



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It was no surprise that the Expo Authority Board of Directors voted to certify the Phase 2 FEIR on February 4. What was surprising was the pre-publication of Supervisor Zev Yaroslavskys "yes" vote in a slick PR piece distributed by the Expo Authority's newly hired public relations firm, Consensus, Inc. His position on the project was never in doubt, but out of respect for constituents, generally the Board members will at least hear public testimony before publicly announcing their vote.

Also surprising, was the last minute decision of sitting Expo Board member Bernard Parks to renege on a promise made some weeks ago to allow City Councilmember and Expo Board Alternate Paul Koretz the opportunity to sit in on the vote to certify the Phase 2 FEIR, as it affects CD-5 and not Parks' district. Councilmember Koretz was, instead, allowed to make a statement regarding the project. In the statement he identified many of the same FEIR faults pointed out by NFSR over the last three years (flaws in the Metro Grade Crossing Policy, Expo misapplied CEQA regulations evaluating crossings in WLA, and the failure to study grade separations). In addition, Koretz made the bold statement that he would have voted no on the FEIR certification. Please read the Councilmember's [response](#) in its entirety. Also read Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas's [letter](#) to MTA Chief Art Leahy about the failures of the Metro Grade Crossing Policy to include safety and environmental considerations.

Over 100 local community members carpooled or drove to the Expo board meeting to support the Neighbors For Smart Rail platform asking that the FEIR **not** be certified until its many deficiencies are remedied, including their failure to study and provide documentation for an underground alignment from Overland to Sepulveda. Thanks to all who came and spoke to the Expo Board, or lent their support to those who did. The importance of getting community input on the record cannot be overstated. The politicians need to see a critical mass of people opposing this project as designed. It is also vital to protest Expo's sloppy environmental evaluation devised to mask impacts and overstate the benefits of running these trains at grade through our residential community as often as every 2 ½ minutes, 22 hours a day for the next 75 years. It is necessary that Expo understand our community resolve for them to, "Build it right or don't build it."

CEQA Attorney Robert Silverstein presented NFSR's response to the FEIR along with a banker's box of evidence documenting the FEIR's CEQA failures. Attorney Silverstein will be representing NFSR through the filing of a Writ of Mandate, and any subsequent trial.

There were supporters of Expo's plans present as well. Their support was for the line as proposed, with few if any comments from them on impacts other than the need to preserve the coral trees on Olympic and to relocate the maintenance yard to protect the quality of life in the Santa Monica neighborhood adjacent. The biggest chunk of the "go Expo" crew were the two busloads of students in aqua t-shirts from Santa Monica College, who stated for the record that they were there because they were given "extra credit" from the college for attending. Three commercial real estate developers from Santa Monica, including one who claimed to represent several thousand hospitality workers in Santa Monica hotels, are also anxious to get the train up and running. Clearly development and commerce in Santa Monica depends on Expo speeding through the residential community of West Los Angeles ASAP.

So, where do we go from here? **NFSR is holding an Expo Light Rail community meeting on February 21, from 1:00 to 3:00pm ([details here](#))** to discuss where we are and the next steps in our legal challenge, and most important, fund raising strategies and public relations. **The meeting will be at Palms Park Recreation Center, 2950 Overland Avenue (at National). We need your help, your ideas, your financial support!**

Thanks for your continued interest in community preservation in the Expo environment.

Colleen Mason Heller

CHHA Light Rail Chair

NFSR Vice President