

January 17, 2023

VIA EMAIL LAART@metro.net; zelmerc@metro.net

Subject: Public Comment – Los Angeles Aerial Rapid Transit (LA ART) Project DEIR

Cory Zelmer
Deputy Executive Officer
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop 99-22-6
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Zelmer and Metro,

I am writing this letter in OPPOSITION to the Los Angeles Aerial Rapid Transit Project ("The Gondola" to Dodger Stadium, or "The Gondola Project"). The following are a list of concerns that I would like to add to my previous comment letters:

Process/Transparency

By allowing this project to move forward to environmental review without a feasibility study, Metro has allowed Frank McCourt to bully our community. It's hard to describe the impact of this. The gondolas would fly directly over my neighborhood. The 98ft tall Broadway Junction would be noisy and imposing. One of my neighbors has said that she has had a lot of anxiety about this project, about the uncertainty of it coming into our neighborhood.

The following is a speech I gave at a "convening" to introduce a number of community organizations to the gondola project and our efforts to organize against it. I hope it provides a sense of the impact that this project has already had on our community:

I'm a resident on a street called Savoy that's on the other side of Broadway from this park. My sister and I became homeowners here 10 years ago. We got lucky after two years of searching and bidding wars. Our mom has always encouraged us to own, to have that security and stability, and we love our house. It's over 125 years old, and we've spent many years working on it, and making it our home.

But even more important than the house itself, we've become a part of the community. Many of my neighbors have been here for decades. There are families raising their kids here, seniors who walk and take the bus, some who speak a little English, some none at all. It's a neighborhood where people grow and share fruit and vegetables. When the LA Times reporter was here, my 95 year old neighbor would not let her leave without a bag of vegetables. Some of our neighbors gave us rice dumplings a couple of weeks ago when it was good luck to eat them. It's a neighborhood where people look out for each other.

Living here, there's Dodger traffic, high school traffic, even concerts in this park. But those things we sort of expect and can deal with. What we never expected was that a billionaire would want to build a massive gondola project over us, and be given a fast pass by Metro to do it.

Four years ago, in 2018 when the gondola was first announced, it was just a concept. No route was proposed. But the next time we heard about it was two years later, with the notice of preparation for the EIR. McCourt's company decided on their two routes, both over my neighborhood, and they made that decision without holding even one public meeting.

I guess maybe McCourt didn't want us to know about his plan to invade our neighborhood with his urban gondola experiment. His people like to compare these gondolas to those in South America, but these would be much larger, with 40-person cabins swooping over us all day long, all year long, and very late at night. They would go directly over us, only 40 feet above our roof. How would you like to live under that?

Real estate is a big business, but some of us just want to live in our homes, and have some peace, security and stability in our community. Crazy projects like this threaten all of that. It's like we can't even own our little part of our neighborhood. We're at the mercy of a billionaire who can force his project on us.

Even today, there's still no feasibility study. All we have are McCourt's promises that this system will be safe, quiet, and take thousands of cars off the roads. Personally, I'm getting tired of billionaires making big promises they clearly can't keep, when it's all of us in the community who would live with the consequences.

People have told me, "You can't fight it. The people behind this are too rich and powerful. Just negotiate and get what you can." But I look at it another way. I shouldn't be bullied into selling my home and losing my community. I shouldn't be told, "This gondola is happening, so you can either sell and leave, or you can live under it." I don't want to be threatened or intimidated.

We are a lower income community, a community with many non-English speakers, a lot of renters. McCourt probably figured we wouldn't have the resources to fight him in court, and in some ways that might be true. But I'm grateful that The California Endowment is fighting back with their lawsuit. I'm also grateful for any allies who will join us in this fight. I'm grateful that you are here today, because I know that by joining forces we can be stronger than McCourt ever thought.

Thank you.

Privacy

A gondola cabin approaching my home on Savoy Street would have a view looking into my living room window, and then into my bedroom if the bedroom door is open. You could literally see my bed. This is when the gondola is approaching my home, not when it is directly over my property. This is why my neighbors and I need more information about the "smart glass" system and how it would be

implemented. When or where would the windows of the gondola cabins automatically fog up, and which windows would actually fog up. I imagine that LA ART would like to keep this to a minimum because it would be annoying and disconcerting for gondola passengers if the windows are constantly fogging up. Would the gondola operator be able to disable this feature easily, and how would we file a complaint if we notice it's not working?

Future development

The preferred alignment would fly within my air rights at 451 Savoy St. However, The Gondola is a private company's project, and private companies cannot use eminent domain. This suggests that Design Option A is the only viable alternative because we are not transferring our air rights to The Gondola Project. However, Design Option A crosses over the airspace of Cathedral High School, a historic property. Has the high school given permission to use their airspace for this project?

Even if this design option is chosen, which does not require the airspace directly over my property, The Gondola could still affect my ability to build or rebuild on my property should the need arise (natural disaster, fire, a gondola catastrophe, etc.). It would be detrimental to the value of any upper floor units that would have windows at approximately gondola level as they pass by our property. It could also prevent the use of a crane or other tall equipment to assist in the construction.

Noise Study

In the noise analysis, the noise from the LA ART gondola stations is estimated using a model developed by Rossi in 2011. I am requesting an explanation of this model and its limitations that a lay person can understand. Although a list of assumptions is provided, there's not really a discussion about the soundness of these assumptions.

I'm concerned that the noise analysis underestimates the noise from the gondola cabins. People tend to be drunk or rowdy after Dodger games and events. This will create more noise than inside the gondola cabins that are flying over our homes until midnight than is described in the DEIR. There will not only be the average and consistent noise, but also the hooting and hollering that is disturbing to peaceful enjoyment of our homes, and shouldn't be averaged out in the noise analysis. The DEIR also should account for peak noise from a person screaming in the cabin.

If we're comparing transit systems, the Portland system does not run as late and serves people who are going to a hospital. That's a very different situation. The LA ART Gondola would serve a major events stadium AND flies low over a residential neighborhood AND will operate until midnight, possibly later in order to accommodate events that end late, such as the Elton John concert. For this reason, cabins need more soundproofing than glass that is similar to automobile glass.

The Elton John concert ended at 11:15pm. I am skeptical that for an event like that, the operator of the gondola would really stop running the system at midnight. This project would put a noisy station in the middle of a residential neighborhood and fly cabins with rowdy people very low my neighborhood. That is a lot of noise and disturbance to introduce into a residential neighborhood that includes children and seniors and many single family homes that are over 100 years old that don't have modern soundproofing. My home is 127 years old, and my neighbor's home is 131 years old.

Los Angeles State Historic Park

The DEIR does not include any renderings showing the Broadway Junction as viewed from inside LA State Historic Park. Given that it sits on the bluff on Broadway, and is 98ft tall, this will be a huge part of the view. There is currently nothing of this size and scale on Broadway next to the park.

Reliability and Safety

The 3S gondola in Toulouse, France has not been reliable so far. It broke down 5 times in the first month, and then went off-line for two weeks only three months after opening, to perform their annual maintenance. Then it broke down again two months later. It broke down one time and left a teenage boy stuck in the hot cabin for 1 hour. It broke down again last week, on January 10, 2023, because of a computer malfunction. This is not yet proven technology for public or urban transit. Teleo has a much smaller rated capacity. A larger capacity system, as proposed for LA ART, is probably even harder to maintain.

Alpine Tower

Taking another lane from Alameda for the Alpine tower seems shortsighted. This takes away space on Alameda street for this project that could be put to better use, such as a bike lane or bus lane. Chinatown has practically no bike lanes.

Land Use Compatibility

I am not aware of any other 3S gondola systems with **open air** stations or junctions that are situated in a residential neighborhood and this close to homes. This seems like an incompatible use that would be incompatible with the City of LA's land use and zoning. Yet in the draft EIR, LA ART claims that this project is compatible with the City's land use policies. This seems highly unlikely to us, especially because representatives from LA ART made public comments to the City Planning Commission asking for the Downtown Community Plan to consider provisions for aerial transit.

I would like to include this document in the record for the DEIR for this project: "Gothenburg – Cable Car Best Practices Report." This report from 2016 has a review

of 3S Gondola systems and considerations for implementing such systems with an intermediate station. The following are excerpts from the report, which I believe are relevant to the DEIR for the LA ART Gondola to Dodger Stadium

(https://www2.trafikkontoret.goteborg.se/resourcelibrary/underlagsrapport_best-practices.pdf):

“To address this question, CCC compiled and documented all tricable detachable gondolas (3S) in the world. It was found that at the time of this report's writing (January 2016), only thirteen 3S systems were operational while six 3S cable cars were in the various stages of planning and construction.”

“However, only two 3S systems are built with mid-stations. This suggests that it is very challenging to directly address best practices for 3S systems with upper floor mid-stations. To further compound this challenge, Gothenborg's cable car system is still undergoing planning and review and therefore, specific design specifications of the system (i.e. location of multi-storey stations, location of return/drive station and etc) were not disclosed to the Consultants. As such, CCC can only discuss and answer the aforementioned question and best practices for upper level gondola stations in generalities.”

<i>Operational Challenges</i>	<i>Comment / Description</i>
<i>Location of Drive vs Return Stations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Station will need to be designed appropriately to handle the forces/stresses applied onto building depending on the final locations of drive and return stations.</i> ● <i>Return stations have less infrastructure components while drive stations have more function-related components (i.e. main drive machinery, auxiliary motors, diesel generator)</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive stations are generally built over two floors. The machinery room is often times built beneath the station to reduce noise.
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<p><i>Accessibility Requirements</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure universal access, many transit agencies now require elevator access for above ground stations. The number and height of elevator systems can add sizable costs and design complexities to a project (i.e. space requirements for elevators). For instance, multi-storey stations may require up to four elevators to provide sufficient service in order to provide access to both sides of the platform. It is also needed in an event that one malfunctions, there's a backup elevator.
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<p><i>Changing Heavy Machinery and Parts</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For multi-level stations, a strategy to change heavy machinery and parts (i.e. gearboxes, motors and etc) will be required in case parts are broken • For instance, if a station is 4 storeys high, project proponents must design and have strategies in place to remove and deliver machinery
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“High ridership cable cars must be built with sufficient loading space throughout the station. Poor queuing strategies may reduce passenger satisfaction and safety.”

“The Funivia del Renon is one of the few, if not only, 3S cable cars with a loading/unloading platform built on the second floor. Unfortunately, due to its popularity during high season, low capacity, poor queuing strategy and limited station footprint, this results in an overflow of passengers queuing haphazardly along the staircase.”

“However, sensitively incorporating a 3S cable car into an elevated mixed-use building adds complexity to a project. Designers must deal with issues related to noise, vibration, space availability and perhaps most importantly, access.

A loading platform located many storeys above ground level will exacerbate this problem and will require an accompanying system of elevators, stairs and/or escalators. The capacity of these systems linking to platform can ultimately limit (i.e. bottlenecks) the overall capacity of the cable car.”

Traffic / Transportation:

How would the Dodger Stadium gondola station affect Circulation of Vehicles and pedestrian traffic around the Downtown Gate? Will it cause a bottleneck before and after games? I ask that an analysis of the vehicle circulation around the Dodger Stadium gondola station be done.

If people who are waiting in line for the gondola after a game or event become restless after 1 or 1.5 hours, won't many of them start walking down the road at the Downtown Gate? This seems like a likely outcome. Walkways need to be provided between the Gondola Station and Stadium Way for this purpose. Where there are already sidewalks, they need to be widened, improved, and maintained. This needs to be done regardless of whether there is a ticketing system for people to reserve tickets after games and events, in case the ticketing system goes down.

Will the LA ART Gondola bring more rideshare traffic into my neighborhood, which is close to the Downtown Gate? Residents in some neighborhoods around Dodger Stadium have reported rideshare drivers using their neighborhoods as waiting areas, and noted that the rideshare companies actually encourage it by paying them a bonus. Will this happen in my neighborhood? There needs to be mitigation for this likely impact. This is just one example of how this gondola project would likely bring more traffic, congestion, and pollution into our neighborhoods, not less.

Aesthetics



StopTheGondola
@stopthegondola



LA ART says that the gondola to Dodger Stadium will be an iconic tourist attraction for Chinatown & Olvera Street, but the cookie-cutter station designs stick out in our historic districts. They look just like the ARTIC train station in Anaheim & Canary Wharf station in London.



6:11 PM · Jan 5, 2023 · **1,833** Views

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StopTheGondola @stopthegondola · Jan 5



Replying to @stopthegondola

LA ART's gondola towers look like an awkward version of the Portland Tram's towers. Both are concrete, but LA ART's towers lurch over the street, like a tree about to fall down after heavy rain. One tower leans toward Metro Lofts, an apartment building for seniors in Chinatown.



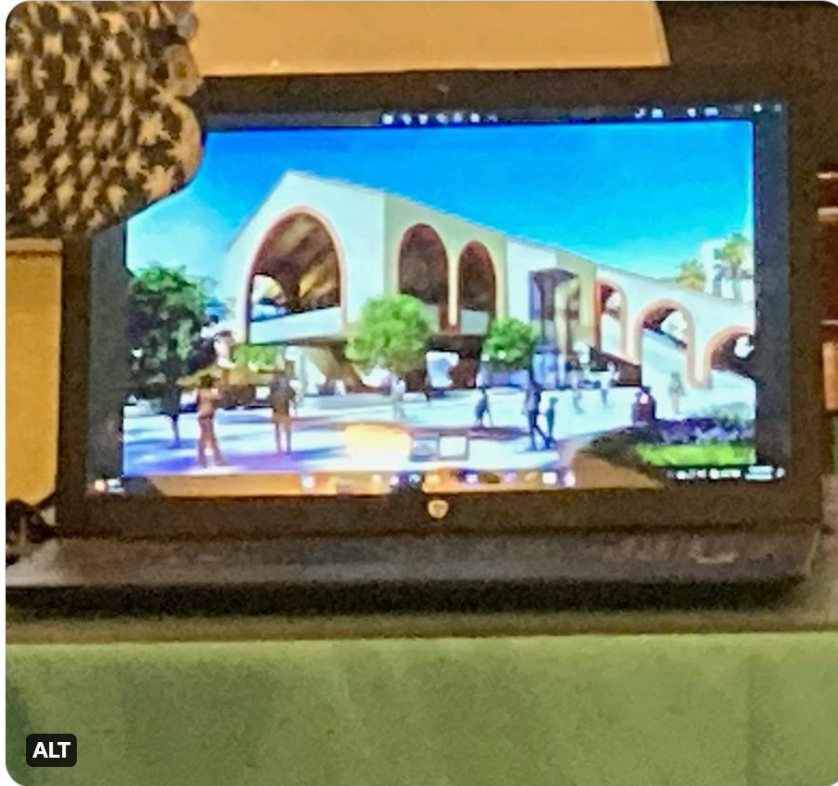
Gondola station and designs should not be cookie cutter or generic. This would be built at the birthplace of our city. LA ART claims this will be iconic, but how is the design iconic? There is no sense of place. Stations look generic and towers are a stark gray concrete. We don't need more gray concrete in our historic neighborhoods. The cabins also appear to be standard cabins.



StopTheGondola @stopthegondola · Jan 4

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At a recent meeting with Olvera Street merchants, LA ART unveiled a redesigned **gondola** station to replace what the merchants called "a covered wagon," "Knott's Berry Farm," & "eyesore for the rest of our lives." This new design is giving us **dingbat vibes**. #StopTheGondola



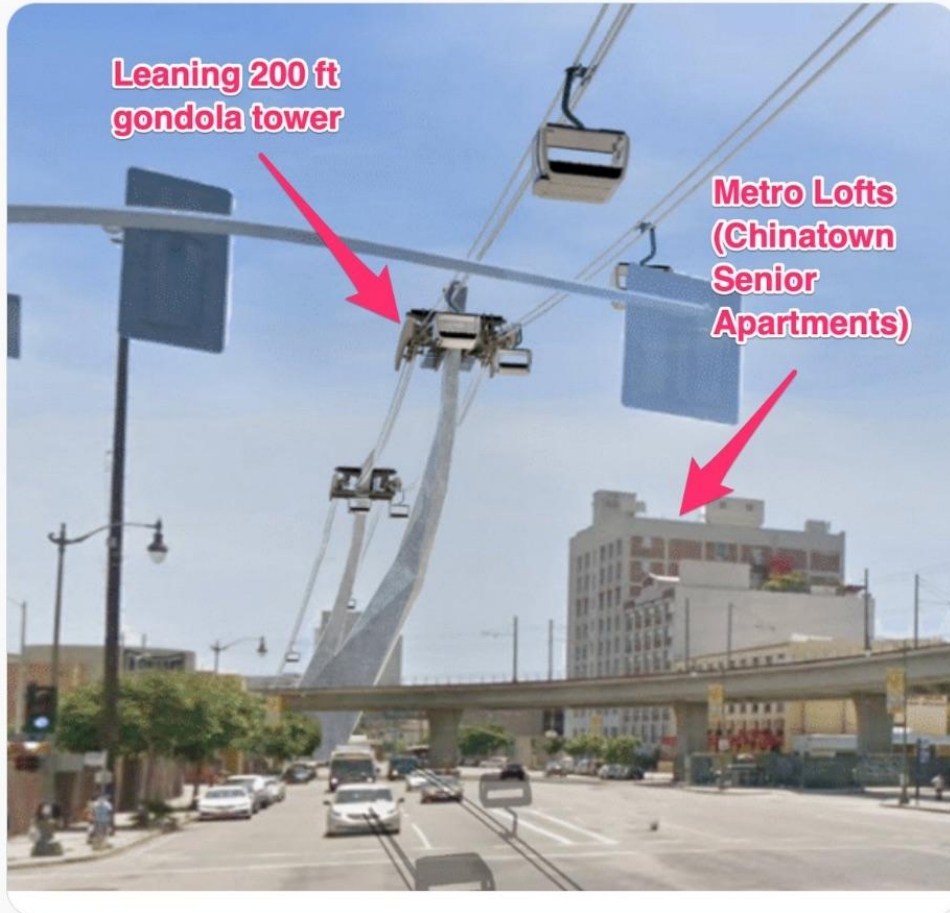
The "improved" station design that was recently presented to a group of El Pueblo merchants looks awkward, and like a dingbat, which is more of a mid century style.



Phyllis Ling @aPhyllisLing · Jan 11

Replying to @racheluranga

Who in their right mind would invite the **erection** of Frank McCourt's **gondola towers** in their neighborhood? stopthegondola.org
[#StopTheGondola](https://twitter.com/StopTheGondola)



The tower leaning towards Metro Lofts looks like it could fall on the building. Even if it's engineered not to, it looks like it could fall down, which is bad Feng Shui. This seems culturally insensitive, considering that many Chinese seniors live at Metro Lofts.

Alternatives

More alternatives should be studied. There are many ways to strengthen or build upon the existing infrastructure. The Yale Street bridge that crosses the 110 FWY

needs more lighting. This would be a benefit to both residents and Dodgers fans. People have long talked about adding stairs and escalators up the hill to Dodger Stadium. They have those in Medellin, Colombia as well.

“How giant outdoor escalators transformed a Colombian neighborhood”

<https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/colombia-medellin-neighborhood/index.html>

“Tear Up the Dodger Stadium Parking Lot”

<https://legal-planet.org/2018/11/02/tear-up-the-dodger-stadium-parking-lot/>

Please also include in the record the following statement that I made at the January 12, 2023 DEIR meeting:

I'm Phyllis. I live over there. The gondola would fly over me and my neighbors. And my house would face the mouth of the noisy Broadway Junction, a 98ft tall turning station.

I think you've seen how this hearing is not right, the way they are taking public comment. It's been like this since the beginning. Trying to hide, and not let it get out about how horrible this project is.

This project is not for us. This project is for Frank McCourt who is a developer, it's for the Olympics, which is for developers, and it's for the politicians who are in the pockets of developers. Frank McCourt wants to build right over us, 40 ft over my neighborhood, as if we're nameless faces. But we're not. We're a real community. I'm glad my sister and my neighbors are here tonight, as well as all of these residents and supporters in the larger community. It's really great to see people show up for each other and speak out.

There have been so many lies about this project from LA ART. But we know what this project is really about. Frank McCourt wants to build a

giant complex up at the Dodger Stadium parking lot. It's not a secret. If he has a permanent transit stop, that would give him incentives to build a massive development there.

This project makes no sense. At max capacity, it can only handle a fraction of the attendance at Dodger Stadium, and how do you think they're getting to the gondola? By driving, most of them. You're only saving the last 1.2 miles. Maybe some will take transit, these are probably the same people who would have taken the Dodger Stadium Express, which we support. Let's support expanding and electrifying the Dodger Stadium Express, better enforced bus lanes, more bike lanes, better sidewalks, and an escalator up the hill for pedestrians. Not this boondoggle gondola.

It doesn't help traffic.

It doesn't connect us to parks or transit.

Those are lies.

What it does is turn Chinatown into Dodger Stadium's parking lot. It takes away parking for businesses, it increases noise with this gondola running constantly, 18 hours per day, 6am to 12am. Not to mention the invasion of privacy.

This gondola mows down the entrance of LA State Historic Park. That's OUR space. The whole point of a park in a city is for people who live in a dense urban environment, to get away from all that and to have some peaceful enjoyment in open space with open skies. It wasn't so that Frank McCourt could fly 5-ton metal cabins 26 ft over our heads.

McCourt wanted to divide us in my neighborhood, buy us out, buy some of my neighbors out, so that we would quietly go away. He wanted to fly

under the radar with this project, keep everything hush hush, and get the project approved before anyone knew what was going on. In 2018, they said it could be running by 2022. Remember that?

My neighbors and I never even had a say about this project going over our neighborhood. And now Climate Resolve is putting their greenwashing slime all over it? It's disgusting!

You'll hear some people say, "but the gondola will be so great, it will be iconic." Yeah, it'll be iconic alright. An iconic monument to injustice.

We're here to call it for what it is. A scam. And a shame. If you're standing up and supporting this, you need to wake up. You're teaming up with Frank McCourt who bankrupted the Dodgers. You're teaming up with those who erased the original Chinatown, and evicted the residents of La Loma, Bishop and Palo Verde to build Dodger Stadium. You're choosing that side of history. And you really don't have to.

We're speaking out because we know the gondola sounds good at first, in theory — it's like, oh it would be so cool and fun — but there's a whole lot more to it. Some people, I think a lot of people, the ones who aren't greedy bastards, do come around. But we need everyone's help, so thank you for being here. We can do this together. Stop The Gondola!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Ling