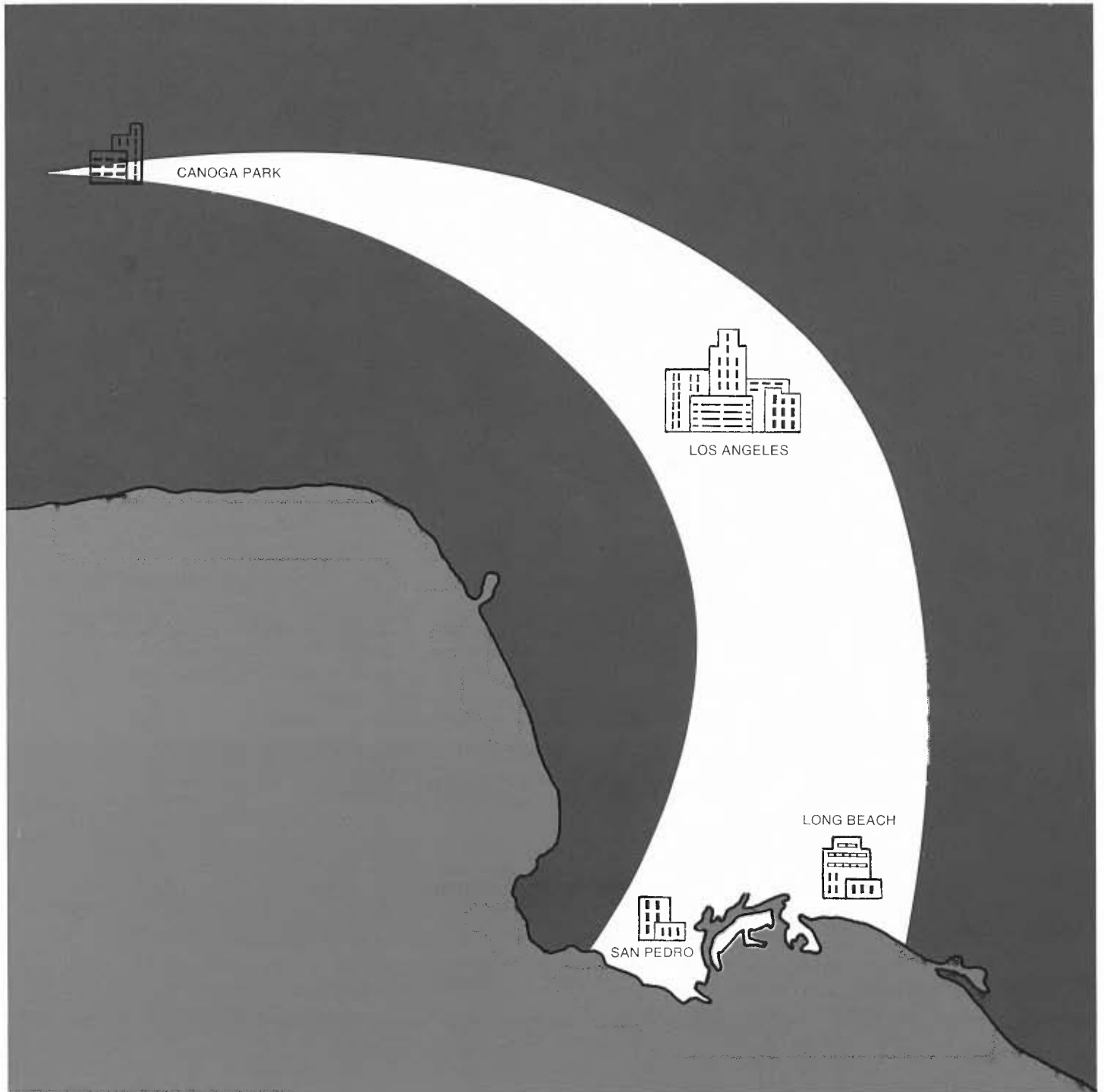


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Rapid Transit Digest



Editor's Note:

With Los Angeles on the verge of agreeing to a final rapid transit plan, the conversion of an existing lane on the Santa Monica Freeway to exclusive use of buses and carpools, talk of \$1 a gallon gasoline by Christmas, and many other transit developments to report to persons with an interest in Southland public transportation, the Rapid Transit Digest becomes a monthly publication with this issue. By coming to its readers 12 times a year the Digest will be able to help you keep better informed about the fast-changing face of Los Angeles public transportation.

COVER: The consensus rapid transit starter line corridor is symbolized on the cover.

The Southern California Rapid Transit District

As mandated by the California State Legislature in 1964, the public agency has the twin obligation of maintaining, implementing, and operating the existing bus system, while proceeding as quickly as funding permits to design, engineer, and build a Basin-wide rapid transit system.

To accomplish these goals, the legislators created an eleven-member board, to be appointed as follows:

1. Five by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; one by each supervisor
2. Two by the mayor of the City of Los Angeles with the concurrence of the City Council
3. Four by the City Selection Committee representing the other 75 municipalities within the areas of Los Angeles County contained in the District

Generally, the District consists of all Los Angeles County with the exception of island areas and that territory lying north of the San Gabriel Mountains. The District provides, on a contract basis, bus service in the heavily populated parts of Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties. Since these counties are not part of the District as created by law, they do not have representation on the board of directors. Also, within Los Angeles County, there are several municipal bus lines that are operated independently of the District. Currently, the District provides 83 per cent of the public transit services within the county.

RTD BOARD MEMBERS

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General Manager

J. R. Gilstrap

Los Angeles Moves Toward Rapid Transit

With local consensus reached on a rapid transit starter line corridor, the federal government was urged for the first time late in July to give the Los Angeles area "definite and high priority consideration in the current and future programming of federal funds for rapid transit."

In a letter to William T. Coleman, Jr., secretary of the U. S. Department of Transportation, Byron E. Cook, Southern California Rapid Transit District president, noted that general agreement by local funding agencies had been achieved on the approximately 50-mile long corridor stretching from Canoga Park in the north through downtown Los Angeles and heading south to the Long Beach/harbor area.

Cook told Secretary Coleman, whose department would supply the majority of funding for a rapid transit project, that intentions to pledge gasoline tax funds for a starter line project have been made by the County of Los Angeles and the Cities of Los Angeles, Long Beach, Glendale, and Burbank.

Support From Sacramento

In addition, both houses of the California state legislature have adopted resolutions in support of the corridor and Donald E. Burns, Governor Brown's secretary of Business and Transportation, has called a proposed Los Angeles transit project "the single most critical transportation issue in the state." The state also has gasoline tax funds that can be committed to the project.

The regional planning agency, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), has also indicated its support of the corridor and its importance to the region.

Three Alignment Alternatives

Although there is general agreement on the corridor, there is not yet specific agreement on the exact route alignment, configuration (aerial, subway, surface level), and transit mode to be used within the corridor. Currently, consideration is being given to three alignments.



ALTERNATIVE 1

One of the proposed routings, Alternative 1, is also known as the Los Angeles County plan. This proposal, making extensive use of existing and former rail rights of way, would begin in Canoga Park and run along Southern Pacific right of way paralleling the Ventura Freeway. Just westerly of the Golden State Freeway, the line goes into a tunnel coming out on Glenoaks Boulevard in Burbank, then on the surface east and south through Glendale and on to Dodger Stadium. From the stadium the proposed line goes back into tunnel for the five-mile stretch through the Los Angeles central business district to the Coliseum area. The line then would go by surface configuration down Vermont Avenue to I-105 right of way, then east to the Southern Pacific's Willowbrook right of way, and then south to Long Beach with a possible 11-mile branch to San Pedro, making a total of 59 miles. In Long Beach, the routing would terminate at that city's proposed downtown Transportation Center.

Cost Estimate

Proponents of this plan say it could be built in five to six years at a cost of about \$1 billion in 1980 dollars, depending on the extent of grade separations and number of stations. They estimate population within a three-mile radius of the stations at 2.4 million. Predictions on the average speed of operation of the vehicles range from 18 to 35 miles per hour — again,

depending on the extent of grade separations and station spacings.

Future Upgrading

Those backing this plan recognize it may be desirable to upgrade the system in later years to achieve the higher speeds associated with rapid transit.

Interest and support for the plan, in addition to Los Angeles County, have come from the cities of Burbank, Glendale, Long Beach, Compton, and from the South Los Angeles community.

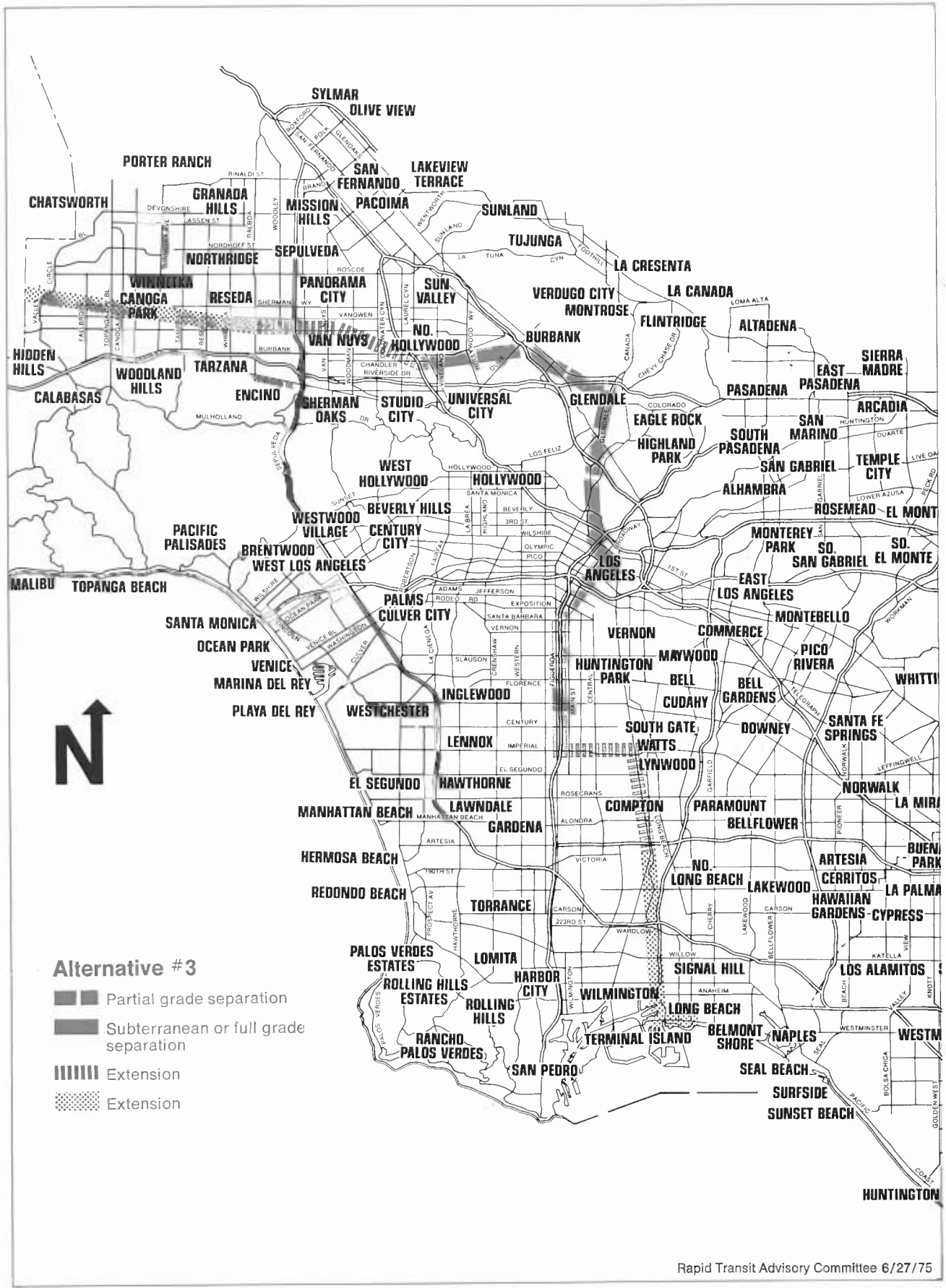
ALTERNATIVE 3

Another plan being given close scrutiny is very similar to Alternative 1; the prime difference is it envisions at the outset being more of a "rapid transit" type of operation, with average speeds of 35 to 40 miles per hour.





Alternative 3 would cover a total of 28 miles, starting in North Hollywood instead of Canoga Park, coming into downtown via Burbank and Glendale, and terminating on Vermont Avenue at Imperial Highway rather than extending further south to the Long Beach/harbor area.

Alternative 3 could take seven years to implement. Cost estimates are \$1.09 billion in 1980 dollars. Population directly served is lower than that for Alternative 1, but average daily ridership by 1990 is estimated at about the same — up to 150,000 because of the higher level of service.

Interest and support for this alignment have also been voiced by Burbank, Glendale, and the South Los Angeles community.



Alternative #3

-  Partial grade separation
-  Subterranean or full grade separation
-  Extension
-  Extension

ALTERNATIVE 5

Alternative 5, like Alternative 3, would have as its northern point of origination North Hollywood, but would head directly south and east through the Hollywood and Wilshire areas to downtown Los Angeles. As is also the case with Alternative 3, the southern terminus would be Vermont Avenue and Imperial Highway.

The approximately 28-mile route would have about 18 miles of subway, and also take about seven years to implement. Its cost (in 1980 dollars) is estimated at \$1.12 billion.

Chief benefits cited for this plan are its proximity to major centers of population and employment, its accessibility to transit dependent individuals, predictions of a high degree of utilization (as many as 240,000 daily riders by 1990), and average speed at the outset of 35 to 40 miles per hour.

Alternative 5 has the backing of the City of Los Angeles' technical staff, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the Wilshire Chamber of Commerce, and South Los Angeles community groups.

Decision Needed Soon

District officials are hopeful that agreement on a specific route alignment will be achieved in the near future. Delay in such a decision could be very costly, as Jack R. Gilstrap, RTD general manager, testified before a state senate subcommittee in July. Gilstrap told the legislators, "This problem must be resolved within 90 days, or the chances will increase that available federal money, which we must rely on to finance the majority of any rapid transit project here, will be committed to other cities."

Notwithstanding the corridor alignment situation, however, the consensus reported to Secretary Coleman represents a milestone in the Los Angeles area's half-century old battle to obtain rapid transit. The progress made in just the past few months can only be called remarkable.

The consensus corridor for the starter line extending from the San Fernando Valley to the Long Beach/harbor area was selected from a system of corridors adopted by the RTD board in the summer of 1974 after several years of extensive planning studies. At that time, a 145-mile initial system was planned with future additions calling for a total 240-mile regional system in Los Angeles County. Both the near-term and long-term plans were designed to tie into a proposed 117-mile rapid transit and express busway system in Orange County.

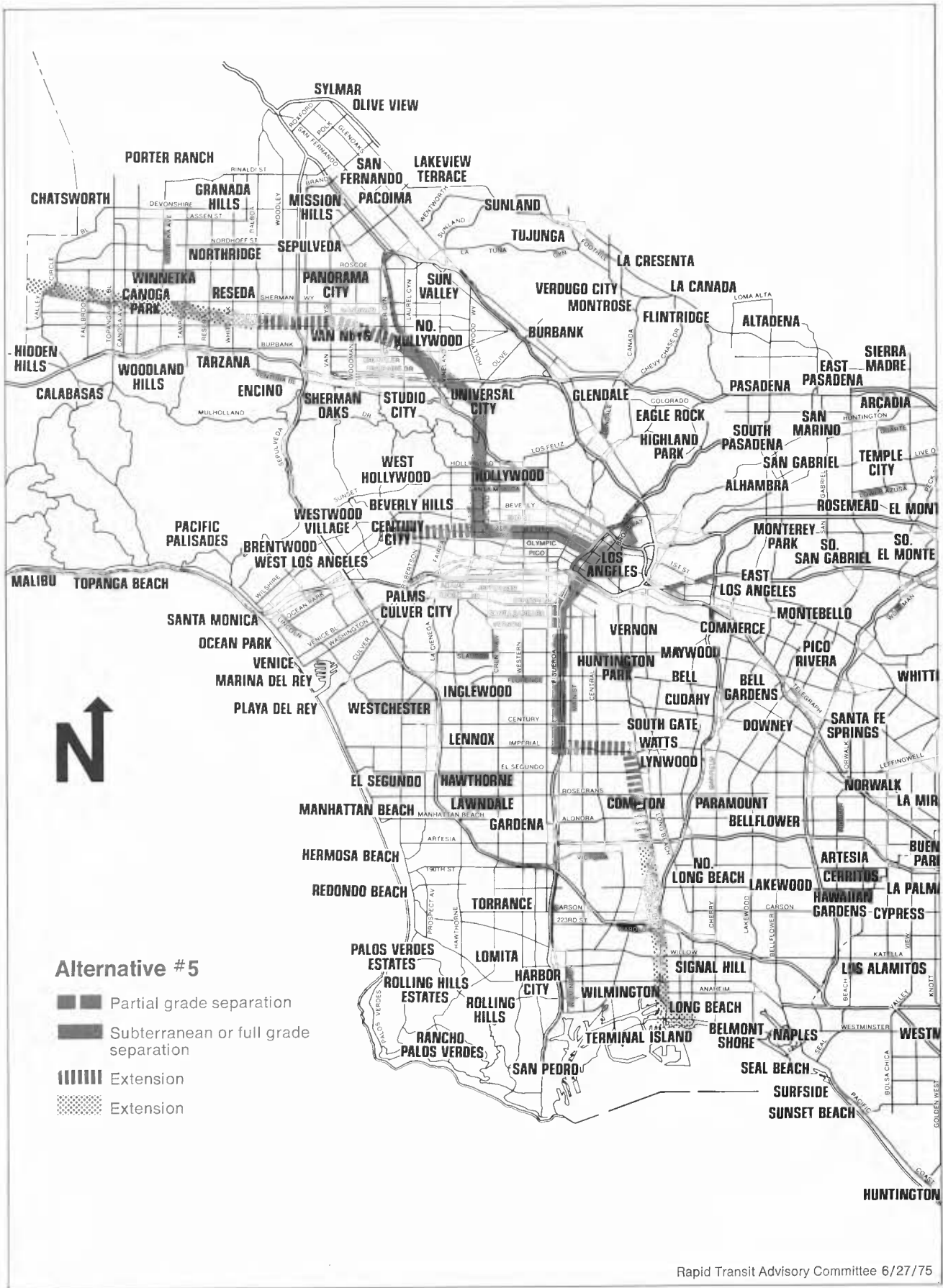
Federal funding was to be used to provide up to 80 per cent of the revenue for the projects in the two counties. One-cent sales tax increases, boosting the local rate from six to seven per cent, were proposed as a method to raise the 20 per cent local share.

In November of 1974, ballot measures known as Proposition A in both counties were submitted to the electorate for authorization of the sales tax increase. The voters, however, faced with the prospect of increased taxation during a period of economic recession and double-digit inflation, turned down the proposed funding mechanisms.

Thus denied the sales tax method of financing the local share of the system, District officials began a process of modifying the 145-mile initial phase to fit anticipated available local funding levels.

Fortunately for the region, a limited amount of funding is available as a result of passage of a ballot measure in June of 1974.

This measure, known as Proposition 5, was overwhelmingly approved by California voters. It authorizes, at the discretion of the state, counties, and cities, a diversion of taxes collected on gasoline from strictly highway purposes to rapid transit construction. A local companion measure to the statewide Proposition 5 (favored by over 60 per cent of Los Angeles County voters), enables governmental entities in the county and the state administration to make this diversion. Orange County is scheduled to offer this option to its residents on the June 1976 ballot.



Alternative #5

- Partial grade separation
- Subterranean or full grade separation
- Extension
- Extension

Exact amounts available in Los Angeles County over the next few years have not been completely determined. Since it is not mandatory to allocate the funds to rapid transit, and since gas tax revenues have been declining due to higher pump prices which force motorists to drive less, it is difficult to fix a firm figure. The combined figure available over the next five to six years should be in the \$200 million range, which, after adding the anticipated four federal dollars to each local dollar, would produce a total of approximately \$1 billion for the project within this time period — a figure very close to the price tags of the three alternative plans now being discussed. It should be noted that allocation of Proposition 5 funds can continue to be made in subsequent years and that it is quite likely (as has been the case with the Federal Interstate Highway program) that additional federal funding will be forthcoming.

The broad base of local support for the starter line corridor results in large part from efforts by the RTD to include virtually every affected governmental body in the area during the planning stage.

District Creates RTAC

In early 1975 the District formed a joint-agency technical committee, the Rapid Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC), whose mission was to analyze available transportation data, obtain needed additional data, and suggest those corridors which appear best suited for a starter line project within the corridors adopted in 1974.

RTAC is comprised of representatives from the California Department of Transportation, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the RTD, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Los Angeles Mayor, City Council, and Planning and Engineering staffs, the City of Long Beach, the Orange County Transit District, and other interested parties.

64 Alternatives Considered

Out of a possible total of 64 corridor combination possibilities, RTAC rapidly reduced the number to 11 and subsequently to the three described above. The following factors were used in this screening process:

1. Costs — including capital, operating, and maintenance costs as well as feeder/distribution associated costs
2. Community and regional planning objectives — ensuring that any major new transportation facility would be compatible with the desires of the citizenry
3. Political and community support — a basic criterion in major public works projects
4. Patronage — considerations of passengers served, types of trips, service to transit dependents, accessibility to major activity centers, and level of service
5. Usable segment — a federal requirement, stating that any proposed starter line must be an effective service even if no additional segments are ever built
6. Speed of implementation — including time for planning, preliminary engineering, and final construction; and considering of coordination with other short-term and long-term transportation improvements
7. Funding constraints — considering the amount available from the state, county, and cities, and using it as the base for a 20 per cent local, 80 per cent federal financing program

District Receives RTAC Report

Richard Gallagher, RTD manager of rapid transit and chairman of RTAC, reported the findings of the committee to the RTD board which then adopted the suggested starter line corridor, and subsequently sent the letter outlining the region's consensus to Secretary Coleman.

Orange County Needs Addressed

Before the letter was sent, another development occurred, again demonstrating the unified approach being taken in the Southland. Meeting in joint session, the boards of directors of the RTD and the Orange County Transit District agreed that Phase 2 of the rapid transit project in Los Angeles County would include an inter-county line within the corridor extending from the vicinity of Watts Junction in South Los Angeles easterly along existing railroad right of way towards Garden Grove and Santa Ana.

More Technical Work To Come

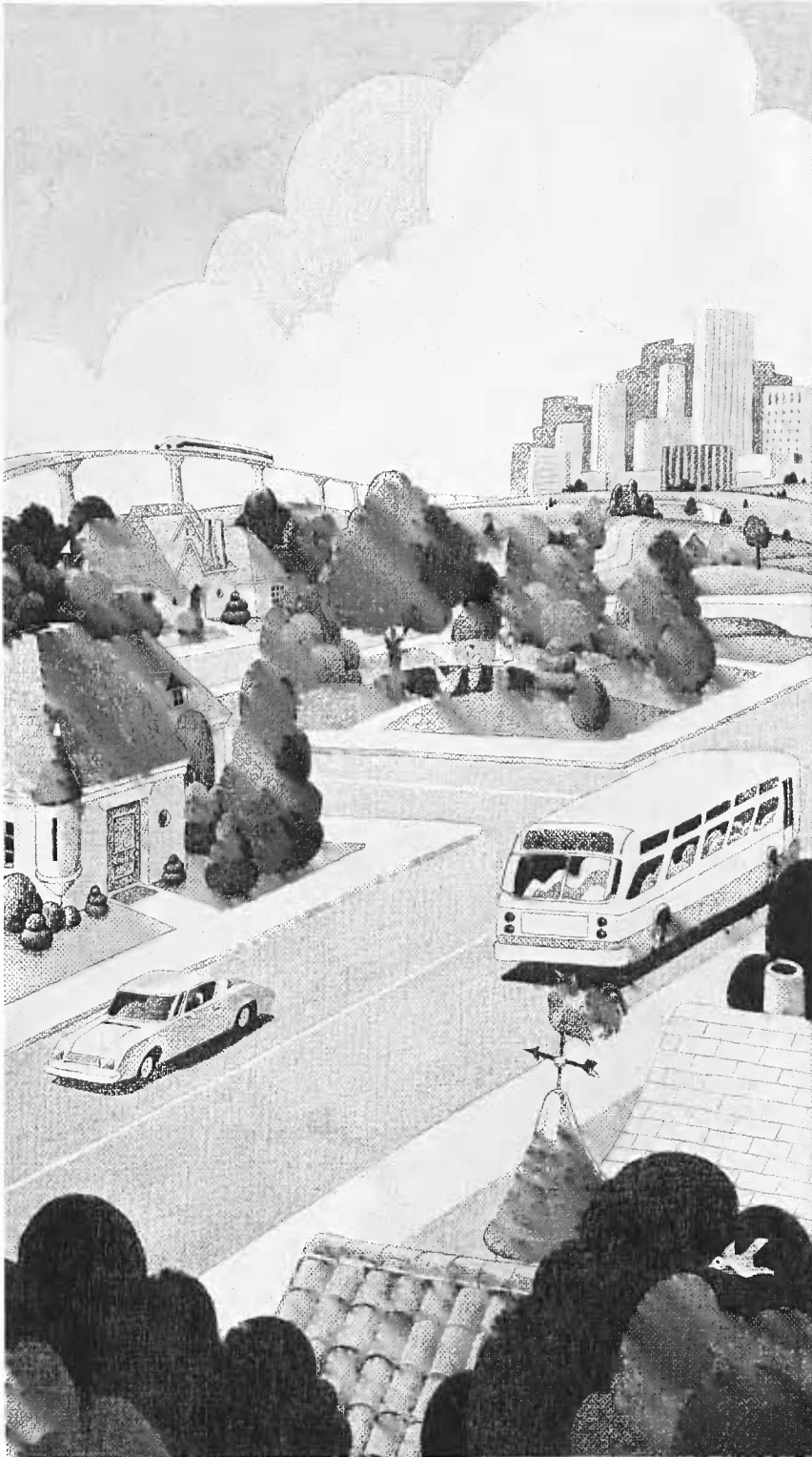
In future months, the RTD staff working with the technical staffs of the involved agencies will address such matters as preliminary engineering and mode and system configuration. Their activities are now awaiting a decision by the policy bodies of the funding agencies on which of the three alternatives is to be chosen.

In a report to the RTD board in early August, RTAC Chairman Gallagher summarized the issues facing the policy-making and funding entities as they make their choice of a route alignment. Gallagher said the fundamental question is: Shall the region's starter line be constructed as a full rapid transit system at the outset — which would mean less mileage — or shall it be initially constructed at a longer length, but provide a lesser level of service which can be subsequently upgraded?

With the answer to this question, preliminary engineering, environmental impact analyses and other related work will take place. During this process each community through which the starter line passes will be invited to participate in the deliberations as to the exact final alignment and station location. District officials are optimistic that a capital grant application can be made to the federal government for final design and construction by June of 1976, with actual construction to start within two years thereafter.

New Era for Los Angeles Transportation

Thus if the spirit of cooperation continues and the consensus on transit priorities is maintained, Angelenos should be able to start riding on their own rapid transit system by 1982 or 1983. Decades of almost total dependence on the automobile will then be at an end. A new era of balanced transportation is in the offing for Los Angeles.



RTD Facts at a Glance . . .



. . . you can catch a bus, one of 2,170, at any of 25,000 stops in the RTD four-county service area



. . . you can then travel to 180 communities on the District's 3,600 one-way route miles



. . . as a passenger, you are one of 610,000 to board that workday; one of 195,000,000 a year



. . . the quarter most of you drop in the farebox is matched by approximately seventy-five cents from other sources, since farebox revenues produce only about 25 per cent of the revenue the District needs to continue operations



. . . the person driving your bus is one of 3,800, and is backed by 770 mechanics, 410 clerks, and 590 administrative personnel



. . . some 100 of these people staff the RTD information switchboard, which, except for Pacific Telephone, is the largest in Los Angeles and answers questions for more than 9,000 callers each day

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