before making a final decision.

"All in all, I thought the city and school district of Beverly Hills made a professional presentation. Not surprisingly, their experts' conclusions are diametrically opposite of Metro's, so we will have to review the testimony and reconcile the differences before making a final decision on the subway alignment," Yaroslavsky said. "This is a problem that can be solved, but the hysteria that has characterized some of the debate needs to be dropped. Today was a good start."

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