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January 28, 2019

Julia Salinas  
Project Manager for Metro  
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Los Angeles River Path Project - Comments

Dear Julia and Metro Project Team,

Friends of the Los Angeles River (FoLAR) has been at the forefront to ensure a publicly accessible and ecologically sustainable Los Angeles River by inspiring River stewardship through community engagement, education, advocacy, and thought leadership. For over 30 years, we have worked to create an enduring vision of the river that acknowledges its legacy as a life-giving waterway and the critical benefits its restoration can bring to the communities that surround it.

The LA River Path Project represents an important opportunity to reconnect neighborhoods to the LA River, complete a 32-mile regional active transportation corridor, and increase the mobility and livability of historically underserved and environmentally burdened communities. We have been involved and following this project for many years, including advocating for the passage of Measure M, which secured funding for this project.

For these reasons, and based on presentations we have seen on this project so far, FoLAR would like to offer the following thoughts:

We believe the LA River Path Project should:

**1. Prioritize an in-channel design that provides direct public access to the LA River**

As we have continued to demonstrate through public engagement events such as our Great LA River Cleanup, public interest in the LA River is high and continues to grow as more people become interested in the river's role in the future resilience, sustainability, and quality of life of our region. Direct public access into the river, not simply to its concrete banks, has been a cornerstone of our efforts to foster stewardship and build a long-standing river movement. In order for this project to live up to the intention that created it, the LA River Path Project should ensure the LA River is a key subject of this project, rather than the background, by

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prioritizing an in-channel design that increases the ability of the public access to the river.

**2. Prioritize a cost-efficient design that maximizes mobility, connectivity, and active transportation benefits to existing communities.**

While the project has the opportunity to provide a 'world-class' bike path that would require significant upfront cost, it also has the opportunity to provide needed mobility, connectivity and active transportation corridor for existing communities who by focusing on an in-channel design. Rather than creating new concrete infrastructure adjacent to the already constrained LA River, the project could utilize the existing channel infrastructure to meet mobility needs more quickly while significantly reducing the upfront and long-term costs of the project.

**3. Prioritize a flexible and resilient design that supports, rather than hinders, future river restoration projects, such as ARBOR and the City of LA's River Revitalization Master Plan.**

The LA River Path Project exists within and adjacent to several areas planned for river restoration such as ARBOR (Reach 6,7,8), LA River Revitalization Master Plan (Chapter 4,5,6) and more recently, the [LA River Downtown Design Dialogue](#) hosted by the City of LA. These efforts seek to expand the river's role in the city beyond its current use as single-purpose grey infrastructure to a multi-purpose, multi-benefit, nature-based approach to improving the sustainability, resilience, and quality of life of the region. Given these projects will require changes to the existing channel infrastructure and acquisition of nearby land, the LA River Path Project should adopt a flexible and resilient design that enables it to support and adapt to these restoration efforts.

**4. Consider extending the LA River Path to the existing in-channel path along the Arroyo Seco**

Connecting the LA River Path Project to the existing path along the Arroyo Seco would improve the mobility and connectivity for several communities along the Arroyo including: Highland Park and Lincoln Heights. This project could substantially increase the service area of the entire pathway by making a simple connection to the Arroyo Seco path.

We hope you will consider these points as this project moves forward. Please feel free to reach out if there is any clarification needed on our comments. We

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greatly look forward to seeing this project executed in a manner that reflects its original vision.

Sincerest regards,



Stephen Mejia  
Policy and Advocacy Manager  
Friends of the Los Angeles River

Cc: Michael Cortez, Manager of Community Relations  
Christina Harrington, Communications Assistant