

BEVERLY HILLS *COURIER*

The Best Read Newspaper in Beverly Hills

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April 27, 2012

From the Publisher, Clif Smith

WESTSIDE SUBWAY EXTENSION - BEVERLY HILLS' MESSAGE

Published Friday, April 27, 2012

Yesterday, Beverly Hills forced the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board of Directors to delay its vote to tunnel under Beverly Hills High School. The City Council, acting finally after months of pressure from almost every citizen in Beverly Hills and The Courier, demonstrated the power of a united front.

Sources at L.A. city pretty much told The Courier that Metro's "science" was disregarded. In other words, it is a joke. It's a bad joke, though, and this reprieve is only that-a reprieve.

We have much work to do to prevent the joke from being on us. While the District's lawyers and experts are fighting the technical battle, how are they faring with the political battle? That is a different situation. All around Beverly Hills the word on the street is, "Beverly Hills is a rich, spoiled NIMBY town that doesn't want 'those' people coming here." That's what we hear. It's probably what you hear. We also know the accusation is false, but our City and school board have not effectively answered the charge.

As a result, we have hundreds of union volunteers blanketing Beverly Hills with the carefully-timed Los Angeles Times "editorial" that vilifies Beverly Hills. That piece, thoroughly discredited by The Courier, perpetuates the stereotype. The truth? Our City has pledged more support for public transportation, offered more help to build the subway, and will suffer more economic harm from it than any city along the entire subway route. All we asked was for Metro to stick to its original promise about Santa Monica Boulevard and stay out from under our only high school. They lied and we're stuck unless the final vote changes.

For those who have not read the Times' piece, we note that it called us the "locally influential Beverly Hills Courier" and linked to our website. That was quite a compliment to The Courier. It is also a recognition by the Times that The Courier speaks for Beverly Hills and has a regional impact. That's recognition that is nearly impossible for a once-a-week print newspaper to get from a big daily. In our business, that just doesn't happen. We have to thank the Times for the shout out.

Beyond that, our editorial shredding of the Times earned tremendous coverage on local television and radio - specifically KTTV and from Larry Elder on KABC 790. (Elder said he "assumed that The Beverly Hills Courier is a liberal newspaper." We're deciding whether or not to disillusion him.) We

know that Los Angeles County Supervisors read The Courier regularly. It seems like only Beverly Hills city hall refuses to acknowledge the power and influence of The Courier. (We know the power and influence is not really ours, but is entirely a result of the trust, power and influence of our readers - you.)

Our community now has a short window of opportunity to dispel the slurs against Beverly Hills. We must do this, not because we're so bothered by it, but because it has become an easy political excuse for Metro to trash our high school and jeopardize our future. The District has a high-paid public relations firm that doesn't seem to be too concerned about the community's image. With other professionals, the District has chosen wisely. This one leaves a lot to be desired.

The final Metro vote will be political. The "consultants" think it will be based on "science." Baloney. Metro cooked up its own "science" and gets to pick "theirs" or "ours." Tie goes to Metro . . . unless we wage the battle where it will be won or lost-politically.

The Courier is committed to the facts. The slurs against Beverly Hills are intended to confuse, distort, distract and destroy. Beverly Hills has the facts on our side. We need to spread that message. That is the political battle. It's time the District held its p.r. consultants to the same standard we set for ourselves. If the consultants won't do the job-and they have failed so far-they need to be replaced and fast. Frankly, The Courier believes we have excellent spokesmen (and women) on our school board and city council. Turn them loose. They can carry the message to every city council, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club and school board in Los Angeles County.

And, yes, we will support the Westside Subway Extension if they leave our high school alone. So, we say to the Teamsters, to the AFL-CIO Building Trades Council, do not consider us your opponents on this. Metro has made us choose either the safety of our children or the subway. You know that we must choose our children and our school over a subway no matter how much we want the subway. You would, too. Don't let the developers in Century City create a split where there should not be one. Don't force this choice on us. Join with us on the side of truth. Help us help all of Los Angeles County make the right decision.

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