

# Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council



## Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council General Meeting

January 9, 2008

Approved by the Board  
As amended 03/12/08

### MINUTES

A duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council ("GWNC") was held on Wednesday, January 9, 2008, at the Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 South Lucerne Avenue. President Charles called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

The Secretary, Elizabeth Fuller, called the roll. Board of Directors members in attendance at the roll call were: Yigal Arens, Patti Carroll, Moon Chung, Charles Dougherty, Elizabeth Fuller, Jane Gilman, Frances McFall (alt. Alison Hannon), Margaret Hudson, Alex Jones-Moreno, Shar Penfold, Mary Rajswing, Thomas Roe, Martha Schuur, Russell Sherman, Jolene Snett, Jane Usher, Jared Abrams (alt. Robert Wishart) and James Wolf. Board Member John Gresham arrived at 7:12 p.m. Board Members Roy Forbes and Sam Cunningham were absent and not represented by an alternate.

The Secretary stated that a quorum was present.

#### Reading of the Minutes

The Secretary presented the Minutes of the previous meeting, which had been distributed to Directors by e-mail and posted on the Council's *greaterwilshire.org* web site. Additional copies were distributed at the meeting. The Secretary reported that Alternate Board Member Erick Garcia had requested a correction in the spelling of his last name. Director Margy Hudson noted that Zev Yaroslavky's position should be corrected to read "County Supervisor" instead of "City Council Member." Director Mary Rajswing requested several changes:

Page 6:

Old version: "Senior Center an other..."

New version: "Senior Center and other..."

Page 7:

Old version: "...and that that plans..."

New version: "...and that plans"

Page 8:

Old version: "She said most at the event"

New version: "She said most people at the event"

Page 11:

Old version: "...\$2,000 support for outreach protocols and mapping in the Greater Wilshire area."

New version: "...\$2,000 for support for one or more 9/11 memorial tree plantings in the Greater Wilshire area, including mapping and event protocols such as flags."

A motion was made to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Russell Sherman reported that there is \$113,360 in our bank account. So far we have spent just over \$3,000 (of \$10,000 budgeted) on tree planting. He also noted that we have approved an expenditure of up to \$20,000 for Larchmont planning, but none of that has been spent yet.

#### President's Report

President Charles Dougherty reminded all Board Members and Alternates that they must complete the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment's online ethics training, and said he would e-mail a reminder with a link to the online course.

#### Wilshire & Crenshaw Rail Lines

Director Margy Hudson said this discussion topic was prompted by a November article in the Los Angeles Times, which quoted a letter on rail transit from the Wilshire Homeowners' Alliance. That letter, she said, prompted many inquiries to the GWNC and its directors, both person-to-person and through our [rail@greaterwilshire.org](mailto:rail@greaterwilshire.org) e-mail address (see Appendix for e-mail comments). Director Jane Usher said that while the WHA did take a stance on the issue, the GWNC has not yet, but that it would be good for us to do so. She presented a map of two major transit routes being studied by the MTA (a.k.a. "Metro") – the "Purple Line" (or "Subway to the Sea") running east/west along Wilshire Boulevard...and the "Crenshaw Line" running north/south along Crenshaw Blvd. from El Segundo to Wilshire Blvd. Then she introduced Metro representatives David Meiger and Jody Litvak.

Mr. Meiger said that no rail transit studies have been done in this part of the city since the Wilshire and Western subway station was built, because there was a legal prohibition preventing further tunneling. The prohibition has now been lifted, however, so further construction is legally possible and Metro is once again discussing various options. One of these is an extension of the Wilshire Blvd. line, now called the "Purple

Line,” from Western Ave. 12 miles west to the city of Santa Monica. This is one of the few parts of Los Angeles that doesn't currently have rail service. The “Expo Line,” from downtown to Culver City is now under construction, he said, and they are also looking at a possible north/south corridor which might go from El Segundo all the way north to Wilshire Blvd. or might stop at the Expo line. If the northernmost extension to Wilshire Blvd., turns out not make sense, he said, it will “drop off the map.” He said the first year of the study will be an alternatives analysis and the second year will be an Environmental Impact Report. We are currently in the first year, so it's still very early in the process and not too early to discuss all concerns.

Mr. Meiger introduced the various transit alternatives that can be considered for each corridor: Rapid Buses, Bus Rapid Transit, Light Rail Transit and Subways, which are the highest capacity option. He reported that scoping meetings were held in October of 2007, and public comments were solicited. The next community meeting will be held on January 30, at LACMA West, where Metro will present the results of the October study and comments. Next summer, he said, Metro will narrow down the potential alternatives for the westside routes and move on to an Environmental Impact Report. He said there are three potential outcomes of the initial study: either Metro adopts the “Locally Preferred Alternative” (LPA) and authorizes moving forward into Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Studies...or the Board does not adopt the LPA and either authorizes a Draft EIS/DEIR for two or more alternatives or defers Preliminary Engineering until the end of the Draft IES/DEIR. The third outcome could be that Metro does not adopt the LPA and does not authorize further actions or study.

He said the Crenshaw Corridor study is on the same schedule as the Wilshire Corridor study, and that the major questions for Crenshaw are whether rail transit alternatives be considered north of the Expo LRT line, whether a rail alignment should go to Wilshire/La Brea or Wilshire/Crenshaw and, if that's not an option, whether there are bus service improvements that would be appropriate to handle the demand for improved transit along the Crenshaw Corridor.

He said that for any project to move forward, there must be an Environmental Review and approval, it must be included in the MTA's long-range transportation plan, and there must be funding for the project. At the moment, none of these three criteria is in place for any westside plan.

Before any project advances, several screening criteria will be used: cost, ridership, cost-effectiveness, economic development and land use, travel time savings and comparisons, reliability, environmental effects, sustainability factors, security and safety, financial capability and community acceptability. “If it isn't supported by communities, it doesn't get built,” he said.

Mr. Meiger reported that the following sentiments were heard in the Greater Wilshire area during the early scoping phase:

- General support for a westside subway extension
- More support for a Wilshire Blvd. alignment, though some support

- expressed for a Santa Monica Blvd. alignment
- Concern raised regarding a station in Park Mile
- Requests for more information on safety of subway tunneling
- Questions about Crenshaw rail alternatives north of Exposition and the I-10 Freeway
- Requests for more detailed analysis of Land Use impacts

Tonight, he said, there are five issues we'll look at:

- Need for the Project(s)
- Alignments under consideration
- Stations under consideration
- Community Questions/Concerns to be addressed as a part of the ongoing studies and
- Metro recommendations for community planning process

He presented a map which showed areas of greatest projected job density in the year 2030, with the densest areas being downtown, just west of downtown and in the UCLA, Century City and Beverly Hills areas. He also noted that the Greater Wilshire area falls directly between the two general areas of greatest density.

Mr. Meiger said there are now 16 bus lines serving this area, with more than 250,000 boardings per day. And the Wilshire Corridor has the highest usage in the system. The question is whether we can get people onto a rail system to relieve car and bus congestion.

According to Mr. Meiger, the distance between Western and La Brea (roughly the east/west measurement of the Greater Wilshire area) is approximately two miles. Metro tries to build subway stations approximately every mile along its routes...but that's not a hard and fast measurement, and the distances between future stations are open for discussion.

The stations currently under discussion for the Wilshire Corridor were inherited from proposals written in the 1980s. Metro bought property at both Wilshire/La Brea and Wilshire/Crenshaw, but doesn't want to develop those areas until decisions have been made about stations. If there will be no station at a location owned by Metro, the land will probably be leased long-term to a developer.

Metro will look at alternatives both with and without a station in the Park Mile, and will try to determine whether a Park Mile station would provide significant benefits to offices and residents along Wilshire, and whether it would be used less than other stations.

Also, Metro will look at whether existing and planned land uses could be preserved if a Park Mile station is constructed. (He said that when the subway was built under Vermont Ave. in Hollywood, they wrote development plans specific to the area, with strict height limits that have been followed by new developments there.) He said

there is precedent for a “good faith effort” at honoring existing zoning restrictions and for development that is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.

On the question of tunneling safety, Mr. Meiger noted that there’s been less than 1/8” settling during recent Eastside subway tunneling, and that even the authors of previous prohibitive legislation have been convinced of the new safety capabilities...to the point that they’ve helped repeal the restrictions.

Mr. Meiger concluded by saying that the time is right to conduct a Greater Wilshire planning process with the City of Los Angeles, the GWNC and other Stakeholders and that he’d like to see the options debated in a methodical, reasonable manner. Finally, he invited everyone to attend the January 30 update meeting at LACMA.

*[Note: a Powerpoint version of Mr. Meiger’s presentation is available on the GWNC website at <http://www.greaterwilshire.org/site/files/metropresentation011408.pdf>]*

At this point, Director Usher thanked Mr. Meiger and Ms. Litvak, and invited public comments.

Stakeholder Fred Pickel, representing the Wilshire Homeowners’ Alliance, noted that this is the biggest planning decision in our area in the last 30 years. He distributed and read the following statement on behalf of the WHA:

***“WHAT WHA SUPPORTS AND OPPOSES***

*We Support solutions to traffic congestion, including traffic and public transit improvements in our own neighborhoods and on “the Westside.”*

*We Support new public transit improvements, including a Metro Westside Extension (and the Transit Corridor study thereof), including Westside extension of either or both the Purple Line or the Red Line.*

*We support near-term traffic improvements, such as signal synchronization, etc.*

*We also support upholding the “Fundamental premise” of the Wilshire Community Plan for residential areas: “A general limitation of residential densities in various neighborhoods to the prevailing existing density of development within these neighborhoods.”*

*We also support enforcement and application of the adopted Wilshire Community Plan, especially its elements designed to protect historic, low-density, residential neighborhoods.*

*We also support enforcement and application of the adopted Park Mile*

Specific Plan, which promotes only that development which is compatible with adjoining residential neighborhoods.

We do not oppose a Purple Line subway extension under Wilshire Boulevard west from Western (and/or a Red line subway extension west from Hollywood and Highland).

We do not oppose Purple Line subway stations at the City-adopted commercial "centers" at La Brea and Wilshire and at Fairfax and Wilshire.

We do not oppose bus service improvements.

We DO OPPOSE a Purple Line subway station on Wilshire Boulevard within the low-density Park Mile Specific Plan area, either at Bronson-Irving-Crenshaw-Lorraine or elsewhere.

We DO OPPOSE:

- (a) Transportation or other public investments that will change or threaten any adopted or proposed Historic Preservation Overlay Zone ("HPOZ") or historic buildings in our community.
- (b) Changes to the numerous existing residential neighborhood protections in the adopted Wilshire Community Plan.
- (c) Changes to the adopted Park Mile Specific Plan.

We DO OPPOSE geological, water-table or other problems for properties in our communities that might be caused by subway tunneling. If such potential problems cannot be mitigated through technology now, then a Purple Line subway extension should not be constructed until mitigation is assured."

Stakeholder Greg Kimble asked why monorails are not being considered for these corridors, noting that they could be constructed at a "fraction of the cost" of subways.

Stakeholder Amanda Parsons, who has lived in Windsor Square for 25 years, noted that the subway in Washington, D.C. has "totally revitalized the city." She said she would love to stay in this area, but that it takes an hour and a half to commute to Santa Monica today. She also said that this neighborhood has been a "model of community process," and that it's crucial to make this planning process open to all, not just a few, and that we must reach out to the community.

Stakeholder John Welborne, who has lived in the area "over half a century," drew people's attention to an article in today's Daily News, which explains why the Green Line doesn't go to the airport. He expressed support for connecting to the airport, which is a part of the Prairie/Crenshaw study now in the works. Mr. Welborne also said that he supports a Purple Line extension (and, also, if experts should support it, a Santa Monica

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line). He noted, however that other experts, including the City Planning Director in the 1980s, have said that a station should not be built at Wilshire and Crenshaw, and that the Park Mile plan does not support it. He said Metro can't promise there will be no development near a station if one is built, and that the Planning staff is going in the right direction and should support the current community plans.

Stakeholder Vince Bertoni, a 12-year resident, said that today we're in a different situation than we were in the 1980s – the area is more congested and there are fewer choices available to relieve the congestion. The only solution, he said, is to go underground and make sure the line extends along Wilshire to at least Westwood Blvd. We also need stations, he said, at Crenshaw and La Brea. "People are going to stop in our neighborhood whether we build it or not." He said he is very concerned about historical preservation, but that we have tools – such as our area-specific plans – to deal with that.

Stakeholder Mary Pickhardt said the Windsor Square board hasn't voted or taken a position on this issue yet, but "everyone agrees" that the world is a very different place now. She said we do need new information, though, before making any decisions. She also said she supports the subway extension, supports the existing zoning in the area and that we should study the potential impacts of a subway before moving ahead.

Stakeholder (and Alternate Board Member) Mike Genewick said he's personally opposed to any further subway construction anywhere in Southern California because the cost is too high and it is not appropriate for a "horizontal" city. "This is the automobile era, not the rail era," he said, contending that trains are now "obsolete."

Stakeholder Dan Kegel said we really need to complete the "subway to the sea" under Wilshire, and that if omitting a stop at Crenshaw is the only way to move the project forward, "so be it."

Stakeholder Natalie Klasky, a student, said that she would love to be able to take the subway to school, and that we need stops at popular destinations such as hospitals and schools.

Stakeholder Joan Taylor (addressing another Transportation issue) distributed a proposal to allow senior citizens to purchase a second book of taxi coupons each quarter, asked for the GWNC's support and requested that it be put on our agenda for action at our next meeting.

Stakeholder Nigel Dick, who has lived in the area for 20 years, said that he knows people are worried that a subway would lower property values, but that in London it has raised values and helped people to get to the "vertical" parts of the city – as well as beaches and other areas – much more easily.

Stakeholder Geoffrey Larsen, who moved here a few years ago from Boston, said the subway works well in Boston because there is no parking there. Also, he said, it does no good just to put a station somewhere - you also have to connect it to something. Right

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now, he said, riding LA's subways takes longer than going somewhere in a car (because of the lack of convenient connections), and that without a feeder system to a new line, we're just "wasting time."

Renee Weitzer, chief of staff for City Council Member Tom La Bonge, announced that Mr. La Bonge would not be able to attend this meeting as planned, because he had just learned of the death of his friend, Johnny Grant. She distributed a questionnaire on subway expansion and asked those present to fill it out and return it to the CD 4 office.

Director Jane Usher distributed copies of suggested motions on both the Purple and Crenshaw lines and then took an informal show-of-hands poll of the stakeholders present on which items in the Purple Line motion the GWNC should support or oppose. The show of hands indicated support for a Purple Line extension west from Western Ave. under Wilshire Blvd....and for construction of new subway stations at La Brea and Fairfax. The poll also indicated opposition to governmental actions or construction that would negatively impact any adopted or proposed Historic Preservation Overlay Zones or historic buildings in the GWNC neighborhoods and changes to the Park Mile Specific Plan.

On the question of a subway station on Wilshire Boulevard, however, the show-of-hands vote was much more mixed.

A second show-of-hands poll on elements of a proposed Prairie Line motion was also mixed, but just as discussion of the specifics was beginning, City Council Member Tom La Bonge arrived, so the discussion was suspended and he was given the floor.

According to Mr. La Bonge, we "haven't done enough" on mass transit in Los Angeles, and to improve the system we need to look at all the different possibilities, including going above ground on the freeways and below ground in the city. Also, Mr. La Bonge said the Park Mile Specific Plan is a very important document and should be preserved. But there are examples of subway stations – such as the one at Beverly and Vermont – where there has been no significant development adjacent to the station. He also noted that it took 18 years to get subway construction underway the first time it was undertaken, and said it will take a long time this time around as well. But, he said, "We have to provide the river to move people." He said that heavy rail – like subways – moves people faster, and that he'd like also like to see a route under La Cienega to get to the airport. He also said he'd like to explore funding options, including a sales tax or a parcel tax – and that a tax of \$52 per year would be just \$1 per week. "Unless we fund it, it won't get done – we have to invest in it." Finally, he noted that there's never been a variance to the Park Mile specific plan, and said there doesn't ever need to be one...but that he does believe heavy rail is the way to go.

Kevin Glen, from the Miracle Mile Residents' Association, said that our area is getting lots of approvals for developments that increase density...before an improved transit system is in place. He asked whether this is putting the cart before the horse, and asked Mr. La Bonge what his position is on this, and when we should "put the brakes

Mr. La Bonge said that in the 1990s there was very little development in our area and now we're seeing an upsurge. But much of our area has actually been down-zoned in the last 10 years. Right now, the Rapid Bus is our best option, he said, and we do need to try to preserve neighborhoods wherever we can.

Renee Weitzer, Mr. La Bonge's chief of staff, said that the developments now underway along the Miracle Mile are all very large, but the construction is what's allowed under current zoning (except for one project that required approval for a condo map). For example, there are no height limits in that area. Still, though, none of the new buildings will be more than six stories high and they will improve Wilshire Blvd.

Alternate Board Member Rudy Gintel asked Mr. La Bonge if he would support a subway station at Wilshire and Crenshaw, and Mr. La Bonge replied that first we need to repeal the ban on using local sales taxes to fund a subway project, and then the MTA needs to determine if we need a station there. If we do need one, he said, then it should be much like the one at Beverly and Vermont, which occupies just a small above-ground parcel.

Charles Stewart, chief deputy for U. S. Representative Diane Watson, said that he's planning to attend an all-day conference tomorrow to discuss funding alternatives for rail transit. He also said that Rep. Watson has filed a request on behalf of the Crenshaw community to analyze alternate alignments for the Crenshaw line, such as turning it toward a station at Wilshire and La Brea instead of Crenshaw, which she thinks is a better alternative.

Resuming Board Comments, Director Margy Hudson asked why a heavy rail (subway) line is not being considered for the Crenshaw corridor, and Mr. Meiger said that light rail was the preference that came out of the scoping process...though connections and compatibility will also have to be studied.

Director Yigal Arens said he lived in Berkeley when BART opened and that he didn't see any serious negative impacts from putting stations in residential areas. People need to be able to get to those areas, too, from a subway system.

Director Jolene Snett thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. She said that cutting down on street traffic does improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods, and nothing works better to do that than improvements in mass transit. She said that if Los Angeles wants to move into the 22<sup>nd</sup> century then we need to support those improvements.

Director John Gresham asked if Mr. Stewart could provide more details on the next day's conference, and Metro representative Jody Litvak said the subject will be transportation funding. The conference will be from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at the Los Angeles Cathedral, and the cost is \$25, which includes lunch.

Mr. Gresham also referred to properties sinking around the Wilshire and Western stations as the result of dewatering, specifically the Wiltern Theater, and that in his experience during the 1990s, once funding is in place, MTA/Metro staff have said anything necessary to move their project forward.

Mr. Gresham said that it's been reported by Mr. Meiger and restated over and over that density is a requirement for a station to be successful, and if the community doesn't want density, they shouldn't want a station. He said Western Ave. would be a much better area for a north/south subway connection, although bringing a surface rail line there might interfere with traffic, so maybe it should be elevated if that's the case. He also advised people to be careful what they wish for and urged people not to ignore bus solutions. Finally, he recalled that Los Angeles sits on an old oil field, not bedrock like other cities. He said you can tunnel 60 feet below ground without problems, but the technology hasn't really changed that much in the last decade or so.

Director Jane Usher said that the GWNC held this discussion because we didn't know what our neighbors thought about transit issues, though we had a "vibration" that it wasn't the same as local opinion 20 years ago. All the facts still are not in, she said, and we can't be definitive yet, but she summarized what she's heard tonight as:

- A "subway to the sea" is necessary.
- But people are still ambivalent about a station at Crenshaw.

Also, she said that a lack of support for a Crenshaw station does seem to be connected to strong opposition to altering the Park Mile Plan, and that the station opposition is a reaction to a perceived land use threat, which is realistic and reasonable. At this point, she passed out copies of two proposed motions, one on the Purple Line and one on the Crenshaw Line. After some brief discussion and wording changes, Ms. Usher moved that the Purple Line motion be adopted as rewritten:

*GWNC Purple Line Motion*

- 1. The GWNC supports construction of a Purple Line subway extension under Wilshire Boulevard west from Western Avenue; and*
- 2. The GWNC supports the construction of new subway stations at the City-adopted commercial "centers" at La Brea and Wilshire and at Fairfax and Wilshire; and*
- 3. The GWNC opposes any governmental actions or construction that will negatively impact any adopted or proposed Historic Preservation Overlay Zone ("HPOZ") or historic buildings in the GWNC neighborhoods; and*
- 4. The GWNC opposes changes to the numerous existing residential neighborhood protections in the adopted Wilshire Community Plan; and*
- 5. The GWNC opposes changes to the adopted Park Mile Specific Plan;*  
*and*

*6. The GWNC supports no changes to the adopted Park Mile Specific Plan and awaits further Metro staff reports on the viability of a Purple Line or Crenshaw/Prairie Line subway station on Wilshire Boulevard within the low-density Park Mile Specific Plan area, either at Bronson-Irving-Crenshaw-Lorraine or elsewhere; and*

*7. Any geological, water table, or other problems for properties in GWNC neighborhoods that might be caused by subway tunneling must be mitigated through technology, and no construction should be started until mitigation is assured; and*

*8. The President shall convey the GWNC's position on these matters to Metro, to the elected officials for the GWNC area, and to such other individuals and/or institutions that the President deems appropriate.*

Director Margy Hudson seconded the motion.

President Dougherty opened the motion to Public Comment and Stakeholder John Welborne said that he appreciated the process the Council was going through.

Stakeholder Dan Kegel said that he supports the motion, that it captures the essence of the evening's discussion and that it's a good consensus.

Moving on to Board Member Comments, Director Russell Sherman asked if items 4 and 6 in the motion, addressing the Wilshire Community Plan and the Park Mile Specific Plan, respectively, might be redundant. He said many of our stakeholders live west of Highland and that we should strive to represent all Greater Wilshire stakeholders. Mr. Welborne replied that the clauses about the Wilshire Community Plan and the Park Mile Specific plan should remain separate because they're separate documents. Also, he said that without the Wilshire Community Plan, then there are no protections for anyone in our area...and if someone doesn't live in the Park Mile, they should definitely be very concerned with preservation of the Wilshire Community Plan. He also noted that the Park Mile Specific Plan was created after the Wilshire Community Plan.

Mr. Sherman asked if the Park Mile Plan was part of the Wilshire Community Plan, and Ms. Usher replied that the Wilshire Community Plan addresses the entire area while the Park Mile plan addresses a tiny subset of that area with more detail and protections than the other document specifies. Both documents, she said, are important, and the only way to make sure we get all the protections possible is to mention both plans in our resolution.

Director John Gresham said he is "personally totally against the subway," because he doesn't trust Metro to be honest and forthright about development plans, noting that they've "reneged on every single promise" they've made in the past. Mr. Gresham said he could "certainly support" a subway at a depth of 60 feet, if the technology has improved enough...but that he doesn't believe that it has. Still, he said, he can support

President Dougherty called for a roll call vote. 18 directors voted in favor of the motion; Director Thomas Roe abstained. The motion passed.

#### Public Comments

While several people worked on the wording for a similar motion on the Crenshaw Line proposals, President Charlie Dougherty introduced DONE representative Betty Wong Oyama, who announced that on December 18, 2007, the City Council passed the Neighborhood Council Review Commission recommendation #45, which passes control of Neighborhood Council elections to the City Clerk. She said that Neighborhood Councils will now all have their elections in even-numbered years. That gives our Council – which was scheduled to have its next election in 2009 - the option to either have our next election this year...or to extend our terms until 2010. She said that if we do decide to have our elections this year, it would have to be decided by today (January 9). Because of the date constraint, however, she said it was pretty clear we weren't going to do this, so our elections will be moved to 2010. The City Clerk will take over all functions of the election except outreach, which will save the NCs considerable time and money.

Ms. Oyama also passed out flyers about training and orientation for new board members, which will be held on January 23 in Glassell Park, and encouraged all Board Members to attend.

Finally, she reminded everyone that we have just three months for all Board Members and Alternates to complete DONE's required online ethics training, and noted that people who don't complete the training by the deadline will have to meet with the General Manager of DONE individually.

Next, President Dougherty introduced Joel Lava, from the California Clean Money Campaign, an advocacy group for publicly funded elections. Mr. Lava asked for assistance in setting up area workshops to talk about this issue, and was referred to his area representative (Yigal Arens) and Board Secretary Elizabeth Fuller for further discussions.

#### Resumption of Wilshire & Crenshaw Rail Lines Discussion

Jane Usher moved that we adopt the following motion on the Crenshaw-Prairie Transit Line:

#### *GWNC Crenshaw/Prairie Line Motion*

*1. The GWNC has serious land use concerns and reservations regarding the construction of a new north-south light rail line along the Crenshaw/Prairie corridor north of Exposition Boulevard; and*

*2. In connection with any such light rail construction north of Exposition Boulevard:*

*a. The GWNC is unable at this time to support or oppose the construction of "at grade" or underground light rail on Western Avenue, Crenshaw Boulevard or La Brea Avenue; and*

*b. The GWNC opposes any governmental actions or construction that will negatively impact any adopted or proposed Historic Preservation Overlay Zone ("HPOZ") or historic buildings in the GWNC neighborhoods; and*

*c. The GWNC opposes changes to the numerous existing residential neighborhood protections in the adopted Wilshire Community Plan; and*

*d. The GWNC opposes changes to the adopted Park Mile Specific Plan; and*

*e. The GWNC awaits further Metro staff reports on the viability of the Western, Crenshaw and La Brea alignments and stations on the Crenshaw/Prairie line; and*

*f. Any geological, water table, or other problems for properties in GWNC neighborhoods that might be caused by tunneling must be mitigated through technology, and no construction should be started until mitigation is assured; and*

*3. The President shall convey the GWNC's position on these matters to Metro, to the elected officials for the GWNC area, and to such other individuals and/or institutions that the President deems appropriate.*

Director Jolene Snett seconded the motion.

There were no Public Comments, so President Dougherty opened the discussion to Board Comments.

Director Jane Gilman said she would like to meet with more people from the neighborhoods along the Crenshaw line, to hear their perspectives, before taking a position on the motion.

Director John Gresham said he is very much against the extension of the Crenshaw Line.

Director Mary Rajswing said she's not comfortable voting on the resolution, and will abstain, because she knows so little about the proposal. Director Jane Usher asked what changes Ms. Rajswing would suggest, but Ms. Rajswing said she doesn't oppose the motion, just can't support it.

Director Yigal Arens said he is sympathetic to Ms. Rajswing's comments and that it's "uncomfortable" to pass a resolution that neither supports nor opposes something. "If that's the case, why put it in a motion?"

Ms. Usher said it's important to tell Metro that we don't feel informed or sufficiently consulted on this project, which is as real as the current plans for a Wilshire Blvd. line. Mr. Arens suggested we say exactly that, and President Dougherty asked if we should amend the motion. Mr. Arens said we should say that we feel we have insufficient information and need more from Metro before taking a stand, and offered to amend the motion.

#### Resumption of Public Comments

While Mr. Arens worked on amending the motion, President Dougherty introduced Carolyn Ramsay, from City Council Member Tom La Bonge's office. Ms. Ramsay, who had planned to report on the status of Quimby Funds available for parks improvements in our area, said that because of various schedule conflicts and illnesses, she hasn't had a chance yet to meet with the Department of Recreation and Parks, but will definitely do so in the next couple of weeks and will report back at our next GWNC meeting. She said that in addition to improvements to Robert Burns Park, the City Council office is also trying to acquire a parcel of land for a pocket park near Western Ave., so there are several projects riding on this question.

Director Russell Sherman asked Ms. Ramsay if the City Council's Transit Committee took any action at today's meeting on revisions that have been proposed for the City's Permit Parking District policies, but Ms. Ramsay said she didn't know.

#### Ad Hoc Committee on Million Trees

Director Mary Rajswing reported that by the end of November, the committee had delivered 200 copies of its new flyer to the Hollywood Beautification Team for distribution, including a half sheet indicating our support of the HBT and its work. She said the committee's next project will be planting trees along the La Brea business corridor between Third St. and Wilshire Blvd. GWNC's other planting partner, KYCC (Koreatown Youth Community Center), has identified 15 locations between 8<sup>th</sup> and Olympic for a potential 27 new trees. The HBT has money for digging 4 x 4 tree wells, she said, and they've contacted seven businesses about planting 13 trees. A "posse" will go out to visit the businesses and offer an emergency preparedness booklet and a city services booklet as "party favors." A few neighborhoods have also asked for trees, said Ms. Rajswing, though the HBT hasn't marked planting locations yet...and there are always opportunities for tree giveaways. Director Elizabeth Fuller asked if they'd be planting trees only on the east side of La Brea, since the west side is technically in the Mid-City West NC district, but Ms. Rajswing said they'll be planting on both sides.

#### Resumption of Wilshire & Crenshaw Rail Lines Discussion

Moving back to the transit discussion, Director Jane Usher presented the amended

*GWNC Crenshaw/Prairie Line Motion*

*1. The GWNC has serious land use concerns and lacks sufficient information regarding construction of a new north-south light rail line along the Crenshaw/Prairie corridor north of Exposition Boulevard, either "at grade" or underground, and requests that Metro staff do more to inform the Neighborhood Council and the affected residents before any decision to proceed is made; and*

*2. In connection with any such light rail construction north of Exposition Boulevard:*

*a. The GWNC opposes any governmental actions or construction that will negatively impact any adopted or proposed Historic Preservation Overlay Zone ("HPOZ") or historic buildings in the GWNC neighborhoods; and*

*b. The GWNC opposes changes to the numerous existing residential neighborhood protections in the adopted Wilshire Community Plan; and*

*c. The GWNC opposes changes to the adopted Park Mile Specific Plan; and*

*d. The GWNC awaits further Metro staff reports on the viability of the Western, Crenshaw and La Brea alignments and stations on the Crenshaw/Prairie line; and*

*e. Any geological, water table, or other problems for properties in GWNC neighborhoods that might be caused by tunneling must be mitigated through technology, and no construction should be started until mitigation is assured; and*

*3. The President shall convey the GWNC's position on these matters to Metro, to the elected officials for the GWNC area, and to such other individuals and/or institutions that the President deems appropriate.*

Jane Gilman seconded the amendments. The amendments were approved unanimously.

Re-opening discussion on motion as a whole, Director John Gresham lamented the fact that no scoping meetings on the Crenshaw Line were held in our area (the closest was on Washington Blvd.), saying that if they had held a meeting in our area, we'd be better informed.

President Dougherty called for a roll call vote on the amended motion, and it passed unanimously.

Ad Hoc Outreach Committee Report

Director Margy Hudson reported that we've received proposals from the two web design candidates we're considering. Director Elizabeth Fuller said one of the candidates has extensive experience creating Neighborhood Council websites, while the other has very strong graphic design skills. The budget proposals range from about \$5,000 to about \$10,000...and we'll come back at our next meeting with a final recommendation.

Ms. Hudson mentioned our new e-mail news list and encouraged everyone who has not yet signed up for it to do so. Ms. Fuller added that this service will be useful for stakeholders as well as Board Members, and urged everyone in the audience to subscribe as well.

On the subject of increasing attendance at our meetings. Ms. Hudson noted that we made an extra effort to get the word out about this meeting, and almost 100 people attended. She would like to book another guest speaker for our next meeting, and is open to suggestions.

Resumption of Public Comments

Stakeholder Karen Gilman noted that at our last three GWNC board meetings, the Board has passed resolutions expressing concern about the cumulative impact of development on our area's neighborhoods. She asked that the Council write a letter expressing this concern, which she could give to developers planning projects in her neighborhood. Also, she would like to know how to get on the agenda for a meeting of our Planning and Land Use committee.

*[To prevent a conflict of interest with her role as president of the city Planning Commission, Director Jane Usher left the meeting at 10:04 p.m.]*

Ad Hoc Committee on Land Use and Zoning

Vice President James Wolf reported that the Park Mile Design Review Board has denied an application for a tract map at 751-757 S. Windsor Blvd....and that the developer of a project at 5920-5952 W. Melrose Ave. and 650 N. Wilcox Ave. has asked for street widening at this project.

Board Member Comments/New Business

Director Elizabeth Fuller circulated a sheet for Board Members to provide their phone numbers so the GWNC officers can contact them quickly when needed.

Alternate Board Member Jared Abrams asked that a discussion about height limits on North Larchmont Blvd. be added to the agenda for our next meeting.

Announcements & Adjournment

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Jack Humphreville, the GWNC's representative to the DWP Oversight Committee reported that in the middle of December, the proposed rate action was sent back to the DWP for review, after the Oversight Committee did lots of work to raise questions about the accuracy of statements in the proposal. This past Saturday, he said, the Oversight Committee also passed a resolution calling for no further rate increases until an audit of the DWP's charter has been completed.

Vice President James Wolf distributed information about a series of planning workshops that Board Members might find useful.

President Dougherty announced that the next GWNC board meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 12.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Fuller  
Secretary

APPENDIX

E-Mail Public Comments Received on Wilshire & Crenshaw Rail Lines Discussion

Jan. 4, 2008

Hello,

I am writing to voice my support for a rail station at Crenshaw and Wilshire. I have lived in Hancock Park for more than ten years, during which time I have seen traffic congestion grow to an untenable point and am excited at the prospect of a different sort of mass transit coming to the area. I always use mass transit when I visit other large cities and know I and others will use it here in Los Angeles.

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Jan. 9, 2008

Dear GWNC,

Unfortunately I am unable to attend the meeting tonight due to a previously scheduled commitment. However, I would like to express my support for the location of a Metro Station at the corner of Crenshaw and Wilshire. This city was designed with exceptional public transportation which was dismantled in favor an inferior bus system. The Metro Department has done the best job they can given they only have buses and streets which, in the case of the Wilshire Boulevard route, is not enough. This route is the most heavily traveled line in Los Angeles, which requires more and more buses which create greater and greater problems. They cripple the ability to commute even short distances on Wilshire and impact business by having limited parking during rush hours. Additionally, the accordion buses, which violate the city charter due to the load per axle, are destroying the street. We can either be inconvenienced by continual re-paving for decades or tolerate the inconvenience of subway digging once. I would ask that when the subway is completed that Metro take the buses off Wilshire entirely or that buses are spaced at least a quarter mile apart. That would be one bus not the 3 to 5 buses that seem to be spaced every other block currently.

Below are other important points:

\* The NIMBYS (Not In My Backyard) may argue that a subway line will increase crime. I would argue that since that intersection already is a bussing hub there would be no greater likelihood. Plus, what burglar is planning on breaking into a home and

carrying a plasma TV to a rail stop? Additionally, a Metro stop could make the area more desirable. The greater the desirability; the more home values increase.

\* Business will suffer during construction. This may be a sad truth and it is up to the consumer to maintain positive relationships with their favorite merchants. It is up to the city to maintain its public transportation. Let the city do what it needs to do and let us provide support for business via our consumer dollars. Also, we cannot complain about traffic on one hand and then challenge the installation of a system that works in all other major cities in the world.

\* No one will use it. Currently no one uses the subway because it does not go anywhere and the few places it does go require driving to the metro stop where there is no parking. If this goes to the beach and Beverly Hills it will actually be convenient. Personally, I have used the bus from time to time and would seriously consider using the subway to get to my office.

We cannot continue to complain about traffic then complain when a viable solution is at our doorstep. One of the top complaints about Los Angeles from tourists is the inability to get around. Families who cannot afford car rentals do not visit or only stay a short time. Foreigners who come from cities that have adequate public transportation do not visit because they do not want to drive. The average tourist stay is 2.5 days. We need to address public transportation for those who live in the city and those who visit. We need to attract tourists and this is one step toward that goal.

In closing, not only do I support this project I wish the city would do more and do it faster; such as making Beverly, 3rd, Olympic and Pico one way streets which will not only add two more lanes in each direction, it will increase the amount of parking if parallel parking was instituted. An above ground rail should be added to Venice which goes to San Vicente then connects with the subway. There are many solutions if we can agree that we are stewards of the city for now and the future. We need to think long term and big picture.

Enough of my ranting; all the best,

Bill Ahmanson  
[Bill@ahmanson.la](mailto:Bill@ahmanson.la)

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Jan. 9, 2008

I am a resident of Hancock Park. I am unable to attend the meeting scheduled for January 9, 2008 and instead am providing my comments on the Metro extension via email.

I have lived in Los Angeles my entire life (55 years), except for 4 years spent in Northern California during college. During the last 10 years the quality of life in Los Angeles has materially declined because of problems associated with transportation. Simply put, extreme traffic congestion and the resulting inability to get across town in a reasonable

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period has made life here both unpleasant and inefficient. For me, other than education, improvement of our transportation system is the most important issue confronting our region.

Thus, I support public transportation improvements including, but not limited to, an extension of the Metro to the Westside on both the Purple and Red Lines. The only way that we will break our dependence upon the car as the principal mode of transport in the region is by providing attractive alternatives. If I could take a subway from Hancock Park to my office in Century City I would do so in a heartbeat.

I do not oppose the construction of a station on Wilshire in the Bronson-Irving-Crenshaw-Lorraine area. The NIMBY attitude has to stop and our leaders have to have the political will to make the hard decisions that will benefit the larger whole. I have been in many cities in which subway stops abut residential areas without material adverse impacts. The same can work here in Los Angeles. The alternative is to locate stops only in commercial areas removed from the residences of potential riders, thereby diminishing the probable usage of the system. We have to stop being parochial and subordinate some of our personal interests to the larger good. Otherwise, we will be eternally paralyzed and no progress will be made.

Sincerely,

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