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Residents, Business Leaders Turn Out to Support Constellation Subway Station

Councilman Paul Koretz, backed by about 60 people, says at a news conference Thursday that the Century City stop should be in the center of the community rather than at Santa Monica Boulevard.

By [Anne Louise Bannon](#) | [Email the author](#) | June 10, 2011 [Print](#) [14 Comments](#)

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Flanked by a crowd of supporters, including area homeowners and business leaders, Los Angeles City Councilman Paul Koretz said at a news conference Thursday that he wanted the Century City stop for the Westside Subway Extension to be located in the heart of the area.

"I stand with them in the strongest possible terms," Koretz said of workers and residents who want the station to be built at Constellation Boulevard and Avenue of the Stars, where the news conference was being held, rather than several blocks to the north at Santa Monica Boulevard and Avenue of the Stars.

He addressed a crowd of approximately 60 people, most of whom had gathered to support the controversial location for the stop.

Residents in neighboring Beverly Hills and the Beverly Hills Unified School District have been actively protesting the proposed Constellation station because it would require tunneling under Beverly Hills High School.

BHUSD Superintendent Richard Douglas said at the news conference that financial figures released by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which is building the subway, support moving the station to the Santa Monica Boulevard site, including a \$60 million lower price tag and 5 percent higher expected ridership. In addition, he expressed concern that building improvements at the high school would be negatively impacted by the tunneling under the campus.

"That is the only space we have," he said of the school, adding that the MTA does have other options for the subway's route.

However, Susan Bursk, president and CEO of the Century City Chamber of Commerce, said that the numbers Douglas was citing were from an older draft Environmental Impact Report and that the MTA is updating them.

"I don't think the numbers are accurate," she said. "Metro is still analyzing it. I'd like to wait and see what they come up with."

Bursk showed the [results of a radius map study done by Gibson Transportation Consulting on behalf of the chamber](#), which showed a station on Constellation would probably serve more people.

Stephen E. Breuer, president of the Century City Homeowners Alliance, said that the station placement seemed obvious to him.

"Just take a look around you," he said, pointing to the huge office buildings surrounding the intersection. "We have four corners of incredible density."

Misael Martinez, who works in the Century Park building on the southeast corner of Constellation and Avenue of the Stars, came to the news conference

with colleagues to show his support for the station location.

"It's a lot of traffic to come into work," he said. "It's better to take the Metro."

Jan Reichmann, president of the Comstock Hills Homeowners Association north of Santa Monica Boulevard, said that she also thought the ridership would be better with a stop in the heart of Century City.

"Those who want it on Santa Monica don't care about the impact on us," she said, citing the five years that local homeowners were affected by the widening and reconstruction of Santa Monica Boulevard. "We're not whining. We're not threatening lawsuits."

She added that even with the proposed Constellation stop, there will still be tunneling under homes in her neighborhood.

During the question period after the remarks at the conference, an unnamed man in the crowd said that lawyers should not be blamed, since many of them work in Century City and would like an easy route to the courts downtown.

David Murphy spoke up from the crowd as a resident of Beverly Hills supporting the Constellation station.

"Obviously, we need to be sure the school is taken care of," he said. But he asserted that commuters would be better served by the Constellation station.

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COMMENTS (14)

[Nancy Kissock](#) Flag as inappropriate
 7:19am on Friday, June 10, 2011

I believe Richard Douglas was mis-quoted. Your article makes it sound as though he supports the MTA locating the stop at Santa Monica Blvd.....and I don't believe that's the case.

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 [Brigham Yen](#) Flag as inappropriate
 12:18pm on Saturday, June 11, 2011

Oh that's wonderful Nancy! Does Richard Douglas now support the Constellation station as well?

There is absolutely no doubt where the station should go, and that's in the HEART of Century City at Constellation.

Beverly Hills is shooting itself in the foot by resisting what is right and good for the entire County. They will not be viewed favorably in the future.

[Carol Spencer](#) Flag as inappropriate
 8:22am on Friday, June 10, 2011

Nancy, Patch made an accurate quote of Richard Douglas words spoken at the press conference - were you there?

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[Josh Marks](#) Flag as inappropriate
 8:25am on Friday, June 10, 2011

Not even a close call. Constellation Station in heart of huge commercial and retail area has to win out. Century City is a downtown where people live, work and play. They should have a station right in the heart of Century City.

These shortsighted and selfish Beverly Hillers are just going to have to deal with it.

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[Chris Loos](#) Flag as inappropriate
 1:54pm on Friday, June 10, 2011

Totally read that as 'Beverly Haters'. I think that's what I'm going to call these Beverly Hills NIMBYs from now on.

[Brigham Yen](#)



12:19pm on Saturday, June 11, 2011

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@Chris Loos - "Beverly Haters" - Good one!

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[John Mirisch](#)

11:58pm on Monday, June 13, 2011

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Actually, it's the Comstock Hills homeowners who are the NIMBY's. They made it clear at the press conference, they don't want a subway anywhere near them -- they don't want to have to deal with the construction impacts. There are two stations in the middle of Beverly Hills and within walking distance of residential areas. In opposition to the Comstock group, we are willing to deal with the construction inconveniences for the good of the region.

We are not, however, willing to be the victims of bait-and-switch tactics which only serve to benefit Century City developers, especially when there are viable alternatives. For those of you who think that ridership is the "holy grail" of transit, you should be supportive of the Santa Monica alignment, as Metro's own figures suggest ridership will be higher on Santa Monica. That might change with a rigged FEIR, which BH will resist. Those of you who resort to name calling clearly don't understand the meaning of those names, nor the difference between the one block you're fighting over and the better part of a mile that separates the UCLA/Westwood station from the UCLA campus.

Pity you're not expending your vitriol fighting for a central Westwood station, which could serve Westwood Village, UCLA and the limited offices on Wilshire. How much more sense would a station in the HEART of Westwood Village make?

Of course, you're all aware that Metro won't build it there because they don't want to tunnel under a cemetery.

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[Chris Loos](#)

19:21am on Tuesday, June 14, 2011

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By "Century City developers", do you mean the general public that would prefer to pop up from a station in the heart of Century City rather than a quarter-mile away?

[Carol Spencer](#)

12:03pm on Tuesday, June 14, 2011

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Mr. Mirisch – Please get your facts straight!

FIRST, I want to advise you that a Federal Law states that there be no tunneling under a cemetery – It is OK to put subway tunnels beneath the Capitol Bldg but NOT under Arlington Cemetery or any other cemetery.

SECOND, Comstock Hills will have subway tunneling beneath their homes for ALL Century City station alternatives –Santa Monica Blvd/Ave Stars, Santa Monica Blvd/Century Park East and also Constellation Blvd/Ave Stars –

Many residents of Comstock Hills have followed the Westside Subway since the 1960's and feel that the location should serve the most riders – That 50 years from now they hope that people will look back and say Constellation Blvd @ Ave Stars was the Very Best Choice.

[John Mirisch](#)

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1:49pm on Wednesday, June 15, 2011

Now does that make any sense at all? It's OK to tunnel under schools with real, live kids, but not OK to tunnel beneath a cemetery? Where is the logic behind that? What is the reasoning behind that? That we respect the dead more than the living? Laws are supposed to reflect the values of a community and laws can be changed. The argument has been made that "all over the world" there are tunnels under schools. There certainly are instances throughout the world of tunnels under cemeteries and there aren't any instances in California of tunneling under schools for a subway.

And if the fault line along Santa Monica is so dangerous, then why was the Westfield 45 story tower approved on SM? Why is a 40 story building being proposed directly contiguous to Beverly Hills High School?

Presumably a subway portal on SM would be located on the south side of the street, i.e. next to existing buildings and the mall -- and not on the north side of the street.

I understand residents' aversion to having to deal with construction impacts, but we in BH are going to have to live with this at two separate points along Wilshire. It's all about supporting the long-term regional needs. SM, for all the reasons previously discussed, makes the most sense, but if for political reasons Constellation is so important, Metro should "dig deeper" as Koretz suggested and tunnel around the high school to CC. A station between Constellation and SM with 2 portals would at least be a better solution.

[Josh Marks](#)

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1:55pm on Tuesday, June 14, 2011

Let's get real here people. This isn't about the "children" of Beverly Hills High School. It never has been. It is about black gold. Yep. All that oil underneath BHHS. Don't you know Beverly Hills gets a cut of that oil as a revenue stream for the school? So cynical. We must not let them win! We want the Constellation Station in the heart of Century City!

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[Jan Reichmann](#)

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4:18pm on Tuesday, June 14, 2011

One theory being tossed around is that BH really wants the subway station as close to its western border as possible because it would be great for business development. They don't want to lose the shoppers and other commuters who would otherwise be getting off in the heart of Century City at Constellation.

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[John Mirisch](#)

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1:57pm on Wednesday, June 15, 2011

I think we would like the subway station closer to our western border for all the reasons people like having subways close by: access. It would mean our school kids from the eastern part of town could use the Metro to go to school. There are larger developments which have been approved at the old Robinsons-May site and the Hilton, which would also benefit from the subway. However, don't expect to see Century City-style development in BH anytime soon. We've managed to resist it -- with a few unfortunate lapses -- and last year reaffirmed our General Plan which limits commercial buildings to 3 stories, 45 feet. Aside from reducing self-generated traffic impacts, we think it makes for a more liveable Community. What a pity that Century City has been the very model of development run amok, the impacts be damned.

That western part of town, however, is not our major shopping district (which will be served by the Rodeo station, as well as a station at La Cienega), and I think we'd all be fine with a stop on Santa Monica by Avenue of the Stars, which of course was Metro's focus for the better part of a decade, is closer on foot and also easier and quicker for us to reach with the arterial Santa Monica Blvd. bus service.

[George Clint](#)

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10:24pm on Sunday, June 19, 2011

I have a better idea. Instead of everyone fighting each other on where to have the station, how about all of us uniting and putting all of our collective energy together to fight this Villarraigosa driven boondoggle. We will end up going way over budget with numerous problems and corruption not to mention the real elephant in the room: the line's supposed safety during an earthquake...you know, the one we're way overdue for. And you know and I know once this thing is built, homeowners will be complaining about noise and vibration no matter what promises are made and trust me when this much money is involved, many false promises will be made.

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