

MTA Orders EIR Despite Community Opposition To Santa Monica Boulevard Project

Despite overwhelming neighborhood opposition, the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Transit Authority insists on reconfiguring Santa Monica Boulevard and eliminating little Santa Monica. At its February board meeting, the MTA directors voted unanimously to commission an Environmental Impact Review for the project. The EIR is expected to be completed early in 1998.

Virtually all the speakers at the meeting at which the EIR was the issue spoke against the Board's desire to spend \$70 million on the 2.3 mile stretch of the boulevard from approximately the San Diego Freeway to the Beverly Hills City Limits.

Hiring Consultant and Engineer

Before the EIR can be conducted, interested parties will be asked to submit questions and comments about the Santa Monica Boulevard project. 7260 is likely to join other neighborhood groups in hiring both an EIR consultant and a traffic engineer to aid their responses.

At the MTA board meeting, the two main charges hurled against the MTA's boulevard plan revolved around traffic jams during construction and the feared loss of convenient parking.

Business owners said that the MTA would replace some current parking spaces with spaces less conveniently located. They also expressed a belief that some of the parking would not be replaced.

Parking During Construction They said that parking problems could kill their businesses. And they feared that they would go out of business during the many months that construction would hinder traffic on the boulevard.

Representatives of the MTA claimed that the MTA intended to make sufficient parking available and would use the median to ameliorate any traffic problems that might be caused by construction.

However, the main charge against the project went unanswered

Opponents say that with the boulevard capable of handling twenty per-cent more traffic after the reconfiguration is completed, huge traffic jams would be created at Wilshire and Santa Monica and beyond as cars moved east. The opponents also predicted westward bound traffic jams beyond the 405.

The opponents stated that traffic already is at a standstill at both points. They maintained that an increase of twenty per cent more traffic would turn the reconfigured Santa Monica Boulevard into the world's biggest parking lot.

One homeowners representative at the meeting called the MTA's thinking "Alice in Wonderland."