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Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez
City Hall
200 N. Spring Street, Room 460
Los Angeles, CA 90012

May 19, 2024
via email

Argyle Civic Assn.
Beachwood Canyon NA
Bel-Air Assn.
Bel-Air Hills Assn.
Bel Air Knolls Property Owners
Bel Air Skycrest Property Owners
Benedict Canyon Association
Brentwood Hills Homeowners
Brentwood Residents Coalition
Cahuenga Pass Property Owners
Canyon Back Alliance
Crests Neighborhood Assn.
Dixie Canyon Assn.
Doheny-Sunset Plaza NA
Franklin/Hollywood West Res.
Franklin Hills Residents Assn.
Friends of Walnut Canyon
Highlands Owners Assn.
Hollywood Dell Civic Assn.
Hollywood Heights Assn.
Hollywoodland HOA
Holmby Hills Homeowners Assn.
Kagel Canyon Civic Assn.
Lake Hollywood HOA
Laurel Canyon Assn.
LFIA (Los Feliz)
Mountaingate
Mt. Olympus Property Owners
Mt. Washington Homeowners All.
Nichols Canyon NA
Oak Forest Canyon HOA
Oaks Neighborhood Assn.
Outpost Neighborhood Assn.
Pacific Palisades Res. Assn.
Residents of Beverly Glen
Save Coldwater Canyon!
Save Our Canyon
Shadow Hills POA
Sherman Oaks HOA
Studio City Residents Assn.
Sunset Hills HOA
Sunshine Hills Residents Assn.
Upper Mandeville Canyon Assn.
Upper Nichols Canyon NA
Whitley Heights Civic Assn.

Re: Dodger Stadium Gondola - Oppose

Dear CM Hernandez:

The Hillside Federation, representing 45 resident associations with 250,000 constituents spanning the Santa Monica Mountains, voted at its April meeting to oppose the approval of the LA ART project (Project) to build an aerial tram from Union Station to Dodger Stadium. The EIR submitted for the project is hopelessly inadequate.

The Project purports to provide transportation to Dodger Stadium to reduce the impact of game-day traffic on the neighborhood. A study by UCLA found that the gondola will likely take a relatively small number of cars off the street. A gondola just isn't an appropriate means of transportation to an event where 50,000 people arrive at the same time and leave at the same time.

The gondola will not just operate on the approximately 80 game days; it will operate year round and all day long. Frank McCourt is counting on income from tourists taking the amusement park gondola ride to whatever he develops on the stadium parking lots. He has mentioned several ideas that he has for developing the parking lots around Dodger Stadium, which he still owns. It might be sports related. It might be entertainment and shops similar to Universal's City Walk. No one knows what he is planning. Nor was the environmental impact of any development analyzed in the EIR. You can't know the impact if you don't know what is planned.

Whatever McCourt builds in the parking lots, it is perfectly obvious that this Project is not a public transportation project. It is private transportation to a private commercial venture which he is trying to get subsidized by the government. If the project runs out on money, who will pay for it?

The Project is not part of Metro's Olympic Games Mobility Plan.

The EIR is flawed and inadequate. Piecemealing is not permitted under CEQA. In spite of that, Metro approved the project.

CHAIRS EMERITI
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Patricia Bell Hearst
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Steve Twining
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Brian Moore
Gordon Murley
Polly Ward

Furthermore the EIR mentioned signage on the project, but without describing what that signage is to be. Will there be flashing digital ads on the inside and outside of the gondolas and on the support towers? Will McCourt sell naming rights to the stations? Will the ads and the stations and support towers be lit? We don't know because nothing was described in the EIR. The DEIR said they would get a Sign District, an approval requiring legislative action, and usually assuring that the area will be saturated with flashing digital billboards. The gondolas will be passing a mere 26 feet above residential apartments. Would you want flashing lights shining in your windows at night? Again, you cannot adequately evaluate the impact of a project on the community if you don't know what the project includes.

The EIR failed to evaluate the impact on the Rim of the Valley Trail. It did not analyze the aesthetic impact on historic Union Station, El Pueblo, Chinatown, or LA State Historic Park.

The project requires removing almost two acres of land from the beloved Los Angeles State Historic Park. LA ART has not yet sought permission from the California State Parks to do this. The community fought long and hard to get a park in this park-poor neighborhood and it has become a point of pride providing a welcoming view of downtown Los Angeles and open space to play. The proposed station would destroy the current entrance to the park.

The project will also require the removal of about 30 mature trees just to build the station. Many, many more trees would be lost under the path of the gondola. This comes at a time when everyone is being urged to plant trees to fight climate change. Of course they claim they will mitigate the loss by planting trees at a 4:1 ratio. One must remember that it takes about 70 years for trees to grow to the size of the ones that were removed.

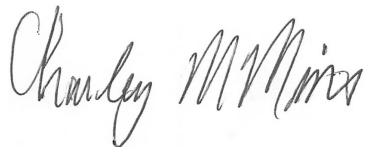
The Project will require multiple permits from a variety of city and state agencies. Although the Project is located within the Santa Monica Mountains Zone, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the trustee agency, was not notified of the project.

Why did Metro agree to act as the lead agency for a private project? Metro's lead is totally inappropriate. It is the City which will have the major role.

One cannot ignore the most obvious objection to the Project. When Frank McCourt owned the Dodgers his mismanagement of the team forced the Dodgers into bankruptcy in 2011. Why would anyone in the City support any Frank McCourt project? Once burned, twice shy.

The Hillside Federation respectfully requests that the approval of the flawed EIR be withdrawn and that the City be designated the lead agency. We further request that the entire Project be abandoned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charley Mims". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charley Mims

cc: Mayor Bass
CM Heather Hutt, Transportation Comm. Chair