

Message

From: Levitt, Melissa [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=D613FEE560E1489DB678AA80D6E2502F-LEVITT, MEL]
Sent: 10/21/2022 8:58:02 AM
To: Zelmer, Cory [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3e2ad7acc5414ea394bde78db47b52a8-Zelmer, Cor]; Clark, Daniel [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c74978669ccb41628414596c281ed76d-Clark, Dani]
CC: Kefalas, Tom [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=f5a8e9b8104e4a51aa0635492374a75a-Kefalas, To]; Sinclair, Stacy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=7517009e03ae47d1b5af3101b5275048-Sinclair, S]
Subject: FW: Comments From LAUSHS on Metro Esplanade Project & LA ART Cable Car

Hi Cory and Daniel,

Sending over this communication from the LAUS Historical Society. There main focus on the Gondola project. Stephanie was included on this email. I am just coming back from vacation, so my apologies for delay in getting this to you. I will see if I can track down the letter mentioned.

Thanks,
Melissa

Melissa Faigeles Levitt

LA Metro

Principal Environmental Specialist

Environmental Services

213.265.0774 C

Metro's mission is to provide world-class transportation for all.

From: Harper, Kip@DOT <Caprice.Harper@dot.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2022 11:45 AM
To: LA Union Station HS <laushs@earthlink.net>
Cc: Wiggins, Stephanie <WIGGINSS@metro.net>; Crawford, Karen <Karen.Crawford@icf.com>; Levitt, Melissa <LevittM@metro.net>; Wang, Andi <WangA@metro.net>; Roberts, Jane <RobertsJ2@metro.net>
Subject: RE: Comments From LAUSHS on Metro Esplanade Project & LA ART Cable Car

Dear Tom,

Caltrans is not a lead agency for the projects you mention below, i.e., Los Angeles Aerial Rapid Transit (LA ART), nor the Alameda Esplanade. Caltrans is the federal lead agency for Metro's LAUS Alameda Esplanade and Los Angeles Streets Improvements Projects at L.A. Union Station. The project area for those two projects is on Alameda and Los Angeles Streets only. The fountain is not a part of the projects under Caltrans' authority. Your comments do not raise any issues related to the Environmentally Sensitive Area/Archaeological Monitoring Area (ESA/AMA) Action Plan for Metro's Alameda and Los Angeles Streets Improvements Project. Therefore, I recommend that you direct your comments to Metro, FRA, and/or the City of Los Angeles.

Regards,

Kip

Caprice "Kip" Harper

Associate Environmental Planner

PQS Principal Investigator--Prehistoric Archaeology &
PQS Principal Architectural Historian
Caltrans - District 7 (Los Angeles)
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NOTE: Teleworking until further notice.

From: LA Union Station HS <laushs@earthlink.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2022 2:12 AM
To: Harper, Kip@DOT <Caprice.Harper@dot.ca.gov>
Cc: Wiggins <wigginss@metro.net>
Subject: Comments From LAUSHS on Metro Esplanade Project & LA ART Cable Car

EXTERNAL EMAIL. Links/attachments may not be safe.

October 10, 2022

Ms. Kip Harper
Associate Environmental Planner
CalTrans

Dear Ms. Harper,

This letter is to inform you that the Los Angeles Union Station Historical Society (LAUSHS) Board of Directors, a non-profit, Section 106 historic preservation consultant for Los Angeles Union Station, a National Historic Landmark, has voted to campaign against Los Angeles Aerial Rapid Transit (LA ART), a for-profit cable car development, aka "Frank McCourt's Gondola," that plans to link LA Metro's Los Angeles Union Station with Dodger Stadium where Mr. McCourt owns one-half of the parking lot and leases the other half from the Los Angeles Dodgers, and LA Metro's "Esplanade Project" that our Board believes to be an "accommodation" for LA ART and the Olvera Street Merchants Association. Our Board believes that the proposed LA ART "futuristic" Union Station Terminal on Alameda Street and LA Metro's adjacent "Esplanade Project" will blight the very historic, architecturally significant facade of Union Station which itself could be endangered Union Station and its patrons if helicopters from the nearby Los Angeles Police Department's Hooper Memorial Heliport airport become entangled in LA ART's overhead cables. Furthermore, our Board opposes LA Metro's planned removal of all "Disabled Parking", without public hearings, from the same location to accommodate it's "Esplanade Project's" so-called "water feature" (aka a water fountain) which itself would be contrary to water conservation policy. Even if the water feature recalculates its water at least 10% will be lost to evaporation day after day after day.

Consequently, it is only right that our Board present the reasons why it has taken these positions. Until now, our Board has steadfastly refused to take sides in these major multi-million-dollar schemes. However, LA Metro and its staff, in our Board's opinion, have obviously taken a supportive role for LA ART, a potential competitor of LA Metro's efficient "Dodger Express" service, as well planning to "gilt the lily" with its Esplanade Project

Among the reasons for our Board's actions are, but not limited to:

A) The LA Metro Board member, Eric Garcetti, who introduced a motion to assist LA ART, without public discussion, and enlist LA Metro staff to "carry LA Art's water" did receive, according to public records, millions of dollars in both political and "behest payments" from Frank McCourt and his various entities and associates, which in our Board's opinion, has the serious appearance of a conflict of interest. Consequently, LA Metro is being sued by the non-profit California Endowment for preventing public participation prior to deciding to "partner" with LA Art.

B) LA Metro Deputy Supervisor, Cory Zelmer, in our Board's opinion, may have falsified an official document--LA ART's Draft Environmental Impact Report--by checking off the box that states there is: "no airport within two miles" of its proposed Union Station Terminal, when he had been informed repeatedly to the contrary by our Board. Moreover, our Board produced evidence that the Los Angeles Police Department's Hooper Memorial Heliport"--variously described as the country's or the world's busiest airport for rotary-winged aircraft (aka helicopters)--is about one-third of a mile from proposed LA ART's proposed Union Station Terminal. Moreover, our Board reminded LA Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins and her Deputy Zelmer that according to the Los Angeles Police Department, CalTrans, the California Public Utilities Commission, the Federal Aviation Administration and the 8th U.S. Court of Appeals all "heliports" are "airports." The fact that some airports are restricted to helicopters and others open to both helicopter aircraft and fixed-wing aircraft (passenger airplanes) does not change the simple fact that all "heliports" are "airports."

C) Contrary to the assurances made to our Board, by CEO Stephanie Wiggins, Deputy Zelmer and LA ART, no meeting has been organized between them and our Board to explain the difference of opinions concerning the nature of LAPD's Hooper Memorial Heliport airport.

D) LA Metro has forbidden our Board's examination of the only known scale model of Los Angeles Union Station's vicinity, because of, in our Board's opinion, a subterfuge that the model, dating from the former Union Station owner--the Santa Fe Railway--is now dated by simply by age and thus unacceptable, and furthermore the sharing of the model with our Board would be somehow "a conflict of interest" even though our Board previously had access to the model in years past. However, our Board's use of the model does not depend on the date of the model buildings per se but only the juxtaposition of Alameda Street and Union Station which has not changed at all since the station was opened in 1939. Consequently, at a loss for options, our Board asked LA ART to produce model given its great resources, but LA ART never responded. This "shadow play," in our Board's opinion, is being performed by LA Metro and LA ART to obfuscate the issues and delay public criticism in favor of LA ART and contrary to the public weal. Furthermore, since the model is public property its use should be continued by our Board and the public so it can be compared it to LA ART's distorted wide-angle artist's renderings of its proposed "futuristic-style" Union Station Terminal with Los Angeles Union Station's monumental "Hispanic-Art Deco style." Cable car rides belong in San Francisco and Disneyland, not in front of our beautiful "Cathedral Of Transportation.

E) In our Board's opinion LA ART is designed to compete with LA Metro's "Dodger Express," a low-fare, highly efficient service that could be even better if Metro switched to modern natural gas and/or battery-powered motor coaches funded by the savings from not building its Esplanade Project.

F) LA Metro's proposed Esplanade Project, according to LA Metro persons--who remain anonymous for the sake of their careers--will be funded by so-called "overlap money" that was "peeled-off" LA Metro's defunct "LINK-US" project that was rejected because of our Board and the public's opposition. According to a former LA Metro professional, the Esplanade fountain will likely attract more disadvantaged "street denizens" seeking showers," contrary to LA Metro policy. The Esplanade's "water feature" (aka "fogging" water fountain) in the opinion of our Board is designed to cool-off future LA ART and "Olvera Street" customers as they walk

between Union Station, LA ART's Terminal and the circa 1930's "Hispanic" Olvera tourist attraction. (While Olvera Street's right-of-way and some of its structures are historic, the "Olvera Street" attraction was developed by a wife and husband real estate team that went on to develop Los Angeles' current "Chinatown" tourist attraction. (Alas, historic Chinatown was demolished in a racist bid to rid Los Angeles of the Chinese who settled here, in part, after building the railroad to Los Angeles. Los Angeles Union Station was then built on top of old Chinatown's rubble.) This explains why Union Station is about a mile from downtown when railway stations were traditionally located in the heart of downtown. Furthermore, erecting the Esplanade water fountain while semi-desert Los Angeles is experiencing its worst drought in recorded history, flies in the face of the State of California's policy to lessen climate change. One only needs to recall the classic Los Angeles-based movie "Chinatown" to understand what our Board believe's drives LA ART and the Esplanade Project. Or to paraphrase the immortal Yogi Berra, "It's 'Chinatown' (the movie) all over again."

For the above reasons, but not necessarily only because of them, The LAUSHS Board of Directors has reluctantly voted to oppose construction of LA ART and LA Metro's "Esplanade Project."

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas R. Savio
Executive Director
Los Angeles Union Station Historical Society

Cc: LAUSHS Board of Directors and members
Stephanie Wiggins, LA Metro CEO