

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: Frank McCourt's Gondolas: What is His Overall Plan? JACK HUMPHREVILLE FEBRUARY 01 2024 LA WATCHDOG - Frank McCourt, the former owner of the Dodgers and the 50% owner of the Dodgers parking lot, Climate Resolve, a respected environmental oriented non-profit, and Zero Emissions Transit, a newly formed non-profit, are planning to construct and operate the 1.2-mile Los Angeles Aerial Rapid Transit system that will use gondolas to ferry 5,000 baseball fans an hour from Union Station to Dodger Stadium with an intermediate stop in the Los Angeles Historic State Park. As part of the approval process, Metro, acting as the lead agency, has prepared an Environmental Impact Report (at McCourt's expense) that will be presented to the Metro Board at an upcoming meeting. Hopefully, the 13 members of the Metro Board, including Mayor Bass who is the Chair and her three appointees, will have reviewed and analyzed the 100-page Executive Summary and the impact on the surrounding communities. (See below.) According to the EIR, the capital cost of the Aerial Rapid Transit system is expected to be in the range of \$500 million. Operating costs are projected to be \$8 to \$10 million a year. Importantly, the sponsors have said that LA-ART will be privately financed and will not rely on any cash or credit support from Metro or any other public entity. This, however, will require the operation to generate at least \$55 million of cash a year, an amount necessary to cover operating expenses of \$10 million, capital costs (principal and interest) of \$35 million to service the \$500 million of bonds, and a cushion demanded by the lenders or investors of at least \$10 million. To generate this level of revenue will require an extraordinary number of full pay riders (Dodger ticket holders ride for free), not only to visit Dodger Stadium and its many events, but to view the many sponsorships envisioned by the promoters. At best, this level of revenue is problematic. The real payoff will be the development of the open space at Dodger Stadium, an idea that was proposed by Frank McCourt when he owned the Dodgers and is most likely part of his game plan now that he owns 50% of the open space. If so, the development of Dodger Stadium adds a level of complexity to the proposed LA-ART that needs to be addressed in an open and transparent manner, including in the EIR. ***** On January 24, local Councilwomen Eunisses Hernandez introduced a motion requesting an updated traffic study for Dodger Stadium. She also requested that the "City Council suspend any action on approving advancements to the LA-ART project contingent upon the results and recommendations of the updated results and recommendations of the updated Dodger Stadium Traffic Assessment." This project also needs to be approved by the City, County, and the State. This project is expected to reduce traffic on games days and cut the emission harmful greenhouse gases. It has been endorsed by many environmental organizations. It has also generated considerable controversy from residents who will be impacted by the noise and loss of privacy because of five-ton gondolas passing overhead every thirty seconds on game nights. The Friends of Elysian Park discussed their opposition in a recent Op-Ed column in the Los Angeles Times, If the Dodger Stadium Gondola is Only the Beginning, What Becomes of Elysian Park as has the Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance.
<https://www.citywatchla.com/la-watchdog/28370-frank-mccourts-gondolas-what-is-his-overall-plan>