Original route along Fairfax to the Valley

Jonathan is right that the San Fernando Valley is trying its best to maximize the land use around its two subway stations, considering the slow pace of legalizing these developments. But part of my problem with the extension of the subway to the San Fernando Valley is not just the land use around the two stations in the Valley itself, but the utilization of all the stations along the entire extension, which probably should never have been built.

The decision to serve the Valley was based entirely on politics and not on ridership. After all, you can't spend $4.8 billion on a subway system in Los Angeles and NOT serve the wealthy, second half of the city. San Fernando Valley politicians insisted that the system come to them, or else they would never have voted for state funds for it. To be sure, you could make an argument that Hollywood merited subway stops along the way, but certainly not at the expense of serving the Wilshire Corridor, which rivals Manhattan for population density. To make matters worse, in order to serve the Valley, the subway had to make a tortured route away from Wilshire Boulevard, where all the density is located, and journey up Vermont into Hollywood, and then on to the Valley.

Originally the subway was supposed to travel to the Valley along Fairfax, as indicated in the photo to the right.

But Henry Waxman killed it (along with further extensions along Wilshire, although he rescinded his legislative ban a few years ago). A Fairfax route would not have been great for ridership, but Waxman's ban now forced the subway onto Vermont, which features such amazing land uses around the subway stops as a gas station, one-story Starbucks, and some long sidewalks along the backs of buildings (I'm exaggerating of course but not by much).

So without Valley politicians forcing subway service for which they are not worthy, the subway would have been a much more effective system serving the most high-density areas. Hopefully we can make use of a bad situation through better land use, but that will take a lot longer than it took Jonathan to Photoshop that picture of the Valley (I have it on good authority that such a clear day has not been seen in the Valley since pre-industrial times).