



# MTA BOARD SECRETARY'S OFFICE

## FAX COVER SHEET

Date: 10/22/03

**TO: MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**cc: CEO; DCEO**

**FROM: BOARD SECRETARY'S OFFICE**

*see attached*

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## CITY OF CULVER CITY

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

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*Culver* CITY

Stephen C. Cunningham

Transportation Director

October 21, 2003

The Honorable Pam O'Connor

Director

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)

One Gateway Plaza

Los Angeles CA 90012-2952

**Subject: Mid City/Exposition Boulevard Light Rail Transit Project's Preliminary Engineering Final Draft EIR/EIS Drawings**

Dear Director O'Connor:

On behalf of the City of Culver City, I would like to thank the MTA for the opportunity to comment on the subject draft EIR/EIS drawings. Under separate cover, Culver City staff has provided detailed technical comments to MTA staff.

However, I feel it is important to call your attention to two documents related to the preliminary engineering drawings. Specifically they are the Grade Crossing Policy for Light Rail Transit (Draft Proposed Policy, dated September 3, 2003) and the Evaluation of Exposition LRT Project With Proposed MTA Grade Crossing Policy (Draft Report, dated August, 2003).

The comments contained in this letter are based on the latter report (Expo LRT Crossings) related to "Possible At Grade Operation" at Washington/National Boulevards in Culver City. It states (in summary) that, using the methodology recommended in the draft "Grade Crossing Policy for Light Rail Transit", the two crossings straddle the boundary between "Grade Operation Should be Feasible" and "Possible At Grade Operation". It goes on to state, "Detailed operational analysis was conducted as part of this evaluation and the operational analysis indicates some of the recommended provisions for successful operation at grade." I would take this to mean that the consultant who did the report is recommending "at grade" crossings.

Now for the interesting part: The report parenthetically notes, "In the event the Expo LRT was extended west of Venice Boulevard, it is anticipated that grade separation would be required at Venice, and that this structure could be extended to the east to provide grade separation at both of these locations in the longer term."

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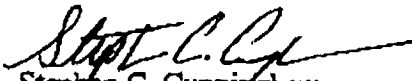
Is the consultant suggesting that the MTA build phase 1 of the Expo LRT project to Culver City, at grade (with presumably a station located between Washington and Venice Boulevards which would include parking and a transit center), only to go back eventually (once the project crosses Venice Boulevard) and rebuild all of this infrastructure? How can the MTA build a station "at grade" so close to Venice Boulevard and then accommodate a grade separation at Venice? How much will this retroactive measure ultimately cost? Wouldn't it prove to be much less expensive to build the project properly from the start? Why would the MTA even consider such a scenario?

Culver City would like to respectfully suggest that, in compliance with the City's General Plan and numerous written submittals made by Culver City to the MTA, the MTA Board only approve a grade crossing plan that takes the future into consideration while protecting Culver City's current conditions. Anything less would seem to be financially wasteful and will result in a lessening of the quality of life in Culver City.

Culver City remains ready and eager to work with the MTA and the consulting team to address this matter. We believe that a unique opportunity exists to form a "partnership" for the development of a transit oriented project located between Washington and Venice Boulevards. There will be only one chance to "get it right". The City would very much appreciate the support of the MTA Board as we work to do just that.

Thank you for your leadership on this and other transportation issues. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (310) 253-6540 if you have any questions about this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

  
Stephen C. Cunningham  
Transportation Director

cc: Mayor Alan Corlin and Members of the City Council  
MTA Board of Directors  
Roger Snoble, MTA Chief Executive Officer  
Jerry Fulwood, Chief Administrative Officer  
Susan Evans, Community Development Director  
Pam Keyes, Public Works Director/City Engineer