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January 13, 2026

Mitali Gupta,
Project Manager,
Mobility Corridors & Countywide Planning,
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

VIA EMAIL: lariverpath@metro.net

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the LA River Path Project

To Whom It May Concern:

At a regular public meeting on **January 13, 2026**, the Board of Directors of the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council ("DLANC") voted to provide the following comments below:

The [LA River Path Project](#) represents a transformational opportunity for the Los Angeles River, serving as the critical link that will finally bridge the existing 8-mile gap between the Griffith Park/Elysian Valley segments and the lower river trails. This project is more than a recreational trail; it is a vital piece of regional infrastructure that will connect diverse communities, provide much-needed access to open and active recreation space, and serve as a primary transit component for alternative mobility modes between neighborhoods that have historically been bisected by the River's industrial corridor.

While DLANC recognizes the significant constraints and the likely necessity of a phased implementation approach, given the technical complexities surrounding structural design, right-of-way acquisition, and intricate easement negotiations, we urge the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority ("Metro") to prioritize connectivity. Metro should utilize metrics and an implementation strategy that prioritizes linkages to the existing LA River bike path network first, working systematically from those northern connections to build the network southward into the heart of Downtown Los Angeles (DTLA).

Regarding alignment, DLANC strongly supports options and designs that provide robust access points and linkages on the **western bank of the river**, specifically advocating for **Alternative 1 (the Proposed Project)** and its associated west-bank configurations through the DTLA segments. DLANC believes that a west-bank-heavy alignment will maximize public benefit by bringing the path closer to the density of the Arts District and Little Tokyo, and the growing Downtown Industrial District communities, allowing for enhanced utilization that will ensure the project's long-term success.

To that end, DLANC **strongly encourages** the Metro team to further study and provide integrated design opportunities for future **connection points to secondary streets in Downtown, and connections to 7th Street and Olympic Boulevard**. We specifically advocate for design flexibility that allows for future private infill development along the southern portion of the proposed segments (Segment 2) to provide direct connection points onto the bike path. Increased access points will provide a more equitable and safer experience for users and the surrounding community. Increased activation through these connections creates safer public spaces and provides access to the type of high-quality recreation space that is often severely limited in dense urban environments.

However, as DTLA prepares for significant growth under the Downtown Los Angeles Community Plan, the role of Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS). While the Los Angeles Department of City Planning's (DCP) new requirements for POPS can accelerate alternative open space production, DLANC maintains significant concerns regarding limited public access, the potential exclusion of non-residents or non-tenants, and the challenges of enforcement and private compliance. Connections to the LA River Path must remain **a truly public asset** similar to the California Coastal Act and the Coastal Access program.

Consequently, Metro must analyze and implement resilient urban furniture and amenities that enhance Universal Design principles while ensuring ease of maintenance and replacement to prevent nuisance activity. We specifically request that Metro **study resilient, "smart," and vandal-resistant lighting solutions. Safety remains the primary barrier for many stakeholders in enjoying public space**; as such, lighting is a critical public amenity for equitable access. Furthermore, we recommend the integration of public safety features such as **emergency blue light systems and beacons** to enhance safety along the corridor, particularly for situations involving inclement weather or swift-water emergencies. Regarding wayfinding and interpretive signage, we suggest a strategic and limited application, as the DTLA community has experienced significant challenges with the long-term maintenance and viability of these assets with time.

The success of this project is entirely dependent on the identification of a responsible maintenance entity and a robust Operations and Maintenance (O&M) plan. **DLANC is deeply concerned by the prospect of the City of Los Angeles serving as the primary or overarching responsible maintenance entity**, given its current span of responsibility, competing interests, and documented challenges with existing capital infrastructure maintenance.

Instead, **DLANC recommends that Metro partner with entities such as the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority (MRCA)** to ensure consistency in operations, and include this entity in the Steering Committee. We advocate for an integrated public safety strategy through the use of **MRCA Rangers** across the bike network and coordination with state leaders to **expand the LA River Recreation Zone** to these new segments. Integration with the **LA River Rangers program** is essential to providing the specialized care, safety oversight, and public programming along the river environment.

DLANC appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on this milestone project and looks forward to collaborating with Metro to ensure that the LA River Path becomes a safe, accessible, and world-class asset for all of Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY DLANC BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON JANUARY 13, 2026

Jens Midthun
President,
DLANC

Heera Kapoor
Chair,
DLANC Livability Committee

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Cc: Council District 14 (via email)
Office of the Mayor (via email)
Los Angeles Department of Transportation (via email)
Arts District Little Tokyo Neighborhood Council (via email)
Arts District Business Improvement District (via email)
Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority (via email)