6.0 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 Background

This section documents the Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor Study Public Involvement Program process over the course of Phase I, the Major Investment Study (MIS) completed in March 2000, and through the current phase, Phase II, which includes the scoping process and the release of this Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR). This section is not intended to address each and every concern raised, rather it documents the community participation activities, and environmental review process.

6.1.2 Objectives

The goals of the public involvement program have been to:

- Create a public involvement process that allows all those with a relevant stake in the MIS/EIS/EIR an opportunity to participate in its development;
- Identify, catalog, and respond to issues of concern to the public with regard to the MIS/EIS/EIR and identify potential mitigations where appropriate; and
- Manage the public involvement program in a manner that maximizes public participation in the planning and environmental processes for the project.

6.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

6.2.1 Notice of Intent/Notice of Preparation (NOI/NOP)

The federal Notice of Intent (NOI), in accordance with NEPA, was issued on May 19, 2000, and was printed in the Federal Register on May 19, 2000 (Vol. 65 No. 98). The NOI announced the MTA and FTA's intent to prepare a joint EIS/EIR document in accordance with Federal and State environmental guidelines. It included information on the project background, the alternatives, the MIS process, FTA procedures, scoping meetings held, and contacts and sources of further information. The NOI and NOP commenced the 30-day public scoping period for the EIS/EIR to help determine the scope and content of the environmental analysis. The scoping comment period closed on June 23, 2000.

In accordance with CEQA, Notice of Preparation (NOP) announcing the MTA and FTA's intent to prepare an EIS/EIR was also mailed on May 8, 2000. Like the NOI, the NOP described the proposed project and requested input from agencies, organizations and individuals. The alternatives and the anticipated effects were briefly described. The scoping comment period for the NOP also closed on June 23, 2000. The State Clearinghouse designated this as project No. 2000051058.

The NOI and NOP are included as Attachment A to this section.

6.2.2 Activities

Stakeholder Identification

Throughout the public involvement process, individuals, community organizations, businesses, homeowners associations, business groups, and public agencies that may be affected by, or have an interest in, the Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor study were identified. Key objectives were to identify and contact key community stakeholders, to inform stakeholders and their communities about plans to improve transit on the Westside, and to gather public comment. The stakeholders that have been identified to date and contacted are listed below.

Chambers of Commerce Business Groups

- Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce
- Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
- Mid-City Chamber of Commerce
- Wilshire Chamber of Commerce
- Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
- Korean American Chamber of Commerce
- Crenshaw Chamber of Commerce
- Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce
- West Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce
- Los Angeles Business Council
- Miracle Mile Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Los Angeles African American Chamber of Commerce
- Venice Area Chamber of Commerce
- Brentwood Village Chamber of Commerce
- Brentwood Chamber of Commerce

Homeowner Associations

- Baldwin Neighborhood Homeowners Association
- Beverly Angeles Homeowners Association
- Beverly Roxbury Homeowners Association
- Beverlywood Homeowners Association
- Brentwood Glenn Homeowners Association
- Brentwood Hills Homeowners Association
- Brentwood Homeowners Association
- California Country Club Homes Association

- Carthay Circle Homeowners Association
- Castle Heights Neighborhood Association
- Century Westwood Watch
- Cheviot Hills Homeowners Association
- Cheviot Hills Homeowners Association
- Country Club Park Homeowners Association
- East Culver City Neighborhood Alliance
- Friends of Sunset Park
- Friends of Westwood, Inc.
- Hancock Park Association
- Hancock Park Homeowners Association
- Hayden Tract Business Group
- La Brea/ Hancock Homeowners Association
- Lafayette Neighborhood Association
- Larchmont Village Neighborhood Association
- Longwood Area Neighborhood Association
- Melrose Action Committee
- Melrose Neighborhood Association
- Miracle Mile Homeowners Association
- Miracle Mile Residential Association
- Rancho Higuera Association
- South Carthay Neighborhood Association
- South of Robertson Neighborhood Association
- South West Association of Neighbors
- Tract No. 7260 Neighborhood Watch
- Victoria Park Association
- Village Green Homeowners Association
- West Adams Heritage Association
- West of Westwood Homeowners Association
- Westside Civic Federation
- Westside Resident's Association
- Westwood Gardens Civic Association

- Westwood Homeowners Association
- Westwood South of Santa Monica
- Wilshire Homeowners Association
- Wilshire Park Association
- Wilshire/Montana Neighborhood Coalition
- Windsor Square Neighborhood Association
- Windsor Village Community Association
- Windsor Village Homeowners Association

Schools

Several schools within a ½-mile of the transit routes have been identified based on field reconnaissance. A comprehensive list of elementary, junior, and senior high schools in the Study Area was prepared and used to conduct outreach activities. Table 6-1 provides a list of these schools and their locations.

TABLE 6-1
SCHOOLS WITHIN 0.5 MILE OF THE WILSHIRE BOULEVARD AND EXPOSITION CORRIDORS

SCHOOL	ADDRESS	CITY
10th Street Elementary	1000 Grattan Street	Los Angeles
3rd Street Elementary	201 S. June Street	Los Angeles
6th Avenue Elementary	3109 Sixth Avenue	Los Angeles
Adams Middle School	151 W. 30th Street	Los Angeles
Alta Loma Elementary	1745 Vineyard Avenue	Los Angeles
Arlington Heights Elementary	1717 Seventh Avenue	Los Angeles
Audubon Middle School	4120 11th Avenue	Los Angeles
Belmont Adult School	1575 W. Second Street	Los Angeles
Belmont Senior High School	1575 W 2nd Street	Los Angeles
Brockton Elementary	1309 Armacost Avenue	Los Angeles
Burroughs Middle School	600 S. McCadden Place	Los Angeles
Canfield Elementary	9233 Airdrome Street	Los Angeles
Carthay Center Elementary	6351 W. Olympic Blvd.	Los Angeles
Castle Heights Elementary	9755 Cattaraugus Avenue	Los Angeles
Cienega Elementary	2611 S. Orange Drive	Los Angeles
Clover Avenue Elementary	11020 Clover Avenue	Los Angeles
Crescent Heights Blvd. Elementary	1661 Crescent Heights Blvd.	Los Angeles
Emerson Middle School	1650 Selby Avenue	Los Angeles
Fairburn Elementary	1403 Fairburn Avenue	Los Angeles
Hamilton Senior High School-Complex	2955 Robertson Blvd.	Los Angeles
Hancock Park Elementary	408 S. Fairfax Avenue	Los Angeles
Hobart Blvd. Elementary School	980 S. Hobart Blvd.	Los Angeles
King Jr. Elementary	3989 S. Hobart Blvd.	Los Angeles
Los Angeles Senior High	4650 W. Olympic Blvd.	Los Angeles
Manual Arts High School	4131 S. Vermont Avenue	Los Angeles

TABLE 6-1
SCHOOLS WITHIN 0.5 MILE OF THE WILSHIRE BOULEVARD AND EXPOSITION CORRIDORS

SCHOOL	ADDRESS	CITY
Mar Vista Elementary	3330 Granville Avenue	Los Angeles
Marvin Avenue Elementary	2411 Marvin Avenue	Los Angeles
Menlo Avenue Elementary	4156 Menlo Avenue	Los Angeles
Mt. Vernon Middle School	4066 W. 17th Street	Los Angeles
Norwood Elementary	2020 Oak Street	Los Angeles
Overland Avenue Elementary	10650 Ashby Avenue	Los Angeles
Palms Elementary	3520 Motor Avenue	Los Angeles
Palms Middle School	10680 Woodbine Street	Los Angeles
Pio Pico Elementary	1512 Arlington Avenue	Los Angeles
Queen Anne Elementary	1212 Queen Anne Place	Los Angeles
Salvin Spec. Ed. Ctr.	1925 Budlong Avenue	Los Angeles
Saturn Street Elementary	5360 Saturn street	Los Angeles
Shenandoah Elementary	2450 Shenandoah Street	Los Angeles
Sterry Elementary	1730 Corinth Avenue	Los Angeles
University High School	11800 Texas Avenue	Los Angeles
Virginia Road Elementary	2925 Virginia Road	Los Angeles
Warner Elementary	615 Holmby Avenue	Los Angeles
Webster Middle School	11330 W. Graham Place	Los Angeles
Weemes Elementary	1260 W 36th Place	Los Angeles
Westwood Elementary	2050 Selby Avenue	Los Angeles
Wilshire Crest Elementary	5241 W. Olympic Blvd.	Los Angeles
Wilton Place Elementary	745 S. Wilton Place	Los Angeles
Echo Horizon School	3430 McManus Avenue	Culver City
Crossroads School	1715 Olympic Blvd.	Santa Monica
Roosevelt Elementary School	801 Montana Avenue	Santa Monica
Franklin School	2400 Montana Avenue	Santa Monica
Lincoln Middle School	1501 California Avenue	Santa Monica
Santa Monica College		Santa Monica
Santa Monica High School	601 Pico Blvd	Santa Monica
Will Rogers Elementary School	2401 14th Street	Santa Monica
Grant Elementary School	2368 Pearl Street	Santa Monica
Richland Avenue School	11562 Richland Avenue	Santa Monica
Charnoch Road School	11133 Charnock Road	Los Angeles
Beverly Hills High School	241 South Moreno Drive	Beverly Hills
Horas Man Elementary School	8701 Charleville Blvd	Los Angeles
Fairfax High School	7850 Melrose Avenue	Los Angeles
Baldwin Hills School	5421 Rodeo Drive	Los Angeles
Dorsey High School	3537 Farmdale Avenue	Los Angeles
Mid City High School	3100 West Adams Blvd	Los Angeles
Widney High School	2302 Gramercy Place	Los Angeles
Coliseum Street School	4400 Coliseum Street	Los Angeles
Tom Bradley School	3875 Dublin Avenue	Los Angeles
James A. Foshay Junior High School	3751 Harvard Boulevard	Los Angeles
Trinity Street Elementary School	3736 Trinity Street	Los Angeles

TABLE 6-1 SCHOOLS WITHIN 0.5 MILE OF THE WILSHIRE BOULEVARD AND EXPOSITION CORRIDORS		
SCHOOL	**ADDRESS**	**CITY**
28th Street Elementary School	2807 Stanford Avenue	Los Angeles
Trinity Street Children's Center	3816 Trinity Street	Los Angeles
Friedman Adult High School	Unknown on Hill Street	Los Angeles
Berendo Middle School	1157 Berendo Street	Los Angeles
Leo Politi Elementary School	2481 11th Street	Los Angeles
Hoover Elementary School	2726 Francis Avenue	Los Angeles
Union Avenue School	150 South Burlington Ave	Los Angeles
Betty Plasencia School	1321 Cortez Street	Los Angeles
Virgil Middle School	152 Vermont Avenue	Los Angeles
Hawthorne Elementary School	624 Rexford Blvd	Beverly Hills

Stakeholder Outreach

Project Fact Sheet

A project fact sheet was prepared that provided an update of the current planning process for the study. The fact sheet, plus illustrative maps, discussed the new transit improvements under evaluation in the Mid-City/Westside Corridor Study Area, the importance of the Corridor, other studies that are being conducted, current transportation needs, the study area, alternatives and a schedule. The team distributed the project fact sheet to all interested stakeholders via mail, fax, meetings and community open houses.

Update Mailing

Various means were used to invite public comment on the project. At the initiation of the study period, the team mailed a letter to over 12,000 addresses, including but not limited to homeowners associations and business interests, throughout the Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor. The mailing resulted in the distribution of public information about the study in homeowners' newsletters and at homeowners association meetings. The letter updated stakeholders about important milestones and the status of the study process, and contained information on important decisions made by the MTA Board regarding the study. The public information materials also included the names and contact information of who to send comments to, and information on how to access the project hotline number. The mailing encouraged everyone's participation and feedback.

The public outreach team coordinated 12,464 individual pieces of mail to the organizations listed in Table 6-2.

TABLE 6-2 LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED	
Pieces	**Organization**
150	Victoria Park Association
20	Rancho Higuera
500	East Culver City Neighborhood Alliance
650	Village Green
300	Windsor Village Homeowners Association
380	West Adams Heritage
114	MTA Rentals/Lease
100	Rose & Kindel
900	Homeowners Associations
1000	HOPE Community Resource Center (Crenshaw Area)
950	Tract 7260
2000	West of Westwood
650	Westwood Gardens
1500	Westside Resident's Association
100	Office of Councilmember Ruth Galanter
300	Office of Councilmember of Mark Ridley-Thomas
1000	Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce
1000	Westside Homeowners Association
350	Santa Monica Planning Dept.
500	Scoping Meetings (*See Section 6.3 below*)

In addition, letters and flyers were sent to the stakeholders throughout the Study Corridor, and follow-up phone calls were made, when necessary.

A number of homeowners associations, neighborhood associations and interest groups submitted comments at each community open house as well as mailed, faxed and e-mailed their comments. Most of the submitted comments came from individuals interested in the project but unable to attend one of the community open houses, or from individuals that desired to have a formal role in the process.

Website/Media Outreach & Coordination

Following is a description of outreach conducted through the web and local media:

- Advertisement in the South of Robertson (SORO) website and newsletter.
- Advertisement in the St. Andrews Homeowners Association website and newsletter.
- Placed community calendar articles in the *Larchmont Chronicle*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Sentinel*, the *Westside Weekly*, independent publications (i.e., *Wilshire*, *Westsider*, etc.).
- Contacted the following newspapers:
  - The Wave,
  - Brentwood Media Group (Monthly),
  - Downtown News,
  - Jewish Journal,

  - Korea Times, and
  - Santa Monica Mirror.

- Placed advertisements in the following newspapers during the week of May 17th, 2000:
  - LA Times (Our Times Editions)
  - LA Times (Southern California Living)
  - The Sentinel
  - L.A. Independent
  - Wilshire Independent
  - Culver City Chronicle
  - Westsider

The advertisements are included as Figure 6-1.

Hotline

A hotline was set up to provide the public with immediate access to accurate, up-to-date information about the project. The hotline briefly describes the planning process and the opportunities for public involvement. Callers had the option of leaving a detailed message, or simply leaving their contact information so that they could receive additional information.

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE EIS/EIR SCOPING PROCESS

The public scoping comment period for the EIS/EIR commenced on May 23, 2000 and ended on June 23, 2000. Homeowner associations, chambers of commerce, community organizations and the general public were contacted by phone, as a supplement to the mailings, to encourage their members' participation in the environmental review process and in determining the scope and content of the EIS/EIR.

6.3.1 Public Scoping Meetings

After completion of the MIS and during the scoping period (May 23-June 23, 2000) for the EIS/EIR, the public had the opportunity to attend five scoping meetings. The locations and dates of these scoping meetings are provided in Table 6-3.

Figure 6-1 Community Meeting Advertisements

TABLE 6-3 MID-CITY/WESTSIDE CORRIDOR EIS/EIR SCOPING MEETINGS	
Location	**Date**
Mid-Wilshire/Beverly Hills/West Los Angeles	
Peterson Automotive Museum	May 23, 2000, Wednesday
Veterans Administration Hospital of West Los Angeles	May 31, 2000, Wednesday
Santa Monica	
Ken Edwards Center	June 6, 2000, Tuesday
Exposition Park/Crenshaw District	
California African-American Museum	June 7, 2000, Wednesday
Culver City	
Veterans Memorial Complex	June 8, 2000, Thursday

A total of 380 people attended the five community open houses:

- 81 at the Petersen Museum on Miracle Mile;
- 88 at the Veterans Administration Hospital in West Los Angeles;
- 93 at the Ken Edwards Center in the City of Santa Monica;
- 39 at the California African American Museum in Exposition Park; and
- 79 at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium in the City of Culver City.

6.3.2 Outreach Meetings

A total of 36 outreach meetings/briefings have been conducted, since the end of the scoping period, with various interested stakeholders to inform them of the study, elicit their feedback, and identify the issues of concern. Table 6-4 provides a summary list of all meetings held since the end of the scoping period.

TABLE 6-4 OUTREACH MEETINGS SUBSEQUENT TO SCOPING	
Date	**Meeting Participant**
June 22, 2000	LAUSD Principals at Dorsey High School
June 26, 2000	Staff of Congressman Henry Waxman
June 27, 2000	Baldwin Hills Homeowners Association
June 30, 2000	L.A. Department of Transportation
July 12, 2000	Wilshire Advocates Coalition/Miracle Mile Chamber of Commerce
July 24, 2000	Staff of Councilwoman Rita Walters
July 27, 2000	East Culver City Alliance
August 10, 2000	Southern California Association of Governments
August 16, 2000	Wilshire Advocates Coalition/Miracle Mile Chamber of Commerce
August 21, 2000	L.A. Community Redevelopment Agency
August 29, 2000	Wilshire Advocates Coalition/Miracle Mile Chamber of Commerce
September 11, 2000	Staff of Councilwoman Rita Walters
September 25, 2000	L.A. Department of Transportation
September 26, 2000	U.C.L.A. Transportation Services
October 5, 2000	Beverly Hills City Council - Traffic & Parking Committee
October 26, 2000	Friends for Exposition
November 2, 2000	Staff of the City of Santa Monica

TABLE 6-4 OUTREACH MEETINGS SUBSEQUENT TO SCOPING	
Date	**Meeting Participant**
November 8, 2000	Crenshaw Community Forum
November 14, 2000	L.A. Department of Transportation
November 16, 2000	California Department of Transportation
December 13, 2000	Federal Transit Administration
December 15, 2000	Elected Official Staff Briefing
January 10, 2001	LADOT
January 11, 2001	Staff of Culver City
January 23, 2001	Staff of Assemblyman Herb Wesson
February 7, 2001	LADOT
February 8, 2001	Neighbors for an Improved Community, Environmental Defense, Esperanza Community Housing Corporation, Strategic Action for a Just Economy
February 12, 2001	University of Southern California
February 20, 2001	Staff of State Senator Polanco
March 5, 2001	Westwood Homeowner's Association
March 7, 2001	Staff of Senator Sheila Kuehl
March 9, 2001	Exposition Park Manage, Staff of Councilman Mark Ridley Thomas
March 15, 2001	Neighbors for an Improved Community, Environmental Dense, Esperanza Community Housing Corporation, Strategic Action for a Just Economy
March 27, 2001	East Culver City Neighborhood Alliance
March 29, 2001	Central City Association Figueroa Corridor Committee
Pending	Staff of the City of Culver City

6.3.3 Summary of Comments

A total of 324 comment letters on the scope and content of the EIS/EIR were received during the scoping period. A summary of the scoping comments and commentors is included as Attachment B to this section, while the following provides a brief summary of the primary issues raised by commentors during scoping.

- *Public Safety:* Members of the public expressed concern about the safety aspect of rapid transit, especially in residential areas, adjacent schools and at intersections, and indicated pedestrian safety at intersections and near schools as their most significant concern.
- *Environmental Issues (Noise and Vibration):* Participants commented on the potential for noise and vibration impacts both during construction and later during actual operation of the line.
- *Traffic and Parking:* Many commentors indicated a general concern, regarding how traffic flow patterns might change due to the line, both during construction and once operations began. There were specific questions about whether traffic around stations would increase, and whether parking would spill over into neighborhoods around stations.
- *Improvements to ROW:* Various stakeholders along the corridor would like to see the ROW improved and landscaped.

- *Wilshire BRT*. Commentors indicated a desire to see detailed plans for mitigation related to the safety concerns raised at the community open houses. Noise and vibration mitigation suggestions include landscaping, "living sound walls," traditional sound walls, "child-safe" grade crossing and mitigation efforts similar to those used in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Some commentors recommended grade-separations at all major streets or a combination of at-grade and grade-separated crossings. Also, an extension of the Red Line subway was frequently brought up, both in the community open houses and in the general comments.
- *Exposition BRT or LRT*. Commentors suggested that the MTA follow the route through Cheviot Hills along the existing MTA ROW. Among the many suggestions for enhancing a LRT line on the Exposition ROW were the inclusions of park-and-ride lots, satellite parking and feeder buses. Use of sound barriers, greenbelts and landscaping was also suggested.
- Loss of on-street parking.
- Traffic diversion onto adjacent streets.
- Pedestrian safety.
- Impact on pedestrian friendly planning.
- Concerns regarding traffic modeling and traffic impact methodology.
- Signalization of cross-streets.
- Loss of left-turn lanes.
- Safety at grade-separations.
- Location of park & ride facilities.
- Noise impact on areas adjacent to both routes.

The scoping comments were distributed to the EIS/EIR technical consultants to ensure that the public's concerns were addressed, to the greatest extent feasible, and incorporated into the EIS/EIR discussion of impacts.

6.4 AGENCY COORDINATION

A number of government agencies and organizations with a vested interest in the development of a transit system have also commented on the project. A summary of their issues and concerns is provided in Attachment B.

Scoping comment letters were received from the following agencies and organizations:

- City of Santa Monica, Office of the City Manager
- City of Culver City, Transportation Department
- City of Beverly Hills
- Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Commission
- State of California, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse
- Native American Heritage Commission

- South Coast Air Quality Management District
- City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks
- County of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks
- Southern California Association of Governments
- Southern California Gas Company
- Gabrieleno/Tongva Tribal Council
- Community Redevelopment Agency
- Los Angeles Unified School District

6.5 PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

In compliance with NEPA and CEQA, the public review period will commence upon release of the Draft EIS/EIR. During the public review period, the Draft EIS/EIR will be placed in document repository sites to provide ongoing information about the project. Public hearings will also be held to receive oral and written testimony on the Draft EIS/EIR from the public. In compliance with NEPA and CEQA, notice of the meetings will be provided to the public well in advance of their occurrence. Consideration of the Draft EIS/EIR by the MTA Board of Directors is scheduled to occur following the close of the public comment period.