

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A HEAVY RAIL SEPULVEDA LINE; IMPLOING UCLA TO END ITS INACTION

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WHEREAS, Los Angeles Metropolitan Rail Authority (Metro) is currently studying alternatives for its future Sepulveda Line, a crucial corridor connecting Westwood with the San Fernando Valley and LAX. Project alternatives 1-3 include a monorail system, which would run in the median of the 405 Freeway; alternatives 4-6 would propose a heavy rail, or subway line, running underground;

WHEREAS, Metro’s environmental review phase, which will study the benefits, cost, feasibility, impact, and mitigations of the above alternatives, is happening now. The formal public comment period is open until February 11, 2022.

WHEREAS, Metro will host virtual meetings and Community Open House events for community members to discuss the environmental review of the six project alternatives and potential station locations. The virtual meeting on January 22, 2023¹, and the Community Open Houses on January 24, 2023², and January 26, 2023,³ will be significant opportunities for the UCLA community to voice their concerns on the environmental review of the six alternative designs and potential station locations, respectively.

WHEREAS, UCLA Transportation’s most recent *UCLA State of the Commute 2021* report noted that UCLA had about 31,685 undergraduate and graduate students that lived off-campus in 2021 that would commute to campus and 17,000 employees that commuted to campus daily, mainly driving alone. At least 910 individuals, either students or employees, were “extreme commuters,” which the study defined as either having a UCLA parking permit and residing between 50 and 120 miles away from campus or driving at least 90 minutes one way to and from the university.⁴

¹ [Reminder: virtual meetings on Jan. 11 and Jan. 22 for Sepulveda Transit Corridor project | The Source \(metro.net\)](#)

² [Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project Community Open House #2 \(In-Person\) - LA Metro](#)

³ [Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project Community Open House #3 \(Virtual\) - LA Metro](#)

⁴ [UCLA STATE OF THE COMMUTE 2021 \(arcgis.com\)](#)

WHEREAS, the University of California has a Sustainable Practices Policy that mandates each UC location to report greenhouse gas emissions from commutes. UCLA noted that commutes by students and employees resulted in about 31,627 MT of CO₂e in 2021,⁵ roughly equivalent to 78,504,715 miles driven by an average gasoline-powered passenger vehicle, 34,992,405 pounds of coal burned, or the annual energy consumption of 6,154 homes.⁶

WHEREAS, due to the high environmental costs of single occupancy vehicle commuting, UCLA's Sustainability Plan targets to reduce the number of students and employees driving alone to campus to 33% and 44% by 2030 and 30% and 40% by 2050, respectively.⁷ In 2021, drive-alone rates for students and employees were 22.3% and 46.7%, respectively.⁸ An effective Metro rail line could lower those numbers further.

WHEREAS, transportation made up 38% of California's Greenhouse Gas Emissions in 2022.⁹ The 405 Freeway ranks consistently as one of the most congested roadways in the nation.¹⁰ Those living near the freeway are at increased risk of health complications, including lung disease and asthma.¹¹ Creating a new rapid transit line is crucial to ease congestion and fight the Climate Crisis.

WHEREAS, the station at UCLA's Gateway Plaza is expected to be the single busiest non-transfer station in LA Metro's system. Without this direct connectivity to campus, the effectiveness of the line is dramatically reduced.¹²

WHEREAS, all three monorail alternatives in consideration by Metro contain stations adjacent to the 405 freeway, which would expose transit riders to intolerable and hazardous levels of pollution and noise from the freeway.¹³ Given that lower-income individuals and people of color comprise the vast majority of transit riders¹⁴ and are, therefore, more likely to be exposed to such pollution and noise from the 405, this proposal presents an environmental justice issue and hinders the goal of achieving equity with the Sepulveda rail line.

WHEREAS, BYD, the main private company partnering with Metro on the monorail proposal, has a history in Los Angeles of poor performance and public agency staff opposition, and its business model has reportedly focused on skilled lobbying to secure support and contracts from

⁵ [UCLA STATE OF THE COMMUTE 2021 \(arcgis.com\)](#)

⁶ [Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator | US EPA](#)

⁷ [UCLA Sustainability Plan | UCLA Sustainability](#)

⁸ [Transportation | UCLA Sustainability](#)

⁹ [Current California GHG Emission Inventory Data](#)

¹⁰ [4 L.A. freeways make list of roads with most traffic in U.S. | KTLA](#)

¹¹ [Living Near Highways and Air Pollution | American Lung Association](#)

¹² [Ten Reasons to Ditch the Sepulveda Monorail Proposal Now – Streetsblog Los Angeles](#)

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ [Results of our 2022 Customer Experience Survey | The Source](#)

local politicians.¹⁵ This poor track record and behavior calls into question their ability to construct the Sepulveda rail line less expensively and in less time than a heavy-rail alternative, and is incongruent with UCLA's True Bruin values of Accountability and Integrity¹⁶.

WHEREAS, the current monorail proposal by Metro's private partnership with BYD excludes a station at UCLA's Gateway Plaza, instead opting for stations at the edge of the 405 freeway and over a mile from campus.

WHEREAS, the monorail system, if built with a direct connection to UCLA, would make the total travel time of the line 28 minutes, compared to heavy rail's 19.4 minutes.¹⁷

WHEREAS, the monorail system has a lower maximum capacity, carrying ~19,000 passengers per hour in each direction, compared to heavy rail's maximum capacity of ~27,000.

WHEREAS, the current public-private partnership proposed for heavy rail with the company, Bechtel, has direct connectivity to Metro's future Purple Line, Exposition Line, and regional rail.

WHEREAS, all connections for BYD's monorail are indirect, limiting the overall efficiency of the Metro network.

WHEREAS, 13 of the 14 neighborhood councils belonging to the Westside Regional Alliance of Councils have issued formal support for a station at UCLA and direct transfer station at Metro's D-Line, including the North Westwood Neighborhood Council. The only opposition comes from the Bel Air-Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council.¹⁸

WHEREAS, when asked for public comment by Metro, 93% of participants favored a heavy rail alternative to a monorail system;¹⁹

WHEREAS, the UCLA Undergraduate Student Association Council (USAC) has previously adopted "A Resolution Calling For A Direct UCLA/Westwood Purple Line Stop on the Sepulveda Transit Corridor," which prioritized a direct connection to campus and the D-Line (Purple) station. This resolution did not explicitly endorse the heavy rail alternative nor pressure UCLA's administration to do the same.²⁰

¹⁵ [Stalls, stops and breakdowns: Problems plague push for electric buses - Los Angeles Times](#)

¹⁶ [True Bruin Values](#)

¹⁷ [LA Metro Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project - UCLA/Westwood Fact Sheet August 2021](#)

¹⁸ [Metro Nears Next Step for Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project — Beverly Hills Courier](#)

¹⁹ [Public says: 93% favor rail tunnels, not an overhead monorail, for mega Sepulveda Pass project – Daily News](#)

²⁰ [A Resolution Calling For A Direct UCLA/ Westwood Purple Line Stop on the Sepulveda Transit Corridor](#)

WHEREAS, despite overwhelming community support and enumerable benefits for heavy rail, UCLA has remained neutral about its preference for mode.

WHEREAS, opposition to heavy-rail remains limited to a vocal minority of homeowners in wealthy neighborhoods represented, in part, by the Bel-Air Association (BAA) and the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association. These parties' interests should not precede those of the UCLA undergraduate student body in the UCLA Administration's decision-making.

WHEREAS, UCLA Administration, represented by Administrative Vice Chancellor Michael Beck, has shown an uncomfortable degree of deference to the BAA, whose constituency has little to no relation with UCLA. Vice Chancellor Beck has gone as far as holding meetings with BAA Board Member Frederick Rosen regarding the Sepulveda Transit Corridor project and failing to push back on Mr. Rosen's opposition to heavy-rail and tunneling.²¹

WHEREAS, Vice Chancellor Beck has neither held similar meetings nor displayed an equivalent level of transparency with stakeholders holding a clearer nexus to UCLA than the BAA, including but not limited to the UCLA Undergraduate Students Association Council (USAC) and the North Westwood Neighborhood Council (NWWNC).

WHEREAS, Vice Chancellor Beck wrote a letter on September 13, 2022, to Peter Carter, the Metro project manager supporting the receipt of public feedback, detailing the opinions of "UCLA" and "the University." In this letter, he stated UCLA's official position as "mode-agnostic," as well as UCLA's overarching principle as investing in the STC in a manner that "enhances equity by transporting people directly to the places they need to go and that connects as seamlessly as possible with the existing rapid transit network,...while minimizing the impacts of operations on the neighborhoods through which it runs."²² While the USAC commends the spirit of equity in the deliberations for voicing the campus community's preferences for the Metro rail line, the lack of engagement with the student community compared to the BAA does not represent either equity or the interest of UCLA's undergraduate students, employees, and other members of the UCLA community.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Undergraduate Student Association Council (USAC) adopts this resolution to explicitly support Metro's heavy rail alternatives, 4-6. This council rejects all proposals for a monorail alternative.

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, the USAC expresses its grave concerns regarding Vice Chancellor Beck's lack of communication with the local campus population in his meetings regarding the Sepulveda Transit Corridor project, compared with parties outside of campus.

²¹ [Sepulveda Transit Corridor Update](#)

²² [STC+PDA+mtgs+letter+091322+FINAL.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, the USAC requests Vice Chancellor Beck to present at a council meeting before February 1, 2023 with a list of his direct involvements and outreach with undergraduate students to solicit feedback on the UCLA community's stance on the Metro project alternatives.

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, the USAC requests a meeting between Vice Chancellor Beck and USAC staff to facilitate further conversation about increasing student engagement about the Sepulveda Transit Corridor during the public comment period and incorporating undergraduate students' desire for heavy rail within UCLA Administration's advocacy efforts to Metro.

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, the USAC implores UCLA to make a public endorsement of the heavy rail alternative and submit an updated position letter to LA Metro reflecting this new position. The benefits the heavy rail option brings to the university, our community, and our planet are immeasurable. The future of UCLA relies on the success of this line; neutrality is not an option.

FINALLY, LET IT BE RESOLVED, the council reaffirms the importance of undergraduate students in UCLA's public endorsements. The needs of students and faculty must be prioritized by our UCLA administration; our University must endorse heavy-rail to secure a better future for Bruins.