



August 25, 2020

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Elizabeth Carvajal, Senior Director
Countywide Planning & Development
One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop 99-23-4
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

SUBJECT: Union Station Forecourt and Alameda Esplanade Project Changes

Dear Ms. Carvajal,

The Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition (LACBC) is concerned by the latest design sketches proposed of the planned changes to the Union Station Forecourt and Alameda Esplanade project. The project itself is a tremendous opportunity for Metro and the City of Los Angeles to partner on their commitment to making a key transportation, cultural, and historical hub for the region more mobility and pedestrian friendly, but the most recent changes seem to be a step backwards from many of the stated goals laid out for the project.

LACBC is excited that a number of proposed changes, such as the dual-direction sidewalk-level bike lane along Los Angeles St, but these elements on their own do not create an inviting enough environment to encourage more people to consider alternative transportation options to and from Union Station. For example, the current design calls for the elevated crosswalk, which would have previously been a 50-foot wide speed mitigating 8-inch elevated table, to be reduced to an insufficient 37-foot wide, 3-inch grading that not only does little for speed reduction and pedestrian visibility, but also creates a nuisance to drivers. This design flaw fails to serve the needs of every modality. If the main interest is in slowing down traffic along Alameda to ensure a safe crossing at this critical intersection, then the original design meets the stated goals of "prioritiz[ing] connectivity, convenience, and safety for the most vulnerable users (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit patrons and community stakeholders) to safely navigate to and from the project site."

Another change in the recent design that is counter to the intent of the project is the reduction in shade trees along Alameda Street. It is our understanding that this decision was made due to cost constraints around reconfigurations to existing pipes. However, the new design does not address the impact that a lack of shade in the area poses to pedestrians and shared-mobility as well as personal mobility users navigating the area. If the city is unable to incorporate additional trees, then additional shade structures should be considered in order to increase the comfort for all community members using the space. The lack of shade in Southern California's average of 284 days of sunshine makes the latest changes less effective at meeting the stated goal of "Facilitat[ing] alternatives to driving by providing infrastructure that enables more walking and bicycling."

Finally, the proposed changes result in a disjointed and potentially unsafe bike path along the Alameda Esplanade that greatly increases the potentially dangerous mixing of pedestrians, cyclists, and cars at the intersection. The current design shows the dedicated bi-directional bike lane on the East side of Alameda St cutting off quite some distance from the intersection in order to accommodate a right turn late for motor vehicle traffic on the South side of the intersection. This design forces cyclists to intermingle with other traffic while still on the sidewalk, creating a dangerous mix of pedestrians and cyclists as well as creating

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opportunities for cars to fail to see cyclists on the sidewalk. This design fails to meet the stated goal of "Prioritiz[ing] connectivity, convenience, and safety for the most vulnerable users (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit patrons and community stakeholders) to safely navigate to and from the project site." We strongly encourage Metro and the City of LA to reexamine the design of this location in order to reduce the potential for dangerous collisions. If this intersection itself cannot be reconfigured, then we ask that right turns on red not be allowed and that the signal timing be adjusted to allow for safe bike/mobility/pedestrian crossing that does not create conflict with motor vehicle traffic.

LACBC raises these issues in an effort to encourage Metro to work with the City of Los Angeles to find more creative and innovative solutions to improve the conditions for walking and biking at the heart of one of the regions most historically and culturally significant sites. We understand that there are many considerations that go into these kinds of projects, but must stand by our conviction that if Metro and the City of Los Angeles prioritized the movement of people over the movement of cars, we could all work together to transform Los Angeles into a region that is celebrated as among the most livable and accessible in the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eli Akira Kaufman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eli Akira Kaufman
Executive Director
Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition