The Westside Blue Line

Westside Traffic
Light Rail Success
EXPORAIL Destinations
Population
Speed & Capacity
Popular Support
MTA Planning

The Exposition Rail Coalition is an independent citizens group, volunteering for Exposition and other effective transit in Los Angeles.

www.exporail.net

P.O. Box 913, Santa Monica, CA  90406
323-393-9025   fax 310-393-9810          10/99
Los Angeles was again ranked the most congested city in the United States. The Santa Monica Freeway (I-10) is one of the busiest in the world, carrying over 400,000 people per day.

Traffic is in both directions—Eastside and Mid-City residents go to Westside jobs (the “Digital Coast” from Culver City to Santa Monica) and recreation as much as Westside residents go Downtown. And it will only get worse as ever more people live in Los Angeles.

Traffic also spills over onto residential streets, impacting neighborhoods with noise, pollution, and safety hazards.

But there is no real alternative to driving. The transit-dependent suffer long, slow bus rides—like two hours cross-town to get to Westside jobs.

More highways—like this new elevated section of the Harbor Freeway—don’t solve traffic; they just add more noise, pollution, and sprawl, and threaten established neighborhoods.
Portland, Oregon (left) has been called the most livable city in the U.S., partly for its MAX light rail. Its 18-mile Westside extension opened last year.

Like this park on San Francisco’s Muni (far left), the Exposition right-of-way is an opportunity for a greenway and bike path. "Silicon Valley" San Jose’s VTA light rail (left) is now being extended 7 miles west into Mountain View. Sacramento’s recently-extended RT light rail line passes the California State Capitol.

The San Diego Trolley (lower far left) was recently extended to the Padres’ Qualcomm Stadium. Its lines carry over 77,000 riders per day.

Sprawling L.A.-like Dallas (lower left) is building transit-oriented developments along its growing DART light rail. Denver is expanding. Salt Lake City is about to open. Seattle’s Sound Transit is now designing a 24-mile line.

L.A.’s own MTA Long Beach Blue Line (next page) is the most successful single light rail line in the U.S., carrying over 53,000 riders per day. Our Green Line carries more than 23,000. The Pasadena Blue Line is resuming construction because corridor residents pushed hard for it. And Orange County is planning its new CenterLine from Fullerton to Irvine.
Downtown Los Angeles, Staples Center, and connections to the rest of LA’s rail network are provided by the existing Long Beach Blue Line on Flower Street. Exposition would then continue south on Flower to Exposition Blvd.

Exposition Park—home of the new California ScienCenter, IMAX Theater, museums, Rose Garden, and potentially a new NFL team for the Coliseum (seen here in the 1984 Olympics)—and the University of Southern California are at the eastern end of the Exposition right-of-way.

People fondly remember the “Big Red Cars” (far left). Here is one that used to travel along the Exposition line. Already owned by the MTA, this right-of-way goes all the way to Santa Monica.

Baldwin Hills’s Magic Johnson Theaters—light rail will bring better transit and needed new development to this area. Crenshaw Blvd. is also a potential light rail branch to Inglewood and LAX.
Culver City’s studios and restored downtown are the beginning of the "Digital Coast"—the new media-technology corridor along Exposition to Santa Monica.

Here's a view of light rail looking west along the median of National Blvd. Moving the track to a landscaped, bermed (to block wheel sound) boulevard median (like this one in San Jose) leaves the right-of-way next to houses for a park and bike path.

For quiet, signal pre-emption handles cross traffic; crossing gates aren’t needed at 35 mph. The few residential areas along Exposition can be run at 35 mph with little slowing of running time.

Palms has very high population density—over 30,000 people per square mile—and could become a transit-oriented pedestrian town center (probably no parking at Palms station). Next to the Santa Monica Freeway, the right-of-way already has bridges over National Blvd. (left) and Motor Avenue (far left).
Near **Cheviot Hills**, trains and bicycles would pass under traffic on Overland Avenue for **safety and quiet** (as specified in MTA Phase I EIR, 1994). This extends the existing trench (left) that isolates the right-of-way from neighbors.

West of Overland Avenue the right-of-way is 200 feet wide (far left)—space for a park along the line.

In a neighborhood already impacted by traffic and freeway noise, funding a freeway soundwall as rail mitigation would reduce overall noise.

**Access to rail transit** enhances property values, as demonstrated by these owners highlighting it (below). Neighborhoods with rail access will become **uniquely valuable** as an alternative to auto gridlock.
West Los Angeles’s Olympic (far left) and Pico Boulevards—home of many jobs and extreme traffic—are within a block or two of Exposition.

Bus riders along the future San Diego (405) Freeway HOV lane could transfer to Exposition’s trains at a station like this one on the Harbor (110) Freeway (left).

Santa Monica’s Pier (far left), Third Street Promenade, Beach (busiest in California, with 400,000 visitors on a peak day), and many Westside jobs (like this new construction at the Water Garden across Olympic Blvd. from Exposition) are within walking distance of Exposition’s proposed stations. Here is a possible design for a station in downtown Santa Monica at 4th and Colorado.
**New West Coast Light Rail Corridors’ Population Densities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Within 1/2 mile</th>
<th>Within 2 miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition Park</td>
<td>11.6 (Sq. Mi.)</td>
<td>8.9 (Sq. Mi.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown L.A.</td>
<td>11.9 (Sq. Mi.)</td>
<td>8.1 (Sq. Mi.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marina del Rey</td>
<td>13.2 (Sq. Mi.)</td>
<td>9.8 (Sq. Mi.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Monica</td>
<td>11.5 (Sq. Mi.)</td>
<td>9.1 (Sq. Mi.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exposition is the #1 light rail corridor in Los Angeles.**

**Exposition is 2-3 times other successful light rail lines.**
Capacity

3-car Light Rail train = 228 seats
Capacity = 98,000 passengers per day (450 per train @ Blue Line schedule)
Capital cost = $6-700M ($2.05/trip @ 84,000 riders/day; operating cost = $.95/trip @$175/veh. hour)
Congestion relief = 10% of I-10’s 400,000 people/day
Neighborhood impacts = few; 35 mph residential speed solves noise issue

80-foot Curitiba bus = 57 seats (claimed "270 passengers" are mostly standing!)
Capacity = 24,000 passengers per day (108 per bus @ Blue Line schedule; cross traffic prevents more)
Capital cost = $2-300M ($2.45/trip @ 27,000 riders/day; operating cost = unknown in U.S.)
Congestion relief = little (mostly existing bus riders)
Neighborhood impacts = noise & exhaust of 20 buses/hour

40-foot low-floor bus = 38 seats
Capacity = 10,000 passengers per day (46 per bus @ Blue Line schedule & consent decree)

Only light rail has the necessary capacity. The Long Beach Blue Line carries over 53,000 people per day (now limited by its two-car stations, which will be extended). Exposition has greater population density, more destinations, and worse traffic. In 1998 SCAG projected Exposition light rail ridership at 93,000 per day.

EXPORAIL
Speed

Light rail = 35 minutes from 4th Street, Santa Monica to 7th Street, downtown Los Angeles.

Busway = one hour, because of detours, street running, and bus speeds—even slower than the current freeway Santa Monica Big Blue Bus #10 (45 minutes).
Landslide support for rail funding along the Exposition corridor (within 1/2 mile) in four elections, by and for a far larger population than just current bus riders.

Prop. A (1998)—68% voted countywide against expensive subways and the MTA—and for a campaign that promoted light rail.

Support for Right-of-Way Purchase

Public
Over 4300 Petition Signatures

Local Governments
Los Angeles City Council
Culver City City Council
Santa Monica City Council
South Coast Air Quality Management District

Environmental Groups
Citizens Committee to Save Elysian Park
Citizens for a Better Environment
Coalition for Clean Air
Heal the Bay
Natural Resources Defense Council
Sierra Club, Angeles Chapter
TreePeople
Westside Greens Transportation Working Group

Neighborhoods, Senior Citizens
Baldwin Hills Estates
Baldwin Hills Homeowner Coalition
Baldwin Neighborhood Homeowners Assoc.
Baldwin Vista Village Garden Homeowners Assoc.
Culver City Senior Citizens Association
Los Angeles Federation of Senior Citizen Clubs
Lemoli/11700 Block Club (Inglewood)
Michael Avenue Neighborhood Watch Group
Ocean Park Community Organization
Pico Neighborhood Association
Sunset Park Associated Neighbors
Venice Action Committee
Vinyard Friendship Senior Citizens
Virginia Deleware Neighborhood Block Club
Westside Action Coalition
West Adams Neighborhood Association

Business, Professional, Education, Political
American Institute of Architects
California Museum of Science and Industry
Central City Association of Los Angeles
Century City Chamber of Commerce
Committee for the Rights of the Disabled
Committee to Preserve the Right-of-Way
Crenshaw Chamber of Commerce
Culver City Democratic Club
The Ethnic Coalition of Southern California
Fox Hills/Ladera Democratic Club
KNX 1070 NewsRadio editorial
Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Commission
Los Angeles Times editorial
Mid City Chamber of Commerce
New Frontiers Democratic Club
Santa Monica Area Chamber of Commerce
Santa Monica College Board of Trustees
Santa Monica Democratic Club
Santa Monica Pier Restoration
Senator Diane E. Watson's Transp. Task Force
Southwestern University School of Law
University of Southern California
Venice Area Chamber of Commerce
Westchester/LAX Chamber of Commerce
Transit Corridor Studies

Reevaluation/Major Investment Study/SEIS/SEIR

Mid-City/Westside Alternatives
1. Heavy Rail—Wilshire/Western to Pico/San Vicente (suspended project)
2. Heavy Rail—Wilshire/Western to Fairfax
3. Light Rail via Exposition ROW
4. Busway via Exposition ROW
5. Wilshire Arterial Bus Lane (New Proposal)

(Study also covers Eastside and San Fernando Valley)

Timeline

Phase I—Reevaluation/Major Investment Studies
Initial Board Action on Locally Preferred Alternative—December, 1999

Phase II—Draft SEIS/SEIR
Final Board Action on Locally Preferred Alternatives—6-8 months after Phase 2 start

Phase III—Final SEIS/SEIR
Project Ready for Final Design/Construction—7-9 months after FTA Authorization

Recommendations

Approve Light Rail via Exposition as an Alternative for Phase II.

Only rail has the speed, capacity, and popular appeal to effectively serve the Exposition corridor’s jobs, recreation, and population, plus promote sustainable development—and at a lower cost per trip than a busway.

Save major expenditures for the rail line this corridor requires. Interim “Rapid Buses” on adjacent streets would be much cheaper and nearly as fast as a “Curitiba” busway.