

# Canoga Transportation Corridor Project



Summary of Outreach Activities and Public Comments  
from July 2007 Environmental Scoping Meetings

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the outreach activities that took place from May 2007 to August 2007 in support of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Canoga Transportation Corridor Project. The Canoga Transportation Corridor Project is a proposed four mile extension of the Metro Orange Line that would connect the Canoga Metro Orange Line Station at Canoga Avenue and Victory Boulevard to the Chatsworth Metrolink Station, with a possible on-street extension to the State Route (SR)-118 freeway.

Outreach activities focused on building awareness and participation in the three environmental scoping meetings that were held on July 24, 26 & 30, 2007. The first meeting was held for government agencies on July 24, 2007, at 2 p.m. at Metro Headquarters, One Gateway Plaza in Los Angeles. Two meetings for the general public were held on July 26<sup>th</sup>, at 7 p.m. at Chatsworth High School and July 30<sup>th</sup>, at 7 p.m. at New Academy of Canoga Park. The purpose of the meetings was to familiarize the public with the project, meet project staff, and elicit formal comments on how best to extend the Metro Orange Line to the Chatsworth Metrolink Station.

For access to the complete record of all meeting notices, public information materials, presentation boards, comments received, mailing lists, newspaper ads, meeting attendees, and other outreach materials, please contact the Project Management Office at (213) 922-7456.

## II. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Nearly 300 community stakeholders with a potential interest in the project were identified via research of key community and business groups, neighborhood councils, and briefings with elected officials. Contact information was catalogued in a project database that now includes elected officials, neighborhood councils, homeowners associations, mobile home parks, resident associations, lease-holders along the Metro right-of-way (ROW), business groups, churches, transportation organizations and equestrian groups with specific interests along the Canoga Transportation Corridor.

## A. Outreach to Elected Officials

The first phase of outreach targeted the elected officials who represent the Canoga Transportation Corridor project area. Decision-makers and their staff members were briefed on the project and their feedback and involvement was solicited. A total of six briefings were held with elected officials representing the corridor.

Date	Elected Officials / Staff
June 13, 2007	Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael Antonovich
June 19, 2007	Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
June 20, 2007	Office of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa Deputy Mayor
June 20, 2007	Office of Los Angeles City Councilman Greig Smith
June 26, 2007	Office of Los Angeles City Councilman Dennis Zine
June 27, 2007	Division 8 (Chatsworth Facility) Staff, Offices of Congressman Brad Sherman, Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, Senator Alex Padilla, Senator George Runner, and Assemblyman Lloyd Levine

## B. Outreach to Public Agencies and the Public

The second phase of outreach was undertaken to notify government agencies and the general public about the environmental scoping meetings. The following activities were undertaken to inform and engage the community:

### 1. Newspaper Advertisements

The official Notice of Preparation (NOP) that describes this project was placed in two major publications selected for their San Fernando Valley-oriented circulation and audience. The scoping meeting advertisements were published in:

- *Daily News* (July 10, 2007)
- *La Opinión* (in Spanish, July 10, 2007)

## **2. Agency Scoping Meeting Notices**

Approximately 60 Agency scoping meeting notices were mailed the week of July 16, 2007 to federal, state, regional, county, and city agencies as well as offices of elected officials representing the project area.

## **3. Mailer Invite**

To inform those most directly affected by the proposed project, Metro purchased a mailing list of 44,100 occupant addresses within the target area bordering SR-118 to the north; US-101 to the south; Shoup Avenue to the west and Mason Avenue to the east. A four-color, tri-fold brochure was sent to recipients that included the project description, project map, details on upcoming meetings, project contact information, and the scoping period comment deadline.

## **4. Email Invite (Evite) & Newsletter Campaign**

An email invite (evite) was created by Metro Marketing and widely disseminated to stakeholders in the project area. The evite contained information in both English and Spanish and included a project description, details on the scoping meetings, the deadline for comments (August 13, 2007) and a project map showing draft alternative alignments. Hard copies of all project material presented at the scoping meetings were dropped off at area elected offices to enable those who could not attend the scoping meeting to be able to acquire project information from an alternate location.

In addition, project and scoping meeting information was sent to organizations with existing communication channels such as community newsletters, chamber of commerce e-mail lists, elected official e-newsletters, and neighborhood council e-mail blasts. The following organizations were contacted and asked to include scoping meeting information in their communications:

- Pierce College
- Save Chatsworth, Inc.
- Canoga Park Improvement Association
- Chatsworth Neighborhood Council
- Canoga Park Improvement Association
- Northridge West Neighborhood Council
- Winnetka Neighborhood Council
- Chatsworth Neighborhood Council
- West Hills Neighborhood Council
- Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council

- Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils
- Reseda Neighborhood Council
- Canoga Park Improvement Association
- VICA Transportation Committee
- San Fernando Valley Economic Alliance
- Canoga Park/West Hills Chamber of Commerce
- Warner Center Neighborhood Council
- Canoga Park Neighborhood Council
- Topanga Messenger
- San Fernando Sun
- Kiwanis Club
- ETI Corral
- Valley of the Stars
- Valley Homeowners Association
- City of Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)
- Friends of the Los Angeles River
- California State University-Northridge
- Woodland Hills Chamber of Commerce
- Friends of the Los Angeles River
- New Armenian Daily

## 5. Project Hotline

A local project telephone hotline was established at (818) 276-1289 to provide the public with current project information and a way to communicate with the project team. The recorded messages directed callers to options such as leaving a comment or question or contact information to be added to the project database. Telephone messages were recorded in the four identified languages spoken along the corridor: English, Spanish, Korean, and Armenian. A phone log is maintained to document calls received and entered into the project database. The hotline number was printed on all project information materials, newspaper advertisements, and e-mails.

## 6. Media Coverage

Metro included information about the scoping meetings in its “Metro Briefs” ads that were published in the following publications during the weeks of July 9 and 16, 2007:

- |                         |                                  |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • <i>Burbank Leader</i> | • <i>San Fernando Valley Sun</i> |
| • <i>Daily News</i>     | • <i>Sherman Oaks Sun</i>        |

- *Encino Sun*
- *Glendale News Press*
- *LA Valley BEAT*
- *Studio City Sun*
- *Tolucan Times*
- *Valley News Group*

Metro also issued a press release with information regarding the scoping meetings that was picked up in the following publications:

- *San Fernando Valley Business Journal* (July 17, 2007 and July 24, 2007)
- *The Transit Coalition Weekly Transit eNewsletter*, Volume 3, Issue 29 (July 17, 2007)
- *The Transit Coalition Weekly Transit eNewsletter*, Volume 3, Issue 30 (July 23, 2007)

## 7. Blogs

Key blogs were identified that could serve as information conduits. The identified blogs were located in the San Fernando Valley, as well as transportation blogs that serve the Los Angeles area. Information regarding the Canoga Transportation Corridor and scoping meeting announcements was posted the week of July 9<sup>th</sup> on the following blogs:

- Along for the Ride
- Curbed LA
- Green LA Girl
- LA Bus Girl
- LA Times Bottleneck Blog
- Metro Rider LA
- The LA Metro Mole

## 8. Visits to Neighborhood Councils and Community Organizations

Project staff visited 16 key community organizations to make announcements, drop off meeting invites, and encourage participation in the scoping process. Visits by project team staff were made to the following organizations:

Date	Organization
July 10, 2007	Northridge West Neighborhood Council
July 10, 2007	Winnetka Neighborhood Council
July 11, 2007	Chatsworth Neighborhood Council
July 11, 2007	West Hills Neighborhood Council
July 11, 2007	Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council
July 12, 2007	Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils

July 16, 2007	Reseda Neighborhood Council
July 16, 2007	Canoga Park Improvement Association
July 17, 2007	San Fernando Valley Economic Alliance
July 18, 2007	Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) Transportation Committee
July 18, 2007	Kiwanis Club of Woodland Hills
July 18, 2007	Rotary Club of Woodland Hills
July 19, 2007	Canoga Park/West Hills Chamber of Commerce
July 19, 2007	Warner Center Neighborhood Council
July 25, 2007	Canoga Park Neighborhood Council
July 27, 2007	Woodland Hills Chamber of Commerce

### III. SCOPING MEETINGS

As indicated above, three environmental scoping meetings were held in July 2007: one for government agencies and two for the general public. The two public meetings were held at each end of the Canoga Transportation Corridor: Chatsworth High School at the north end and New Academy of Canoga Park at the south end. A total of 168 people attended the three scoping meetings.

#### A. Public Scoping Meeting Format

The format for the meetings consisted of an Open House followed by a PowerPoint presentation and public comment period. The Open House format allows participants to view current project information and provide feedback as well as have direct contact with the project team. This format utilizes information stations staffed by project staff. Additionally, this format provides the public with immediate responses to concerns and comments, thereby reducing misinformation and rumor.

The open house for this project featured display boards that served to better illustrate the project description, environmental review process, corridor area map, and the nine project alternatives under consideration. Key personnel from the project team were present to enable stakeholders and others that could be impacted by the project to speak directly with the project's senior staff and ensure their concerns were heard before the project moved forward in its environmental review.

The open house session was followed by a PowerPoint presentation by Metro Project Manager Walt Davis. The presentation was followed by a formal public comment period that allowed participants to express their thoughts about the project for inclusion in the scoping section of the Draft EIR. Comments were recorded by a court reporter. Forms were also provided for submitting written

comments. To enable attendees to formulate their thoughts before making comments, written comments were received by Metro until August 13, 2007.

Spanish language interpreters were present at both public scoping meetings to provide simultaneous translation using audio headsets. A Korean translator was available at both meetings as well.

## B. Scoping Meeting Information Materials

Upon arrival at the Scoping Meeting, each attendee signed-in and was provided with information materials. The materials included:

- Welcome Sheet – explaining the purpose and format of the scoping meeting
- Metro Project Map – showing study area and alternative alignments
- Metro Orange Line Pamphlet – providing detailed information on the existing Metro Orange Line route, stations and features
- Alternatives Packet – maps describing each alternative under consideration for the Canoga Transportation Corridor
- Speaker Card – for individuals choosing to provide verbal testimony
- Comment Sheet – for individuals choosing to provide written comments

## C. Project Boards

Bilingual (English/Spanish) project display boards were presented at all scoping meetings. The following display boards were created to convey fundamental information about the project:

<b>Project Boards</b>
<i>Welcome</i>
<i>Project Goals</i>
<i>EIR Contents</i>
<i>EIR Process Overview</i>
<i>Types of Metro Bus Service</i>
<i>Metro Orange Line photos</i>
<i>Existing Land-Use Map</i>
<i>Aerial Photos of Project Area (available at Metro Library)</i>
<i>Corridor Area Map- including a possible extension to the SR-118</i>
<i>Alternative 1- No Build</i>
<i>Alternative 2- Transportation System Management (TSM)</i>
<i>Alternative 3- Mixed Flow Metro Rapid on Canoga Avenue</i>
<i>Alternative 4- Canoga Avenue Dedicated Lane Metro Rapid</i>
<i>Alternative 5- Canoga Avenue Busway - Metro Orange Line Extension</i>
<i>Alternative 6- Mixed Flow Metro Rapid on De Soto</i>

<i>Alternative 7- De Soto Dedicated Lane Metro Rapid</i>
<i>Alternative 8- Topanga Canyon Mixed Flow Rapid</i>
<i>Alternative 9- Topanga Canyon Dedicated Lane BRT</i>

## **D. Verbal and Written Comment Procedures**

Comment Sheets were made available in English and Spanish to all scoping meeting participants. Meeting participants also had the option of speaking for two minutes during the public comment portion of the meeting. Speakers completed request to speak cards which were called in the order received. All verbal comments were captured by a certified court reporter. In addition to the court reporter, a videographer recorded both public scoping meetings.

Members of the public could also mail or e-mail their comments to project staff. The deadline for comments was August 13, 2007.

The following suggested comment topics were listed on the Comment Sheet:

1. Canoga Transportation Corridor Alternatives (see handout)
2. Issues you would like addressed in the Environmental Impact Report (please be specific)
3. Additional Comments

## **IV. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC MEETINGS**

### **A. Chatsworth High School meeting – July 26, 2007**

A total of 96 people attended the meeting at Chatsworth High School. 36 comments were received at this first public scoping meeting. The subject matter of most comments consisted of support for Alternative 5, the Canoga Avenue Busway on the Metro-owned right-of-way (ROW), and concerns about an on-street extension of the Metro Orange Line further north from the Chatsworth Metrolink Station to SR-118.

The following is a summary of comments received:

Those voicing support for Alternative 5 (Canoga Avenue Busway) expressed that it would:

- Enhance the physical surroundings on and along the ROW
- Provide the least impact to the community
- Create dedicated bicycle and pedestrian paths
- Ensure the most cost-effective and logical use of existing land
- Benefit high school students attending nearby educational institutions

- Reduce traffic

Those voicing concern for the proposed extension to SR-118 expressed concern that it would impact:

- Scenic corridor and rocks
- Biking, hiking and equestrian trails
- Zoning and land use
- Cultural landmarks and existing petroglyphs
- Open space

Several stakeholders suggested the use of an existing park and ride lot in Porter Ranch to serve as the intercept point for the SR-118 extension.

Other comments submitted included:

- Recommendation for usage of native plants for landscaping
- Support for a station at Parthenia
- Consideration of disabled residents who use Access Paratransit

Comments voicing opposition to a Metro Orange Line extension included:

- Need for ridership projections to justify project
- Concerns for property acquisitions
- Concerns for the loss of businesses who lease land on the Metro-owned ROW

## **B. New Academy of Canoga Park meeting – July 30, 2007**

A total of 69 people attended this meeting and 29 comments were received from the public. Metro has a higher concentration of lease agreements on the southern portion of the Canoga Avenue ROW and several tenants attended this meeting to voice their concerns. For the public comment session, comments were split approximately in half between those voicing opposition or support for Alternative 5 (Canoga Avenue Busway).

Those voicing support for Alternative 5 (Canoga Avenue Busway) stated that this option would:

- Benefit the entire San Fernando Valley
- Be most cost-effective
- Ensure speed and capacity goals
- Maintain best use of land
- Benefit older residents/non-drivers from nearby Mobile Home Parks

- Keep buses off existing streets
- Increase pedestrian pathways
- Create bicycle pathways

Those voicing concern for Alternative 5 (Canoga Avenue Busway) feared:

- Negative impacts on businesses that would be relocated
- Uncertainty of where businesses would be relocated
- Noise impacts from buses

Other comments included:

- Requests for a soundwall for residents living adjacent to the ROW
- Support for a station at Parthenia
- Consider light rail as a possibility for the eventual replacement of the busway
- Operational issues/suggestions, including the need for Metro to better maintain its property
- Concerns regarding the park-and-ride option at SR-118
- New color for the north-south portion of line (in lieu of “Orange”)
- Analyzing the impact two large malls in area will have on the proposed project

Following the scoping meetings, four letters of support for Alternative 5 were received from the following organizations:

- United Chambers of Commerce of the San Fernando Valley
- Woodland Hills-Tarzana Chamber of Commerce
- Pierce College
- The Transit Coalition

## V. CONCLUSION

Comments received from both public scoping meetings generally indicated support for Alternative 5 (Canoga Avenue Busway). General concerns were expressed, however, pertaining to the impact the project would have to existing businesses along the Metro-owned ROW. There were a number of people who expressed concern pertaining to the possible extension of the project to the SR-118 Freeway impacting parkland, equestrian areas, street traffic and cultural landmarks.