

Rail~Volution 2010

Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, CA

A Case Study in Building Community Consensus



Metro

Ann Kerman, Community Relations Manager

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)

The Project

Regional Connector Transit Corridor Project

- > A less than 2-mile LRT link in Downtown Los Angeles
- > Connecting 3 LRT lines across Los Angeles County
- > Increasing transit and access into Downtown and across the region
- > 3 to 4 new stations in Downtown Los Angeles
 - Bunker Hill, Broadway, Financial District & Little Tokyo

Regional Connector

The Missing Link



Metro

Regional Connector

Proposed/New



Metro

The Background

- > **Project is currently in the environmental review phase**
 - Draft EIS/EIR released September 3, 2010
 - Comment period ended October 18, 2010
 - Staff-recommended LPA to Metro Board of Directors October 28, 2010

- > **Study began in 2007 with 33 conceptual build alternatives**
 - Screened down to 8 alternatives during scoping
 - 2 build alternatives at conclusion of Alternatives Analysis (1/09)

The Little Tokyo Story



The Little Tokyo Story

- > Last of 3 Japantowns in the United States
- > Cultural and spiritual center for Japanese Americans
- > National historic district adjacent
- > Rich in architecture and history
- > In recent years, has developed into one of the most pedestrian-oriented & vibrant night life destinations in Los Angeles

Little Tokyo

Pre-World War II



Metro®

Little Tokyo

1940 – 1 Square Mile



Metro

Little Tokyo

Today - 4 City Blocks



City
Parking

LAPD

Weller
Court

Arts
District

Public
Defenders
Office

New LRT
Station

City
offices



Metro

Little Tokyo

Today



Little Tokyo

Early Regional Connector Concept



Little Tokyo

Early Regional Connector Concept



May 11, 2009

Ms. Dolores Roybal Sallarelli
Project Manager
METRO
1 Gateway Plaza
MS99/22/52
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Roybal Sallarelli:

The Little Tokyo Community Council (LTCC) is a council of more than 100 stakeholder organizations dedicated to the future vitality of our historic and cultural neighborhood. On behalf of LTCC, I take this opportunity to express our concerns related to the proposed METRO Regional Connector. While we recognize the importance and need for efficient public transportation for the Los Angeles area, we believe that the proposed alignments can have irreparable negative impact on our community unless specific issues are responsibly addressed and analyzed.

The concerns of LTCC in respect to the proposed Regional Connector alternatives include:

- Impact of construction on local businesses
Disruption of business due to construction, and resulting diversion of traffic for an extended period of time can have devastating effects on small businesses.
- Loss of public parking
Loss of convenient and available parking will impact negatively on public institutions and businesses, discouraging visitors and customers.
- Impact to key Little Tokyo property owners
Potential loss and/or construction on major properties in Little Tokyo eliminate potential for future development benefiting community. Every consideration should be given to longtime community stakeholders who face loss or devaluation of property.
- Noise Pollution
On-going noise from construction negatively impacts, business, community programming, and daily activity.

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Community Opposition

Voices of community's opposition

- > "Little Tokyo is fragile, cannot withstand 4 years of construction"
- > "Everything that makes Little Tokyo special will be destroyed"
- > "Project will divide the community"
- > "Cannot support any of the alternatives"



Building Trust

Little Tokyo Working Group

- > **Early intervention**
- > **What are the real concerns and issues?**
 - Trust
 - Fear
 - Lack of knowledge/information
- > **Bringing the right stakeholders to the table**



Metro

The Little Tokyo Working Group

Model

- > Working Group created as a committee of the Little Tokyo Community Council
 - Representing over 100 organizations
- > Chaired by community members, but staffed by Metro
- > Met bi-weekly
- > Developed matrix of issues
 - Included in Draft EIS/EIR
- > Developed new alternative embraced by community

The Little Tokyo Working Group

Outcomes

- > A third build alternative was added to the Draft EIS/EIR
- > Hired an independent consultant to work with the community and help them understand the environmental process
- > Solicited candidate mitigation measures to include in the Draft EIS/EIR

One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, California 90012

Re: Downtown Regional Connector

Dear Mr. Najarian:

The Little Tokyo Community Council (LTCC) would like to thank the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's for its response to the Little Tokyo community by presenting for consideration a concept for the Third Build Alternative for the Downtown Regional Connector.

The LTCC adopted the following motion at its November 24, 2009 meeting:

MOTION

The Little Tokyo Community Council supports the further exploration of the concept of the Third Build Alternative as presented by the Metro Planners.

We respectfully urge the Metropolitan Transit Authority Board of Directors to adopt the Third Build Alternative as one of the options for the Metro Planners to further explore for the Downtown Regional Connector, as part of the FIR study.

We thank the Metropolitan Transit Authority for their consideration of the concerns of the Historic Little Tokyo. We look forward to working with the Metro Planners as they further explore the Third Build Alternative.

*The Little Tokyo Community Council is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) which has 80+ member organizations whose mission is to ensure that Little Tokyo

Sincerely,



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Lessons Learned

- > Early intervention a must
- > Listen, listen, and listen some more
- > Build relationships
- > Outreach never stops
- > Provide a mechanism for regular dialogue

Questions & Answers

Thank you!