

CHAPTER 6—PUBLIC AND AGENCY OUTREACH

This chapter documents the Westside Purple Line Extension Project (the Project) Public Participation Plan for the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS) and Section 4(f) Evaluation, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 United States Code (USC) (4321-4347) and its implementing regulations (23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 771).

6.1 Highlights of Previous Outreach Efforts

Over the past 30 years, tremendous population growth, employment growth, worsening congestion, changing land use and traffic patterns, and the growing challenge of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) to meet transit demands have collectively led to the need to improve mobility in the West Los Angeles area. The Westside Purple Line Extension Project (the Project) was initiated to address these mobility needs. The project garnered considerable stakeholder interest and involvement throughout the environmental process, from the Alternatives Analysis (AA) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) through the Final EIS/EIR phases of the Project. Outreach efforts continue today as construction of Section 1 is underway.

In fall 2007, Metro began an AA for the Purple Line Extension Transit Corridor. The AA considered whether a transit improvement was needed in the area and evaluated different types of transit improvements and alignments. The AA concluded in January 2009 when the Metro Board of Directors approved moving forward with the Draft EIS/EIR, which analyzed five subway alternatives. A robust community outreach process was deployed throughout this phase, including five early scoping meetings, key stakeholder meetings, inter-agency coordination, and outreach in multiple languages.

The Draft EIS/EIR began in spring 2009 to assess the impacts of alternatives both during construction and once the system is operational, and to look at potential mitigation measures. Issues were addressed as the alternatives were refined, including decisions about station locations and ultimate alignments in order to best address the mobility needs of residents, workers, and visitors traveling to, from, and within the highly congested Corridor Study Area by providing faster and more reliable high-capacity public transportation than existing services. In a collaborative effort, Metro worked closely with the community to address appropriate mitigation measures regarding construction and operational impacts, including station alignment options and tunneling safety.

The Draft EIS/EIR process concluded in October 2010 with Metro's staff recommendation for a Locally Preferred Alternative to advance into the Final EIS/EIR process. A thorough stakeholder outreach and public engagement process was conducted, including five public hearings and several community update meetings

covering a range of topics. In 2010, Metro also established Station Area Advisory Groups (SAAGs) for each of the stations, with the exception of the Westwood/Veterans Affairs Hospital Station. Each SAAG was comprised of stakeholders within the project area to represent the public's concerns and stay up to date on the status of the project. The SAAG meetings were held quarterly to address outstanding issues and update the group on the status of the project. The formation and success of the SAAGs, accompanied by Metro's desire to implement a transparent and proactive process in engaging the community, collectively provided an exceptional opportunity for stakeholder engagement to address pertinent issues, and in the process built trust and support for the completion of a large transit project.

In October 2010, the Metro Board authorized the preparation of the Final EIS/EIR to refine the Board-selected Locally Preferred Alternative, alignment, station and entrance locations, ridership data, and costs, as well as to present mitigation measures and to respond to comments on the Draft EIS/EIR. The public engagement effort continued with ongoing community update meetings and a series of SAAG meetings. Beginning in 2012, Metro also began hosting pre-construction meetings and more recently construction update meetings. The Final EIS/EIR was released in March 2012 for public review. In April 2012, the Metro Board of Directors certified the Final EIS/EIR and approved Section 1 of the project, extending the Purple Line to Wilshire/La Cienega. In May 2012, the Metro Board approved Sections 2 and 3 of the Project extending the Purple Line to the Westwood/Veterans Affairs Hospital.

Subsequent to the completion of the Final EIS/EIR, Metro has continued its proactive public engagement efforts. Metro initiated pre-construction and construction update meetings for communities near Section 1 of the Project beginning in fall 2014, hosting small gatherings and larger community meetings to keep the public informed as the project moves forward. These meetings are ongoing where the project team provides construction updates, including station progress, a construction schedule of what to expect that include impacts related to noise and vibration, and updated fact sheets for reference. Project business cards are also available to the public with a point of contact to address any issues or concerns that could arise from the daily impacts of construction. Metro initiated the first pre-construction community meeting for the Section 2 portion of the project in October 2016 and will continue these similar to the outreach for the Section 1 communities.

Additionally, Metro's Purple Line Extension public outreach program has been recognized twice by the Innovations in American Government competition that is run by the Harvard Kennedy School's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation. It was initially recognized as "Bright Idea" in 2012 and was named as a semi-finalist in the 2015 competition. These awards recognized the project for using new communication tools integrated with long-standing outreach strategies and for being all inclusive during the AA, Draft EIS/EIR, and Final EIS/EIR phases. The Project is recognized as the first NEPA project to fully incorporate new media strategies that included blogs, online publications, social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter, and live streaming of community meetings, along with traditional outreach tools.

6.2 Public Participation Plan

Recognizing the unique challenges and opportunities of the proposed Project, Metro developed a creative approach to outreach to ensure an inclusive, engaging, and transparent public participation process from the AA through the Final EIS/EIR. The community outreach effort was designed to build awareness and understanding of the Project, provide opportunities for ongoing stakeholder involvement and input, and assist in the identification of potential mitigation measures. Outreach included engagement with a wide diversity of stakeholders and opinion leaders, including business organizations, chambers of commerce, business improvement districts, neighborhood councils, community councils, homeowners and residents associations, arts organizations, and elected officials representing the project area. Multi-lingual outreach was conducted, where appropriate, in Spanish, Korean, and Russian. The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is provided in the *Westside Subway Extension Alternatives Screening and Refinement following Scoping Report* (Metro 2010b) as Appendix A.

Elements of the PPP included a stakeholder database, communications protocols, public input tracking, a schedule for interfacing with the public, and recommendations for how meetings should be conducted. Project notifications, mailers, and updates will follow the specification outlined in the PPP, including newspaper ads and media outreach in appropriate languages.

This proactive PPP is ongoing through the SEIS phase, including direct outreach to businesses, stakeholders, and chambers of commerce with membership within the Study Area, as well as a new media emphasis on the avenues and opportunities to provide public comment to maximize community participation.

6.3 Public and Agency Comment for the Draft EIS

This Draft SEIS is intended to provide additional detail on Section 2 of the Project as it was approved by the Metro Board of Directors in May 2012. Therefore, the public outreach for this Draft SEIS will be focused on Section 2 of the Project, specifically the West Beverly Hills and Century City areas. Public notice of the availability of the Draft SEIS, a 45-day public review period, and notification of the completion of the Final SEIS will be provided in compliance with NEPA and the implementing regulations (23 CFR 771.130; 40 CFR 1502.9).

This Draft SEIS is being distributed for public review and comment for a 45-day period. Copies of the Draft SEIS may be reviewed at the Metro Transportation Library at One Gateway Plaza, 15th floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012; and at the following public library locations:

- Beverly Hills Public Library, 444 North Rexford Dr., Beverly Hills, CA 90210
- Donald Bruce Kaufman -Brentwood Library, 11820 San Vicente Blvd., Los Angeles 90049
- Fairfax Library, 161 S. Gardner St., Los Angeles 90036
- Felipe de Neve Library, 2820 W. Sixth St., Los Angeles 90057
- Frances H. G. Hollywood Regional Library, 1623 N. Ivar Ave., Hollywood 90028

- John C. Fremont Library, 6121 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles 90038
- Memorial Library, 4625 W. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles 90019
- Pio Pico Koreatown Library, 694 S. Oxford Ave., Los Angeles 90005
- Robertson Branch Library, 1719 S. Robertson Blvd, Los Angeles 90035
- Santa Monica Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd, Santa Monica 90401
- West Hollywood Public Library, 715 North San Vicente, West Hollywood 90069
- West Los Angeles Regional Library, 11360 Santa Monica Blvd, Los Angeles 90025
- Westwood Library, 1246 Glendon Ave., Los Angeles 90024
- Will & Ariel Durant Library, 7140 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles 90046
- Wilshire Library, 149 N. St. Andrews Pl., Los Angeles 90004

A Notice of Availability about this Draft SEIS has been published in the *Federal Register*. One public hearing will be held on the content and findings of this Draft SEIS. Information on the public hearing and the Draft SEIS may be found on the project website at: www.metro.net/projects/westside.

6.4 Section 106 Consultation

An extensive consultation process with various cultural resources groups and historic preservation agencies to identify traditional cultural properties, cultural practices, historic properties, and areas of archeological interest or potential was conducted during all phases of the environmental planning process and has been documented for the Section 106 consultation process. Detailed information can be found in Chapter 8, Public and Agency Outreach, of the Final EIS/EIR.

The level of detail about construction staging near the AAA Building has increased since the Final EIS/EIR (Metro 2012); therefore, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) reassessed project effects related to construction staging, as described in Section 4.4.2 of this Draft SEIS. FTA has made a finding that the construction staging would have no new adverse effect on historic properties and is consulting with the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). As part of the consultation, FTA has prepared a letter to the California SHPO explaining the purpose of the SEIS, court order, the alternatives under evaluation and anticipated impacts. FTA is also informing the California SHPO of its intent to make a Section 4(f) finding based on their concurrence with the Section 106 determination. FTA is in consultation with the California SHPO regarding the reassessment of effects on historic properties as of the date of issue of this Draft SEIS.

As part of the ongoing project design development and refinements, Beverly Hills Unified School District and the City of Beverly Hills have requested to be Section 106 consulting parties. FTA has granted this request and both groups will be included in forthcoming Section 106 consultation, affording them the opportunity to comment on historic preservation-related aspects of the Project.

6.5 Section 4(f) Consultation

This consultation and coordination has continued through this Draft SEIS phase in regard to Section 4(f) and is summarized below and detailed in Chapter 5 of this Draft SEIS.

On January 25, 2017, per 23 CFR 774.5, FTA consulted with and informed the City of Beverly Hills Community Services Department and the Beverly Hills Unified School District (BHUSD), the officials with jurisdiction over the public use of the Beverly Hills High School (BHHS) sports fields, of its intent to make a *de minimis* impact determination for the recreational facilities, below which the project would construct and operate a tunnel in a subsurface easement.

The City of Beverly Hills responded to the FTA on February 2, 2017, requesting consultation under Section 106 and requesting additional information. The City also requested a meeting with FTA.

The BHUSD responded to the FTA on February 8, 2017, requesting consultation under Section 106 and requesting additional Project information. BHUSD also requested a meeting with FTA.

On February 15, 2017, FTA and Metro met with the City of Beverly Hills and BHUSD representatives to discuss the findings and provide the additional information requested by the reviewing parties.

On April 4, 2017, the City of Beverly Hills responded to FTA with questions related to air quality modeling methodology and methane gas assessment in the vicinity of BHHS. The analysis included in Chapter 4 of this Draft SEIS considers the City's comments.

On April 7, 2017, BHUSD responded to FTA with questions related to subsurface methane gas, seismic analysis, noise and vibration, and air quality and public health. The analysis included in Chapter 4 of this Draft SEIS considers BHUSD's comments.

