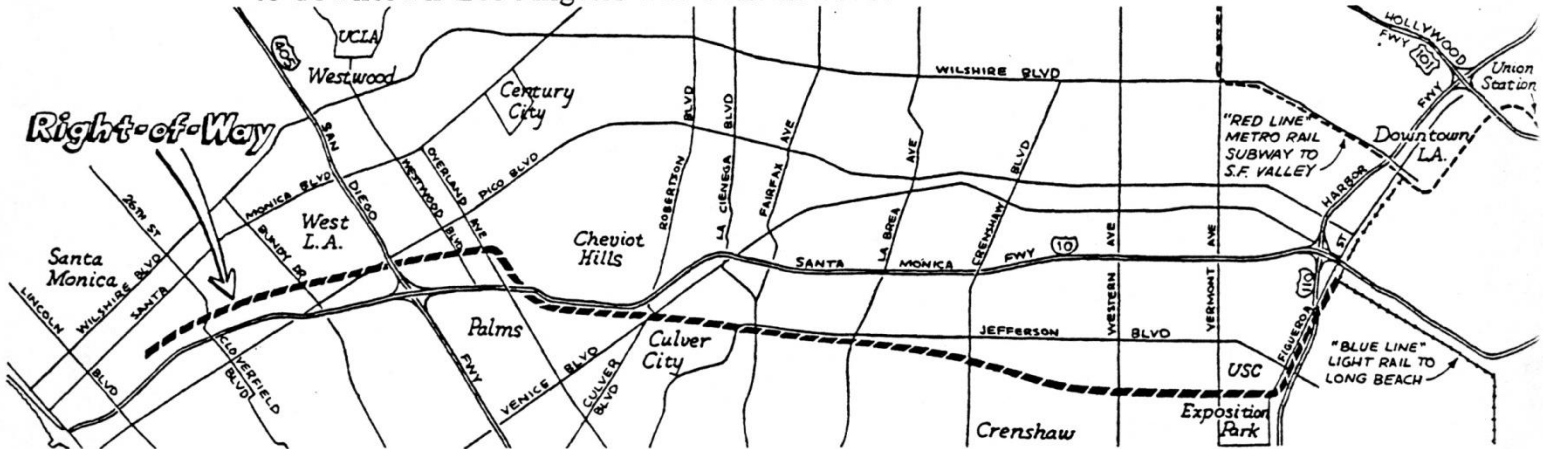


Preserve the Westside Right-of-Way

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Q: What is the Westside (Exposition Boulevard) right-of-way?

A: The now-unused railroad line along this strip of land from Santa Monica to downtown Los Angeles was built in 1875.



Q: Why is it important to purchase this land?

A: This right-of-way presents the *only* opportunity for rail transit from the Westside to downtown in our lifetimes, the only land where a light rail line could be built economically without tunneling or elevated structures. It is also a unique site for neighborhood parks and trails across the Westside.

The Southern Pacific Railroad has offered until *May, 1990*, to sell this land to local governments for public use. If purchased, there will be ample time for detailed studies and public hearings to decide its best use. If *not* purchased, however, it *will* be sold off in pieces for private developments such as self-storage warehouses, mini-malls, and apartment complexes.

It is vital to preserve this right-of-way now; *once broken up and developed, this land can never be replaced at any reasonable cost.* Let's not let crowding, traffic, and ugliness win over good planning in Los Angeles yet again.

Q: Does light rail transit fit this corridor, or is Los Angeles too decentralized?

A: Any Westside-to-downtown commuter knows that this is a heavily-congested corridor, not a decentralized suburb, and that densities are increasing. The Santa Monica Freeway, carrying over 320,000 cars per day, may be the busiest in the world. A light rail line is an excellent fit along this freeway corridor, projecting over 35,000 passengers per day.

This line would conveniently link Santa Monica, West Los Angeles, Palms, Culver City, and Crenshaw to downtown, USC, and Exposition Park, plus connect to Century City and UCLA/Westwood by shuttle bus, Long Beach by light rail, and the San Fernando Valley and east side connections by subway.

Q: Would a light rail line conflict with plans for a Westside Wilshire subway?

A: Because it is so expensive, a Wilshire subway won't likely be built before 2030. If ultimately built, it would complement the more southerly light rail corridor, *but it is no solution to traffic problems in our lifetimes.*

Q: Has light rail been successful in other cities?

A: Yes! West-coast light rail cities include San Diego, San Francisco, Sacramento, Portland, and Vancouver. San Diego's light rail system, for example, has growing ridership, pays over 90% of its operating costs from fares (excellent for any transit), and many of its riders are former drivers. If traffic is heavy now, imagine how much *worse* it would be in these cities is they *didn't* have rail transit!

Q: Are buses and carpools more cost-effective than rail transit?

A: Where would more buses run in this corridor? On our already traffic-choked streets and freeways? Any effective alternative to commuting alone by automobile *must not get stuck in traffic*.

There is no space to economically add lanes to the Santa Monica Freeway, and any attempt to convert existing lanes would repeat the 1970's Diamond Lane fiasco. The current addition of bus and carpool lanes to the similar Harbor Freeway is costing over \$400 million for 2.6 miles of elevated and 10.5 miles of widening.

Light rail vehicles bypass traffic on their own dedicated right-of-way, carry more people than buses can, cost less to operate, have no diesel exhaust, and are more comfortable to ride. This 14-mile light rail line, estimated at only \$200-300 million, would cost less *less than two miles* of MetroRail subway or *one mile* of new freeway.

Q: Will this rail line bring frequent noisy trains and snarled cross-traffic into residential neighborhoods?

A: Bordered along both sides by a parkway of trees, grass, and trails, a light rail line would be attractive, quiet, and isolated from its neighbors. Most neighboring properties along the the one mile of residential right-of-way between Palms Park and Military Avenue are at least 50 feet from the 100-foot-wide right-of-way, and all are separated by back fences, a street and heavy bushes, or a hill.

Electric light rail vehicles are quieter than the current neighborhood bus and car traffic, and produce no pollution. Cross traffic would be stopped less by a passing trolley than by the many existing traffic signals.

Many neighbors may find that access to light rail becomes a valuable convenience. If this land is *not* purchased for public use, however, they *will* have the substantial intrusion of new private development.

Q: Won't rail transit encourage more over-development?

A: The only way that limiting transit could end development in L.A. is if congestion gets so bad that people leave in disgust. This is actually beginning to happen, but is this the future we want for our city?

Q: Will this transit route attract crime?

A: On-board operators, railway police, and electronic security will make riding a safe experience, as it is in other cities.

Q: How can I get more information?

A: Contact: Committee to Preserve the Right-of-Way
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