

July 19, 2012

Via E-Mail & Hard Copy

Michael Miles
Director, Caltrans District 7
100 S. Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Frank Quon
SR-710 Study
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Arthur T. Leahy
Chief Executive Officer
Metro One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Michelle Smith, Director SR-710 Study
One Gateway Plaza
Mail Stop: 99-22-9
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: **WPRA Concerns Regarding SR-710 Alternatives**

This letter is to inform you that the West Pasadena Residents' Association (WPRA) strongly opposes any consideration of the SR-710 alternatives routed through the San Rafael area of southwest Pasadena, whether they be surface or subsurface. In particular, Alternatives F-5, F-6, and H-2 in the current planning documents would devastate well-established and historically protected residential neighborhoods and landmarks. In addition, we have grave concerns about Alternative F-7, which is so vague that we cannot even evaluate it. As presented, the idea of a 4.5-mile tunnel with no portal along the entire length makes no sense. Finally, the serious flaws in the concepts and process that resulted in these unacceptable alternatives must be corrected before any decisions are made. Rest assured, the WPRA will use all of its political and economic resources to oppose each and every one of these alternatives, and anything else that negatively impacts our quality of life.

A. The Problems with Each Alternative.

As described in the Alternative Concepts document, Alternative F-5 is a new freeway running through San Rafael, roughly along the path of Avenue 64. In stating that this Alternative results in "different environmental and community impacts compared to the other alternative concepts," the document woefully understates the devastating impacts this Alternative will have on our pristine community.

Alternative H-2 further proposes converting Avenue 64 into a four-lane highway to handle significantly increased traffic with a widened footprint, as well as improved intersections, likely grade separations or overpasses, and additional traffic signals; all of which would require massively expensive property acquisition and destroy our community.

And, Alternatives F-6 and F-7 follow the same route that the affected communities have been contesting for 60 years. They suffer from the same faults as Alternatives F-5 and H-2 in disrupting and destroying established residential neighborhoods and historic landmarks. In fact, using Pasadena Avenue, or any other adjacent site, as the terminus for any northward extension of the SR710 will destroy the Singer Park and adjacent neighborhoods as has been argued and explained for years.

Indeed, the very location of Alternatives F-6, F-7 and H-2 is adjacent to South Orange Grove Boulevard, which has been named one of “The Forty Seven Great Boulevards of the World.” Any continuation of the excavated site as a freeway, therefore, will degrade South Orange Grove Boulevard and destroy a preeminent neighborhood in West Pasadena. We continue to contest these routes with the same vigor as we have in the past.

In short, all of these Alternatives would be catastrophic for West Pasadena and the San Rafael area in adding traffic, isolating portions of the neighborhood, removing homes and threatening historic structures and landmarks (including churches, schools, libraries and children’s homes). Alternatives F-5, F-6, F-7 and H-2, are thus unnecessarily provocative, threatening to our neighborhoods and community, and will substantially reduce the tax base. They deserve no further consideration and will be adamantly opposed by us every step of the way.

B. The Problems with The Process.

While some effort was made to educate our community, there obviously is a substantial lack of understanding of these Alternatives. For example, the public sessions in May were superficial in how they presented the effects on our neighborhoods. Attendees appreciated the limited information provided, but left with little understanding of the considerations or details of each Alternative, and with more questions than answers.

We also see substantial problems going forward. In particular:

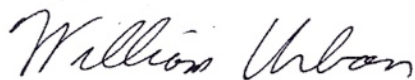
- ◆ The process lacks transparency. So far, the plans have lacked detailed information regarding routes, traffic requirements and impacts, intersections and interconnections, improvements and land requirements. Information regarding the criteria used to evaluate and select alternatives also has been very limited.
- ◆ Public participation has been inadequate. So far, opportunities for public participation have been limited, and the role of that participation is not understood. Further, according to

published plans, the reduction in alternatives from 12 to 5 will be made without public input, and there will be no scoping comments from the public and city officials after the five finalists are identified and before the EIR is started.

- ◆ Opportunities to review requirements, selection criteria and assumptions have been inadequate. Based on the information we have reviewed to date, there is a high likelihood that inappropriate or invalid study assumptions have been used in the development of these alternatives and in the evaluation of them. Going forward, the public and city officials must be able to review all of the information used in the analytical process, including an indication of confidence level in each alternative studied.
- ◆ Assumptions about truck traffic are inconsistent. Although minimal increases in truck traffic was stressed by Metro representatives during the earlier study sessions, trucking companies say they are anxious to have the SR-710 connection completed in order to significantly improve freight transportation from the San Pedro and Long Beach ports. As such, it is simply impossible to reconcile their statements with the MTA's representations.
- ◆ As for the likely increases in noise and pollution, they too have probably been underestimated because of the underestimated truck traffic, and overly optimistic projections on the proportion of new, more efficient vehicles (using optimistic vehicle replacement rates).
- ◆ As for the obvious negative environmental impacts on our established neighborhoods and businesses, the fact that these Alternatives made it to the final 12 indicates that the negative neighborhood impacts were seriously underweighted.

In summary, we find it beyond reason to have included any location in West Pasadena as an alternative site for a terminus of the SR-710. We trust you will agree. If not, then make no mistake, we intend to fight each and every one of these Alternatives. We will do whatever is necessary to protect our West Pasadena neighborhoods!

Sincerely



William Urban
WPRA President



Richard McDonald
WPRA Director



Marilyn Randolph
WPRA Director

DISTRIBUTION

Michael Miles
Director, Caltrans District 7
100 S. Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Frank Quon
SR-710 Study
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Garrett Damrath
Caltrans District 7
100 S. Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Michelle Smith, Director SR-710 Study
One Gateway Plaza
Mail Stop: 99-22-9
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Arthur T. Leahy
Chief Executive Officer
Metro One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Ron Kosinski
Chief Environmental Officer
California Dept. of Transportation
100 S. Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

EMAIL ADDRESSES

City of Pasadena

Mayor Bill Bogaard
Vice Mayor Victor Gordo
Councilmember Jacque Robinson
Councilmember Margaret McAustin
Councilmember Chris Holden
Councilmember Steve Haderlein
Councilmember Steve Madison
Councilmember Terry Tornek
City Manager Michael Beck
Transportation Director Fred Dock

bbogaard@cityofpasadena.net
vdelacuba@cityofpasadena.net
district1@cityofpasadena.net
mfuller@cityofpasadena.net
jmcintyre@cityofpasadena.net
rstone@cityofpasadena.net
smadison@cityofpasadena.net
ttornek@cityofpasadena.net
mbeck@cityofpasadena.net
fdock@cityofpasadena.net

Department of Transportation:

Michael Mills
Ron Kosinski
Garrett Damrath

Mike.Mills@dot.ca.gov
Ron.Kosinski@dot.ca.gov
Garrett.Damrath@dot.ca.gov