

Westside Subway Extension

Conclusion of Environmental Studies



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Conclusion Factsheet



We're going to extend the Purple Line to bring real congestion relief to LA.

Background

After more than four years of in-depth study, Metro has completed the environmental analysis for the Westside Subway Extension. This work is documented in the recently released Final Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report (Final EIS/EIR), which is expected to be presented to the Metro Board of Directors for their consideration and possible approval on April 26, 2012. In addition to the technical analysis, there has been an extensive community outreach effort. By the time the Final EIS/EIR is presented to the Board of Directors, Metro will have hosted 71 community meetings throughout the study area.

Printed copies of the Final EIS/EIR, Plan and Profile and Station drawings (Appendices A & B), and CDs containing the report and all appendices are available in public libraries within the study area. Please go to metro.net/westside for a list of the libraries. At that website, you can also find the Final EIS/EIR, all of the supporting appendices and technical reports, along with all prior reports, information from the community meetings, numerous fact sheets and other material.

Summary of the Environmental Analysis Process

Alternatives Analysis Study (2007-08): Environmental analysis of this project began in 2007 with work on an Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study. That effort evaluated a variety of routes and travel modes including bus rapid transit, light rail, monorail and heavy rail. It also evaluated underground, street-level and elevated options. The study determined that underground, heavy rail (subway) was the most appropriate option for this heavily congested, dense area. In January 2009, the Metro Board approved the AA Study and authorized proceeding with a Draft EIS/EIR to further review the project.

Draft EIS/EIR (2009-10): The Draft EIS/EIR evaluated five subway alignment options, all extending the Metro Purple Line from the current Wilshire/Western station for different distances to the Westside. Two of the options also evaluated adding a connection to the current Metro Red Line at Hollywood/Highland. In October 2010, the Metro Board approved the Draft EIS/EIR, adopted the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), and authorized further analysis of this LPA through the preparation of the Final EIS/EIR. The LPA selected is a nine-mile extension of the Metro Purple Line subway from its current terminus at Wilshire/Western to the Westwood/VA Hospital with seven new stations. This was selected as the option that best meets federal evaluation criteria and that can be built with projected funds. The LPA selected basic station locations for the first four stations at La Brea Avenue, Fairfax Avenue, La Cienega Boulevard, and Rodeo Drive. At the three westernmost stations – Century City, Westwood/UCLA, and the Westwood/VA Hospital – it identified two options for further evaluation at each station location. The station options also resulted in different tunnel alignment alternatives.

Final EIS/EIR (2010-current): The Final EIS/EIR further analyzed and refined the selected LPA. This latest document includes recommendations for consideration by the Metro Board of Directors including station locations and entrances, tunnel alignment between stations, sites for construction staging, and mitigations. It also includes responses to comments received on the Draft EIS/EIR, results of additional analysis, and preliminary station designs.

Additional Technical Analysis and Recommendations

During preparation of the Final EIS/EIR, numerous technical studies were conducted to address comments received on the Draft EIS/EIR and assist in the refinement of the proposed project description. Two reports that are crucial to the station location and tunnel alignment recommendations in the Century City area, the "Fault Investigation Study" and the "Tunneling Safety Report", were publically released in October 2011. Detailed analyses of tunneling in gassy ground, as well as in areas with abandoned oil wells and active fault zones were conducted. The potential for noise and vibration during construction and operations was also assessed. Given the success that Metro has experienced with recent tunneling operations on the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension and the similar conditions expected for the Westside Subway Extension, the Final EIS/EIR concludes that with appropriate mitigation measures, the tunneling and operations can occur safely without resulting in any significant impacts to properties above or near the subway.

Once the Westside Subway Extension is completed to the Westwood/VA Hospital, it would take 25 minutes to travel between the Westwood/UCLA station and Pershing Square in Downtown Los Angeles, a savings of 30 minutes compared to transit travel times without the project. On an average weekday in 2035, 78,000 new trips are forecasted for the project, including people boarding at one of the seven new stations as well as those who begin their trips elsewhere on Metro.

The seven new stations are located at or within easy walking distance of major Westside destinations including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Beverly Hills "Golden Triangle," Century City, Westwood Village and the Veterans Administration complex. Metro will work to design the stations as much as possible with improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and easy transfers to area buses and shuttles which should provide a short ride to other destinations such as UCLA, Farmers Market and Cedars Sinai Medical Center. Metro will also work with local parking operators to encourage shared parking arrangements.

Next Steps

The Final EIS/EIR is expected to be presented to the Metro Board of Directors on April 26, 2012. The Board will be asked to certify the document, take action on the staff recommendations, and authorize moving the project into final design and construction. If this occurs, various pre-construction activities would begin including:

- > Obtaining federal matching funds through the Federal New Starts program;
- > Real estate appraisals and negotiations for properties needed for station entrances, construction or subsurface easements. (Please see our Property Acquisition Fact Sheet for more information);
- > Continuing station design;
- > Construction contracting; and,
- > Ongoing community outreach.

Construction on the subway could begin in 2013.

How fast will the subway extension be built?

When these planning studies began in 2007, there was no funding identified for the Westside Subway Extension. The passage of Measure R in November 2008 provided funding and a funding schedule for this project and others around Los Angeles County. Based on that schedule, the Westside Subway Extension will be built in three phases planned to open to La Cienega by 2020, Century City by 2026 and the Westwood/VA Hospital by 2036 at a cost of \$6.2 billion (in 2036 dollars). Metro continues to pursue America Fast Forward and other initiatives which, if successful, would accelerate all of the Measure R projects and allow the subway to be built in one phase to the Westwood/VA Hospital in as little as ten years at a cost of \$5.6 billion (in 2022 dollars).

Community outreach efforts will be ongoing. To stay involved in the process visit metro.net/westside and sign up for future project updates. You can also follow the project on Facebook and Twitter.

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