



LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

Arroyo Seco
Cypress Park
Eagle Rock
El Sereno
Glassell Park
Highland Park
Lincoln Heights
Sunland-Tujunga

CITIES

City of Glendale City of Sierra Madre
City of Los Angeles City of South Pasadena
City of La Cañada Flintridge

OPPOSITION GROUPS (PARTIAL LIST)

Caltrans Tenants of the 710 Corridor
Natural Resources Defense Council
East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice
Glassell Park Improvement Association, Land Use Committee
Far North Glendale Homeowners Association
San Rafael Neighborhoods Association
West Pasadena Residents' Association
Highland Park Heritage Trust
Glendale Home Owners Coordinating Council
Crescenta Valley Town Council
La Cañada Flintridge Unified School District
LA RED, El Sereno

Green Scissors 2011 Report Groups

Friends of the Earth
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Heartland Institute
Public Citizen

INJUNCTION PLAINTIFFS

City of South Pasadena
Sierra Club
National Trust for Historic Preservation
California Preservation Foundation
Los Angeles Conservancy
Pasadena Heritage
South Pasadena Preservation Foundation
South Pasadena Unified School District

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20 July 2013

Statement of dissatisfaction with public outreach program

The No 710 Action Committee has been an advocate for responsible transportation planning for the entire Los Angeles County region since its inception in 2009. It is a grassroots organization comprised of residents, business owners, scientists, engineers, healthcare professionals, researchers, and transportation experts who are stakeholders in Los Angeles (El Sereno, Mt. Washington, Glassell Park, Cypress Park, Highland Park, Garvanza, Eagle Rock, Sunland-Tujunga, Hermon, South Pasadena, Pasadena, La Cañada Flintridge, La Crescenta, Montrose and Glendale. The goal of the Committee is to work with civic leaders and transportation officials to encourage modern transportation solutions that are environmentally and fiscally responsible. The No 710 Action Committee has played an active role in encouraging formal resolutions opposing the extension from the cities listed in our letterhead, which are comprised of over 500,000 residents, as well as the City of Los Angeles with a population of 3.7 million.

The No 710 Action Committee wants an EIR/EIS process that includes full transparency, public outreach, and an intellectually rigorous technical analysis. We do not feel MTA, Caltrans and any of the contractors or subcontractors involved are fulfilling their responsibilities in this EIR/EIS process.

The purpose of this statement is to communicate our complete dissatisfaction with the Public Outreach and Community Involvement component of the SR 710 Study. To date, our requests for changes to the process have gone unanswered. Finding Metro's Open House format unsatisfactory, the public requested information meetings be held as true public forums with the opportunity for individuals to address the technical team with their questions. We were hopeful that the latest series of information update meetings were going to be held in this format. However, at the July 18 All Communities Convening meeting, Metro once again prevented a true public discourse by collecting written questions from those present, categorizing them, having a moderator homogenize and summarize them and then failing to provide the detailed answers requested by the audience. Opportunities for verbal comments and questions that could be heard by all were controlled and limited. As a group, we and the communities we represent are angered with the public outreach overall for this project, but have chosen to focus on the key issues discussed below.

Alternatives Analysis Report:

The Alternatives Analysis Report was released to the public on Friday, January 18th in the late afternoon, giving interested parties only five (5) days to read and digest the 1,759 pages of the report to prepare questions before the Open House was held in Pasadena on January 23rd.

Distribution of the Alternatives Analysis Report were initially limited to files on the Caltrans website --no printed copies had been made available, and this limited review to those who have access to the internet. As a result of our request, some printed copies were provided to selected libraries in the study zone. The burden of providing copies should lie with Metro, not the public. **Printed copies of the entire report should be made available in every public library in the study zone, and their availability needs to be announced to the population at large within the study zone.**

Engagement of non-English speakers has been insufficient:

The Alternatives Analysis Report was provided in English only. No Spanish or any Asian language versions were released despite the many Spanish-, Korean-, Japanese-, and Chinese-speaking residents of the study zone. The same holds true for the Scoping Report.

The public outreach began in early 2011 with a series of "SR 710 Conversations" meetings. Throughout these, the subsequent meetings on the CEQA/NEPA process and the Scoping meetings, all presentations and handouts were distributed in English only with the exception of the Scoping Presentation, which does appear on the website in Spanish, but no other languages. However, other important documents such as the "CEQA/NEPA Study Guide" appear on the SR 710 pages of the Metro website in English only.

Only after criticism from the public was directed at Metro for not providing materials in other languages did Spanish (but not any Asian language) versions of materials begin to appear. This occurred well into the study process, around the time of the first set of Open Houses held in spring 2012. Fact sheets and Frequently Asked Questions are now provided in Spanish and Chinese on the Metro website, but reports remain issued in English only. None of the TAC or SOAC handouts or presentations provided as resources on the Metro website have been made available in languages other than English.

Collapse of the Community Liaison Council (CLC) component: (See attached document)

In 2008, a series of meetings was organized and conducted by a public relations firm under contract to Caltrans to inform communities about the Geotechnical Feasibility Study. Penetrating questions and intelligent suggestions for tunnel alternatives were offered by members of the public but not answered. Those meetings left attendees frustrated and feeling patronized. In fact, it was the dissatisfaction with the process that caused members of multiple communities to unite to form the No 710 Action Committee. Dissatisfaction with the public participation process during the Geotechnical Feasibility Study prompted the No 710 Action Committee to submit a letter (attached) to Metro and other officials urging the MTA Board of Directors to work with the No 710 Action Committee to help formulate a plan for open, fair and direct public participation ...a plan that would give all stakeholders a voice in the process. We were led to believe by Metro's Michelle Smith that the CLC format was the agency's answer to our request.

Most people registered to serve on a CLC because they believed they would have the opportunity to influence the Alternatives Analysis process as stated on the Metro website. CLCs were organized and meetings were held in multiple communities. Attendees asked questions that went unanswered, for the most part, because no technical people were available to respond, and the public relations consultants replied to virtually every question with the same response ... that these questions would be addressed during the EIR/EIS process. It is telling that the same questions raised ...but not answered ... at the public meetings held in 2008 during the Geotechnical Feasibility Study were still being asked... and still not answered ...four years later at the CLC meetings. We are now halfway through the EIR/EIS process, and many of our questions remain unanswered.

The CLC construct proved to be worth nothing to the public. Realizing that the expectations of the CLC members exceeded the willingness of Metro to conduct a two-way exchange of opinions and ideas, the role of the CLC was gradually diminished. Initially, the role of the CLC was described as "Tell us which alternatives you believe should further be evaluated," "advising," "providing feedback," and "helping shape improvements proposed for the study area." However, possible alternatives were reduced in number from forty-two to approximately a dozen before any CLC meetings were even held!

After the CLC recruitment period, but shortly before any CLC meetings were held, this post appeared on the SR-710 Study Facebook page: “We would like to clarify the role and expectations of Community Liaison Councils (CLCs). CLC participants help with outreach efforts by serving as ambassadors within their communities who inform and engage as many stakeholders as possible regarding the SR-710 Study.” Note the very much diminished role of the CLCs as stated in this “clarification.” There is no mention of the CLCs helping shape the improvements or telling them which alternatives should be further evaluated, or advising them. This description really asks the CLC members to do, as unpaid volunteers, the job that the Metro Outreach Team (paid consultants) were hired to do.

CLC meetings were held in May and in August 2012 and there have been no communications from Metro to CLC members specifically since that time, and no additional CLC meetings scheduled. The August CLC meetings in Pasadena and Highland Park, attended by over 300 people each, were particularly contentious. At the special Pasadena City Council meeting to address the SR 710, attended by 600 people, Project Manager Michelle Smith stated that the CLC process would be retooled. Nearly one year later, this has still not happened.

Postponements and cancellation of meetings:

Metro announced two Open Houses for October 2012 – one in Pasadena and one in El Sereno. These were postponed without notification of the new date. When the new dates were announced, three Open Houses were scheduled for January of 2013 – one remained for Pasadena, one was added in San Marino at that City’s request, but the El Sereno Open House was changed from the originally-scheduled location at the El Sereno Senior Center to the campus of Cal State LA. No explanation was given for the change in venue of the El Sereno Open House. Neither was there an explanation as to why the Open Houses did not return to the communities in which the first series was held. Requests by the Cities of La Canada Flintridge and South Pasadena to host Open Houses in January were refused. Recent request for technical presentations in our communities have been refused.

The reduction in the number of Open Houses made it more difficult for people to attend. Two were held on weekday evenings and the third, held on a Saturday morning. Unfortunately, the Saturday meeting was the one scheduled for Cal State LA. The Open House began at 9:00 a.m., and yet at that hour the designated parking lot was already full, as classes were in session and many students were on campus. People arriving within the next hour had a very difficult time finding parking. Some were not able to find parking at all and, after driving around campus trying to find other lots in to park, gave up and left without ever attending the Open House. Others had difficulty locating the building and the room. Still others were challenged by the climb up the many steps that led to the building. As a venue for a public meeting, the Cal State LA campus was a nightmare. Everyone, and particularly the residents of El Sereno, would have been better served had the meeting taken place at the El Sereno Senior Center as originally scheduled. Because of a history of lack of notification about important meetings pertaining to the 710, residents of El Sereno should have been sent an announcement via the USPS of the Open House in their community.

Metro recently announced an additional series of three “All Communities Convening” meetings. While meeting notices were distributed in neighborhoods in Alhambra and El Sereno that would be impacted by construction of the southern portal, none were distributed in Pasadena neighborhoods adjacent to the planned northern portal. In addition, these neighborhoods were wrongly identified by Metro staff as commercial when, in fact, there is a substantial residential component.

Another important meeting scheduled by Metro for last September was the much-anticipated Goods Movement meeting. We were assured that this meeting would provide a public forum for a discussion, which we have been seeking since the beginning of the process, about the role of goods movement in making a decision on the 710 extension. However, this meeting was cancelled with no explanation and has never been rescheduled. The role of goods movement as a driving force for the project and the potential impact of increased truck traffic along the 210 corridor – whether due to trucks from the ports or trucks re-routed from other freeways – remains one of the most significant issues for the study. Metro continues to address the concerns about increased truck traffic by reiterating their claim that only 3% of trucks from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are still present on the 710 above the interchange with the 60 freeway. However, we believe that they are engaging in a game of semantics. ***Our concerns are about increased truck traffic and the accompanying noise and pollution, regardless of the origins of the trucks.*** We believe that trucks will choose to use the eastbound 210 freeway as an alternate route for destinations to the east and that trucks now using the clogged northbound 5 freeway through central Los Angeles and those on other congested freeways will choose to use the 710 extension to reach the 210 freeway, connecting with the northbound 5 freeway in Sylmar. In fact, a 2011 truck origin and destination study focused on the segment of the 210 between the 57 and 134 freeways confirmed that 47% of the responding truck drivers (N=377) chose to use the eastbound 210 as an alternate route to other freeways. Additionally, 56% of the freight operators questioned reported that their use of trucks on the 210 freeway has increased over the last five years, with 66% expecting their use of the 210 to increase in the next five-year period.

Format of Open Houses

The format of the Open Houses consists of display boards printed with information stationed around a room. Representatives of CH2Mhill or the public relations firm are positioned at each display to answer questions, but only questions about that display. There has been no public question-and-answer forum at which the audience can ask questions, listen to the questions posed by others and then hear the responses of the technical team or Metro representatives. The only public comment mechanism has been feedback cards that people can choose to fill in and deposit into the black hole of a suggestion box or comments written on post-it notes stuck to the display boards. We believe that this format was instituted to dilute the impact of the synergy that occurs when large groups are involved in a public forum, and also to shield Metro from being required to provide answers to a large audience and then being held accountable for those answers. The outreach activity our communities want is the opportunity for a face-to-face public forum, complete with questions and answers, with the decision-makers for this process.

For further information, contact: Joanne Nuckols 626-252-3344 or Jan SooHoo 818-952-4103

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The Changing Face of Community Liaison Councils Metro is Guilty of False Advertising

Metro's definition of Community Liaison Council Roles and Responsibilities has been a work in progress. The various descriptions and visual aids provided on the Metro website, the SR-710 Facebook page, the emails distributed to CLC registrants and even the CLC Orientation Guide contain conflicting information on the roles and responsibilities of the interested community members volunteering to serve on CLCs.

We were led to believe by Metro's Michelle Smith that the CLC format was the agency's answer to our demands for a true public participation process for this study. Most people agreed to serve because they believed they would have the opportunity to influence the Alternatives Analysis process as stated on the Metro website. I certainly used that argument in recruiting my fellow community members.

However, one has only to follow the various published descriptions of these roles and responsibilities to conclude that Metro has no sincere interest in feedback from the CLCs regarding alternatives, but also that it is sloppy in its advertising and promotion. Or, maybe it is just so arrogant and secure in its mission that it doesn't care that it is distributing conflicting information?

A. From the Metro website The first description, and the one that most people read via the link they were referred to on the Metro website for registering to serve on a CLC (Still present on 5/2/12):

- As a CLC participant, you will act as a liaison between the study team and your community by:
- Sharing updates with others
- Providing feedback to the study team
- **Helping shape improvements proposed for the study area**
- Gathering feedback received from others in your community
- Recommending outreach activities and making suggestions to enhance the public participation program

Note that the bullet item in red promises an active role in shaping proposed improvements (read "alternatives"). As a community organizer, this is the description to which I referred people who expressed an interest in registering to serve on my community's CLC. This is what I believed the role of the CLC would be.

B. From a post on the SR-710 Study Facebook page (posted April 24, 2012):
Join a Community Liaison Council!

- Better understand the alternatives being considered
- Tell us which alternatives you believe should further be evaluated**
- Help get your neighbors involved

Note that the bullet item in red again promises an active role in shaping improvements.

C. From a link on the SR-710 Study Facebook page “Join A CLC” button (Copied on 5/2/12) The red ovals are my addition:

Join a Community Liaison Council

Volunteer

Organize

Advise

M

Become a CLC member, if you want to:

- Help get your neighbors involved
- Better understand the alternatives being considered
- Tell us which alternatives you believe should further be evaluated

Learn more at metro.net/sr710study

This is YOUR opportunity to provide feedback to Metro and help engage your community on the SR-710 Study.

M Metro **ST** *Strategic*

Note the statements “Tell us which alternatives you believe should be further evaluated” and the appearance of the word “Advise” in the graphic.

D. Also from a post (4/20/12) on the SR-710 Study Facebook page as a reply from Metro to a comment by Tom Williams

SR - 710 Study We would like to clarify the role and expectations of Community Liaison Councils (CLCs). CLC participants help with outreach efforts by serving as ambassadors within their communities who inform and engage as many stakeholders as possible regarding the SR-710 Study.

Note the very much diminished role of the CLCs as stated in this “clarification”. There is no mention of the CLCs helping shape the improvements, or telling them which alternatives should be further evaluated, or advising them. This description really asks the CLC members to do, as unpaid volunteers, the job that the Metro Outreach Team (paid consultants) were hired to do at a cost of \$3.5 million!

E. As outlined in the 'CLC roles and responsibilities' document available on the SR-710 Study website (<http://www.metro.net/projects/sr-710-conversations/community-liaison-council>) CLC members:

- recommend outreach activities & make suggestions to enhance the public participation program
- gather feedback received from others in the community
- share project updates with others in the community and provide feedback to the study team

Again, there is no mention of the CLCs helping shape the improvements, or telling them which alternatives should be further evaluated, or advising them. Instead, this list again would relegate the CLCs to the role of assisting the Metro Outreach Team with its job!

F. From the email reminders I received 4/28/12 and 4/30/12:

- Recommend outreach activities & make suggestions to enhance the public participation program
- Gather feedback received from others in the community
- Share project updates with others in the community and provide feedback to the study team

Once again, there is no mention of the CLCs helping shape the improvements or telling them which alternatives should be further evaluated, or advising them. Instead, this list would relegate the CLCs to the role of assisting the Metro Outreach Team with its job!

- G. From the “Community Liaison Council Orientation Guide” distributed to all attendees at the 4/30/12 La Canada CLC meeting (It is my understanding that this was the only CLC at which this guide was distributed to attendees. It should be noted that the La Canada meeting was the last of 13 CLC meetings.) 5/3/12 Update: The Orientation Guide was just posted on Metro’s website.



Community Liaison Council Roles and Responsibilities

Thank you for your interest in joining a Community Liaison Council being formed in your area to support the SR-710 Environmental Study team in providing feedback on the technical study and overall outreach efforts. Community Liaison Councils (CLCs) will play an important role in the study process. Each CLC will be comprised of stakeholders within a specific study-area community. The CLCs may include local residents, business owners, community-based organizations, chambers of commerce, institutions, major employers, among others.

As a CLC participant, you will act as a liaison between the study team and your community by:

- Sharing updates with others
- Providing feedback to the study team
- Remaining current on the alternatives screening process as it affects your community and the study area
- Gathering feedback received from others in your community and sharing this with the outreach team
- Recommending outreach activities and making suggestions to enhance the public participation program, including the need for technical information.

The success of each CLC depends on active participation! To that end, CLC participants should make every effort to attend CLC meetings consistently and to provide continuity in moving the dialogue on the SR-710 Environmental Study forward.

If you choose to participate in a CLC, please sign-up today and a member of the SR-710 Outreach Team will contact you with information specific to your designated CLC.

Thank you for your commitment to improving transportation in our region!



We are asked to remain current on the alternatives screening process and yet we have not been able to get any information on how the original 42 alternatives were chosen from the couple of hundred that were gleaned from the Scoping process. We are asked to remain current on the alternatives screening process and yet we have not received any details on how those 42 alternatives were narrowed to 11. Metro wants us to remain current on the alternatives screening process but when we ask why no alternatives for goods movement were included, we cannot get answers.

H. From the Open House display materials posted on the SR-710 website.
(http://www.metro.net/projects_studies/route_710/images/Sr710openhousepresentation.pdf)

Community Liaison Council (CLC)

Stakeholders within a specific Study area community and may include local residents, business owners, community-based organizations, chambers of commerce, institutions, major employers among others. CLC members act as liaisons between the Study Team and their community by sharing updates with others, providing feedback and recommending outreach activities to enhance the public participation program over the course of the Study.

Yet another description that makes it clear that CLC members will not have the opportunity to provide input on preferred alternatives. How could we, really, when we have been given no technical materials to digest and then share with our communities? How could we, when the multitude of ideas for alternatives included in the Scoping Report were narrowed down to 42 and those 42 had already been narrowed down to roughly one-third that many by 3/28/12 (Reference Technical Memoranda titled “Alternatives for Initial Evaluation” and “Draft Results of Initial Evaluation” from M. Smith presented to the Technical Advisory Committee on 3/28/12) – a full month prior to the first meeting of any of the 13 CLCs?

The outreach activity my community wants is the opportunity for a face-to-face public forum, complete with questions and answers, with the decision-makers for this process. Why isn't this being provided? What is Metro hiding?

I can only conclude that Metro's intent for the CLC process is, at best, disingenuous and at worst, dishonest. But you should draw your own conclusions.

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Doug Failing
Executive Director, Highway Programs
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October 23, 2010

Dear Mr. Failing:

The purpose of this letter is to express our dissatisfaction with the public participation component of the 710 Tunnel Geotechnical Feasibility project. In addition, we are writing to urge MTA to cooperate with the No 710 Action Committee in formulating a new public participation program for the upcoming scoping and environmental impact studies.

The volunteers on the No 710 Action Committee come from diverse backgrounds and communities. These highly-qualified and dedicated individuals – community organizers and activists, engineers, elected officials, scientists, economists, physicians and other health care professionals, public relations and media experts – many of whom hold advanced degrees – have years of experience in their respective areas of expertise. Collectively they represent decades of involvement in 710-related issues and have exhaustively researched multiple aspects of our region's transportation issues including pollution and health concerns, contemporary advances in freight movement, mass transit, traffic calming strategies and more. Through their decades-long involvement, they have forged solid relationships and are well-connected with government agencies on local, state and even national levels.

At the May 27, 2010 meeting of the MTA Board of Directors, it was proposed that the public participation component of the scoping and environmental study phase be modeled after the Steering and Technical Advisory Committees formed for the Geotechnical Feasibility Study. Those committees were comprised primarily of elected officials from various communities, and did not include the stakeholders with the most at risk -- members of the general public. Having read the minutes of many meetings of those committees and attended the final meeting of the Steering and the Technical Advisory Committees, I was surprised at how few committee members actively participated with meaningful input. In truth, I was appalled at the lack of participation by most of them.

A series of meetings was organized and conducted by a public relations firm under contract to Caltrans to first inform communities about the Geotechnical Feasibility Study and later to present the results of that study. Those meetings left most of the public who attended frustrated and annoyed. The public was patronized during that process, and quite frankly, those meetings proved to be a public relations nightmare for Caltrans and MTA. At those meetings, intelligent suggestions for tunnel alternatives were offered and penetrating questions were asked by members of the public. However, these inquiries and suggestions were met with the same pat answers at meeting after meeting in community after community – either “This study did not address that issue.”, or “That will be addressed during the Environmental Impact Study process.” One has only to read the summaries of those meetings to substantiate these facts.

In fact, it was the dissatisfaction with the process that caused members of multiple communities to unite to form the No 710 Action Committee. Communities represented by this committee include Glendale, La Crescenta, Sunland-Tujunga, Pasadena, Montrose, South Pasadena, La Cañada Flintridge and Los Angeles (Highland Park, Eagle Rock, Glassell Park, Mount Washington, and El Sereno).

The inability of MTA and Caltrans to provide substantive answers to the public's questions as well as the public's dissatisfaction with the flawed process was not lost on elected officials. The failure of MTA to address the same issues and concerns prior to initiating the environmental impact process has been raised by Congressman Adam Schiff in his letter of July 16, 2009 to MTA and to Caltrans on April 20, 2010; Assemblyman Anthony Portantino in his letter of April 22, 2010 to MTA; as well as four mayors of affected cities -- La Cañada Mayor Donald Voss, South Pasadena Mayor Richard Schneider, Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard and Glendale Mayor Ara Najarian in their joint commentary in the Pasadena Star News on June 17, 2010. Additionally, Portantino summarized his frustrations with the process and loss of trust in MTA in his commentaries of Sept. 1, 2010 in the South Pasadena Review and Sept. 29, 2010 in the Valley Sun.

It should be noted that the public was given the opportunity to submit written comments for inclusion in the final version of the Geotechnical Feasibility Study. Believing that their concerns would be addressed in the final report, many members of the public put countless hours of careful thought and effort into the letters submitted, only to have their comments placed in the appendix of a more than one-thousand page report -- without a single response to any of the issues raised.

We urge you and the MTA Board of Directors to work with the No 710 Action Committee on behalf of your constituents to help formulate a plan for open, fair and direct public participation that is proactive rather than reactive -- a plan that gives all stakeholders a voice beginning with the scoping process and, if it continues past scoping, throughout the environmental review process. A transparent process in which all stakeholders are actively involved can only result in a better outcome for this complex, controversial and costly project. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Jan SooHoo
No 710 Action Committee

Cc: The Honorable Don Knabe
MTA Board Members
Lynda Bybee
Michelle Smith
Congressman Adam Schiff
Congressman David Dreier
Assemblyman Anthony Portantino
Mayor Bill Bogaard and the City Council of Pasadena
Mayor Ara Najarian and the City Council of Glendale
Mayor Richard Schneider and the City Council of South Pasadena
Mayor Donald Voss and the City Council of La Cañada Flintridge