



August 20, 2020

Via Email

Re: LA Union Station Forecourt and Esplanade Improvements - FEIR Addendum 2

Dear Chair Garcetti,

Central City Association represents a coalition of businesses, nonprofits and trade associations with a shared commitment to the vibrancy of Downtown Los Angeles (DTLA) and increasing investment in the region more broadly. A key component of this vision is an accessible, walkable and welcoming experience for residents, visitors and workers travelling from near and far.

As defined in the 2018 Final EIR (FEIR), the Metro LA Union Station (LAUS) Forecourt and Esplanade Improvements project will improve the DTLA experience by prioritizing connectivity, convenience and safety; increasing desirable public space; and facilitating alternatives to driving by providing infrastructure that enables more walking and bicycling. The project's identified priorities also advance economic development, public health and sustainability goals in the City of Los Angeles.

While the approved project advances these goals and priorities, we are concerned that certain proposed modifications run counter to the project's stated priorities as well as Metro's Vision 2028 and the City of Los Angeles' Vision Zero policy. We ask you to reconsider the following aspects of Addendum 2 and move forward with the existing provisions outlined in the Board approved 2018 FEIR.

Left-Turn Access to Alameda Street

Addendum 2 proposes keeping the existing eastbound Los Angeles Street left-turn lane to northbound Alameda Street out of concern that drivers would not comply with the no left-turn signaling and make illegal left turns at the intersection. The approved project proposed removing this lane to eliminate a movement that would conflict with the raised crosswalk and would create a traffic queue along Los Angeles Street for those waiting to turn left.

We cannot plan projects nor design streets around the possibility that drivers will not comply with the rules of the road. Drivers, like pedestrians and cyclists, must be responsible for following the City's rules and regulations. Keeping the existing left-turn lane puts people driving and people walking at odds. If this turn lane remains, pedestrians using the raised crossing would have a shortened amount of time to cross Alameda Street while navigating the threat of cars turning left into the crossing. This dynamic creates a dangerous and uncomfortable experience for pedestrians. This pathway is a direct connection between LAUS, the region's transportation hub, and the highly walkable El Pueblo District. Pedestrians should feel safe and welcomed as they move to and from these landmark locations without threat from drivers turning left. **We request that the existing eastbound Los Angeles Street left-turn lane be eliminated as designated in the approved project.**

Pedestrian-Supportive Infrastructure

As defined in the 2018 FEIR, the pedestrian and cyclist crossing on Alameda Street would be a 50-foot-wide raised crossing that connects the LAUS Forecourt and Esplanade to the Los Angeles Street pathway and the El Pueblo District. We are concerned that the modified project reduces the width of the crossing to 37 feet and lowers the platform height to three inches. These design changes again prioritize cars over

Comment Number 15



other transportation modes by reducing crossing space for pedestrians and cyclists while expanding street space for cars to queue and move more quickly over the crossing.

Changes to the crossing combined with reduction in the number of mature trees that provide much-needed shade to those on foot, bikes and scooters would again erode the project's intent of providing a great public space and encouraging active transportation alternatives. **We request that the designs to the crossing remain consistent with the approved project and that every effort to provide additional tree canopy be made.**

The LAUS Forecourt and Esplanade Improvements project has undergone extensive study and community outreach. Successful implementation that reflects the priorities of this project will lead to a transformative public space that encourages active transportation and alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles while celebrating Los Angeles' surrounding historical landmarks. We thank you for your consideration and ask you not to accept modifications that fall short of meeting this project's intended outcomes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Lall".

Jessica Lall
President & CEO
Central City Association of Los Angeles

cc: Councilmember-elect Kevin de León
Supervisor Hilda Solis
Commissioner Teresa Villegas, Board of Public Works