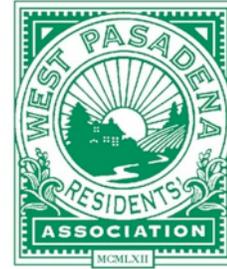


July 24, 2013

Via E-Mail

Dianne DuBois, Chair
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012



Re: Freeway Tunnel Option in SR-710 Study

Dear Chair DuBois and Members of the LA Metro Board,

The West Pasadena Residents' Association, which represents about 7,000 households in Western Pasadena, is very concerned about continued consideration of a deeply flawed concept for supposedly improving transportation in metropolitan Los Angeles.

The freeway tunnel option, which now includes 10 sub-options, is an insupportable scheme being promoted by people who have spent decades and countless millions of dollars advocating for a freeway extending SR-710. As we have noted in previous correspondence and testimony before the Metro Board, Metro's SR-710 Study Group frequently provides information that is confusing and contradictory. This is especially true regarding severe impacts of air pollution, traffic congestion and trucks, and ever-changing (but always huge) cost estimates. Here are three examples:

1. A primary goal stated by Metro is "to help alleviate congestion and improve mobility," but Metro won't say if they are talking about moving people, freight, or both. We think it matters. If the study is about completing what Metro in March 2011 called "the natural goods corridor" from the ports, wouldn't rail be a better option? Wouldn't public transit be a better solution for moving people, taking cars off the road rather than channeling them through foothill communities?
2. Metro has said building the 710 extension will reduce pollution in the region, but the proposed tunnels would concentrate the pollution from 4.9 miles of tunnel traffic and expel it at either end. At the north end, the pollution would be expelled into foothill communities to be trapped by the mountains, the inversion layer and the onshore air flow. A UCLA study found that tunnels concentrate air pollution by almost a thousand-fold. Therefore the tunnel pollution will make air worse in El Sereno and Alhambra as well. Metro must conduct local pollution studies and not use diffuse regional estimates, as is its current practice.
3. Metro tells us the exhaust from the tunnels will be filtered at the portals, although they haven't explained how. To date, we have no convincing information that current technology is capable of satisfactorily cleaning toxic gases and small particulates from the tunnel. Nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, acid vapors, ozone, and other pollutants are not sufficiently cleansed from vehicle emissions, nor are particulates smaller than 2.5 microns, which are the most harmful.

The freeway tunnel option is by far the most expensive, challenging, risky and controversial option being considered. It must be taking an inordinate portion of the study funds to analyze and justify. It is time to cease using 20th Century solutions. WPRAs urges you to withdraw the tunnel alternatives and to focus on modern 21st Century solutions: rail for cargo, and public transit and traffic management options for people.

Sincerely,

William Urban
WPRAs President

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