

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



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In the Matter of the Application of the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority for an order authorizing the construction of a two-track at-grade crossing for the Exposition Boulevard Corridor Light Rail Transit Line across Jefferson Boulevard, Adams Boulevard, and 23rd Street, all in the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, California.

Application 06-12-005
(Filed December 6, 2006)

Application 06-12-020
(Filed December 19, 2006)

Application 07-01-004
(Filed January 2, 2007)

Application 07-01-017
(Filed January 8, 2007)

Application 07-01-044
(Filed January 24, 2007)

Application 07-02-007
(Filed February 7, 2007)

Application 07-02-017
(Filed February 16, 2007)

Application 07-03-004
(Filed March 5, 2007)

Application 07-05-012
(Filed May 8, 2007)

Application 07-05-013
(Filed May 8, 2007)

And Consolidated Proceedings.

OPENING BRIEF OF EXPO COMMUNITIES UNITED

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OPENING BRIEF OF EXPO COMMUNITIES UNITED

In accordance with Rule 13.11 of the Rules of Practice and Procedure of the California Public Utilities Commission (“Commission” or “PUC”) and the schedule established at the prehearing conference held July 19, 2007 in the above-captioned proceeding and memorialized in the July 23, 2007 Ruling of Administrative Law Judge Koss, Expo Communities United (“ECU”) hereby respectfully submits its opening brief in the above-captioned consolidated proceeding.

I. SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Expo Communities United is a coalition of homeowners’ associations along or near the corridor of the Mid-City/Exposition Light Rail Transit Project (“Expo Line”) being constructed by the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority/Metropolitan Transportation Authority (“the Authority”). The coalition consists of Baldwin Neighborhood Homeowners’ Association, Jefferson-Buckingham-Adams-Crenshaw-La Brea-Vineyard Park Neighborhood Association, Expo Neighbors Association, and Baldwin Village Gardens Association. ECU was formed to address concerns about the safety and environmental impacts of the proposed light rail project on the majority-minority communities. ECU is organized to ensure that the proposed Expo Line project adequately addresses safety, noise, traffic congestion, and other community impact issues. This brief clarifies and amends all previous ECU documents and protests.

The question is whether as the responsible agency tasked with maintaining the optimal safety of all railroad crossings, the California Public Utilities Commission is willing to abdicate its responsibility to the people of California. The design in the Flower Street and median street running section of the Expo

Line has proven to be defective based on the accident rate of the Authority's own Blue Line - the deadliest light rail line in the United States. In its 17-year history there have been 88 deaths and more than 790 accidents, 76% of which are in the portion of the line that is identical in design to applications on the Flower Street section and in the median street running section of Exposition Blvd. By approving the proven defective at-grade design the Commission would thereby assume all legal consequences of the predictable accidents.

The Authority's own studies, specifically *Evaluation of the Current Grade Crossing Safety Improvement Program of the Metro Blue Line* (Booz-Allen & Hamilton, 1998), illustrate how conditions that are identical or more intense on the Exposition Corridor, contribute to the Blue Line's astronomical accident rate. Booz-Allen states that one of the major causes of the accidents on the Blue Line is its high ridership, which increases pedestrian and vehicular density near stations. With the completion of the Expo Line to Santa Monica, daily ridership is estimated at 72,000, which will exceed the Blue Line in ridership per mile. The study also states as a factor, high population density areas (including citizens with language, literacy and age issues), which is greatly exceeded by the large volume of "special populations" on the Exposition corridor. The same level of frustration experienced by commercial truck drivers where the Blue Line traverses industrial areas will lead to accidents in the Expo Line's adjacent industrial areas as well. The Authority's callous repetition of the proven defective Blue Line design at the many at-grade crossings in the Exposition corridor is a cause for grave concern on the part of the ECU neighborhoods and Los Angeles.

Additionally, ECU is concerned with the apparent lack of respect the Authority has for the process of safety oversight of its projects. By withholding all crossing decisions until "final design," public oversight of the process is effectively blocked. The Authority has also sought to minimize the Commission's effectiveness and influence over the safety of projects by soliciting authorship of

California Senate Bill 724 (Expo Construction Authority Board Meeting Minutes March 1, 2007), which seeks to shorten the time the Commission has to approve grade crossing applications. What is intended to be a cooperative process between agencies in defense of rail crossing safety in California is constantly being undermined by the Authority. The resulting adversarial nature from the Authority's reticence to "play safe" does not inspire public confidence to say the least.

Perhaps the Commission should take solace in the fact that they are not the only public agency often disrespected by the Authority. Frequent reports by the Authority to legislative staff, legislators and the public fail to accurately characterize the Expo Line risks, including the consistent use of inaccurate and misleading comparisons to the less analogous Gold Line. (The Authority's Exposition Line Transit Project Legislative Staff Briefing Presentation - May 17, 2007)

ECU, the citizens of Los Angeles, and the State of California welcome the state mandated prerogative of the Commission to oversee, intervene, and adjudicate in the interest of grade crossing safety in these proceedings. Therefore, by way of protest, ECU hereby submits the following issues and concerns with the grade crossing applications applied for by the Authority from the Commission. It is the hope of ECU that the deficiencies cited herein will be addressed to the satisfaction of the communities represented by denying the applications, as sought, in favor of below grade crossings. A below grade alignment, either in a trench, cut-and-cover with possible top/down construction, single bored tunnel or twin-bored tunnel, with open cut stations is the only option that would allow the Commission to exercise its obligation as the responsible agency, lest it bare the legal consequences of approving a proven defective unsafe design.

The below grade alignment removes at-grade mitigation requirements and land

costs, provides opportunity for above station development, allows the parkway to be maintained, provides the highest level of safety and efficiency, allows for substantial growth in ridership, addresses federally agreed upon noise and vibration requirements, maintains property values along the corridor, has a higher life cycle cost benefit, and is possible within the existing environmental document.

ECU submits that the Authority has the ability to construct a below grade alignment within it's existing budget by exercising the minimum operable segments construction option in the Authority's Los Angeles Mid-City Westside Transit Corridor - Mid-City/Exposition Light Rail Project Final Environmental Impact Statement Report ("FEIS/R"), which allow them to build from Downtown Los Angeles to two temporary termini, Vermont Avenue/Exposition Blvd (Minimum Operable Segment 1) or Crenshaw Blvd/Exposition Blvd (Minimum Operable Segment 2). (FEIS/R Sections 4.15.1.1 Construction Methods, 4.15.1.2 Phase Implementation, and 2.4.4.2 Partial Operation Construction Option).

Further, ECU submits that the minimal operable segments construction/operations option, "domino effect" (City of San Diego D.03-12-018 PUC at Page 11), in which a grade crossing alignment impacts adjacent crossings (Los Angeles to Pasadena Metro Blue Line Construction Authority D.02-05-047 PUC), and economies of scale, which reduce the overall capital costs of grade separations if a consistent design is adopted, precludes the Commission from approving construction of any individual crossings, until the Commission determines safe solutions at all crossings.

II. SPECIFIC ISSUES

A. Failure of Environmental Documents to Comply with CEQA

In several respects, the Authority's FEIS/R fails to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act.

1. Segmentation

In Laurel Heights Improvement Association of San Francisco, Inc., v. Regents of University of California (1988), the California Supreme Court ruled:

"An EIR must include an analysis of the environmental effects of future expansion or other action if: (1) it is a reasonably foreseeable consequence of the initial project; and (2) the future expansion or action will be significant in that it will likely change the scope or nature of the initial project or its environmental effects."

The environmental impacts of two future expansions were not measured:

a. Phase 2 Extension - Culver City to Santa Monica

The Authority was established by California Senate Bill 504 (Kuehl), for the purpose of completing the Expo Line light rail project from Downtown Los Angeles to Downtown Santa Monica. The Applications before the Commission are to construct Phase 1 of the project from Downtown Los Angeles to Culver City. Phase 2 is expected to be constructed from the Culver City terminus to Downtown Santa Monica. The extension is expected to drastically increase ridership on the line, which will likely require an increase in the frequency of trains in the Phase 1 area to meet travel demands.

b. Crenshaw Light Rail Spur

The possibility of a Crenshaw LRT branch line is identified in FEIS/R, and in the constrained 2001 Long Range Transportation Plan for Los Angeles County (Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority 2001 Long Range Transportation Plan Executive Summary at Pg. 12). Yet, the FEIS/R fails to assess the impacts in the Phase 1 area of the likely 50%-100% additional trains, and thereby increased delays at intersections, forced diversions into residential communities, and other environmental impacts.

2. Environmental Justice

Any evaluation of the environmental impacts in the residential majority-minority South Los Angeles communities compared to the impact in the more affluent City of Culver City show a great disparity in the Authority's design.

ECU, like the Commission believes that optimal safety is obtained through grade separation. However, the level of assumed health risk, along with other severe environmental impacts, such as noise and vibration reveal a clearly lowered mitigation standard applied in the majority-minority South Los Angeles residential communities, compared to the City of Culver City.

The process that led to the disparate design, is clearly stated in the Federal Transit Administration's Record of Decision for the Project:

"The original LPA adopted by the LACMTA Board in 2001 called for at-grade rail crossings at all intersections in the City of Culver City and an at-grade station at Venice/Robertson, which serves as the western terminus of the line. This configuration conflicted with the adopted city General Plan that called for no at-grade crossings and full grade-separation of all crossings in that city.

Primarily for this reason, the City of Culver City opposed the project at the time of the adoption of the LPA in 2001."

After further evaluation, including adoption of the Authority's Grade Crossing Policy for Light Rail Transit in December of 2003, a recommendation of a grade separation of Venice/Robertson when the Expo Line is extended west of Venice/Robertson terminus ("Phase 2") was made:

"As a result, crossings of nearby Washington and National Boulevard will also need to be grade-separated in the future because of their close proximity to Venice Boulevard. The traffic analysis by LACMTA did not concur that a full grade-separated station and crossings of Washington and National Boulevards would be required at this time, if no Venice Boulevard crossing were included in the LPA.

"A compromise agreement was reached in mid-2005 to resolve the above conflict by shifting the Venice/Robertson Station a few hundred feet to the east. This location required no rail crossing of any streets in the City of Culver City, but allowed for a future grade separation to be built if the line is extended past Venice Boulevard as part of a future project."

Building a project to a higher standard in a more political powerful and affluent residential community than poorer ethnic-minority majority South Los Angeles residential communities is a textbook environmental justice violation.

3. Reduced Park Access

a. Rancho Cienega Park

ECU is concerned that the Authority neglected to acknowledge or address the four pedestrian crossings on the north side of Rancho Cienega Park, which will

be closed as a result of the project. This omission led to a failure to consider the impacts to the community of effectively closing access and thus “locking” the second largest park in Los Angeles. The City of Los Angeles suffers from a chronic lack of park space and the amount of park acreage per person in South Los Angeles is the lowest in the city by far, at less than 1/2 acre for 1,000 people. The Authority’s disregard of the importance of access to this park falls well short of the community standard for neighborhood cohesion. The restricted access creates an unacceptable risk of pedestrian intrusion across the tracks. The planned closure of the park’s northern border will create increased traffic at the southern entrance, as more people will choose, in the interest of safety, to drive themselves or their children the additional ½ mile or more diversion. Added traffic, queuing, and parking on surrounding residential streets is likely. By ignoring the historical and current use of the pedestrian crossings to enter the park, across the Expo ROW between La Brea Boulevard and Farmdale Avenue, the Authority is ignoring the needs and standards of the community regarding this resource.

Further, Rancho Cienega Park is designated a CLASS Park:

“The CLASS Parks youth development model is based on an understanding that many of today’s teen problems, including: isolation, substance abuse, educational failures, gang involvement, and criminal activity are symptoms of a crumbling youth development infrastructure.

“As a provider of programs and services, the CLASS Parks program operates 47 youth development sites providing safe and supervised after school and weekend enrichment, educational, vocational, recreation and adventure based recreation programs for youths between the ages of 11 and 15 years.” -City of Los Angeles CLASS Parks website

The very nature and intent of parks is to, in part, provide access to recreational facilities for children. The CLASS Parks program and the shared activities with Dorsey High (2 blocks away) make this park an invaluable community resource for community youth. It is not acceptable to the community standard that access to this community asset be permanently and irrevocably blocked by four at-grade rail crossings. The crossing closures may completely inhibit use of the park by many children, elderly, and those with special needs, who are unable to navigate the extended distance that would be necessary for residents from north of the park.

Furthermore, the hazard of at-grade crossings in this part of the ROW puts hundreds of children at an increased risk of catastrophic injury by closing the pedestrian park entrances currently on quiet residential streets and forcing pedestrian traffic to circumnavigate the park through busy intersections of La Brea Ave/Rodeo Rd, or La Brea Ave/Exposition Blvd.

Additionally, in violation of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), there was no notice or opportunity for public review and comment on these crossing closures and the adverse effects on the activities, features and attributes of the Expo Line project on this park.

ECU maintains that the nature of the crossings and their continued and historical use was never properly addressed and thus no mitigation was designed.

b. Baldwin Hills Recreation Center

ECU, including the Baldwin Hills community, has determined that closing the entrance to Baldwin Hills Recreation Center near the South Dunsmuir Avenue crossing unreasonably blocks neighborhood access from the north and east sides of the park. With only the main southern access open, the park's reasonable use

and enjoyment by the surrounding neighborhood is greatly restricted. The at-grade crossing in this part of the corridor effectively creates a “wall,” blocking communities from the south, which unreasonably challenges neighborhood cohesion. The increased distance park goers must travel to the remaining entrance will create an unacceptable increase in traffic and parking issues in the residential areas surrounding the park. The increased distance necessary to circumnavigate the park to its single entrance will restrict park use by children, the elderly, and those with special needs.

4. Traffic and Residential Growth Projections are Insufficient

ECU submits that the anticipated traffic impact projections are inaccurate and insufficient for the Commission to review. The project’s forecast year is only ten years after the 2010 operation date. This is inadequate for considering the impact of a project whose lifespan is decades longer. Traffic increases projected to 2035 are currently available from the Southern California Association of Governments. Phase 2 is being modeled to this standard, and so too should Phase 1.

Further, deficiencies exist in the limited expectation of growth around the corridor, which will lead to a significant increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic at the crossings and in the neighboring communities as the result of proposed mitigation measures, including street closures.

a. Community Redevelopment Agency Project Areas

The Expo Line will directly pass through and adjacent to major project areas of Los Angeles’ Community Redevelopment Agency (“CRA”). The section around Vermont is in the University Park project area; the Mid-Corridors project area is from Degnan Blvd to Hauser Blvd; and plans currently exist to extend the Normandie 5 project area to the Exposition corridor between Western and

Normandie Avenues.

b. Figueroa Corridor Rezoning

The Los Angeles City Council has approved zoning changes intended to drastically increase the residential density on the Figueroa Corridor from Downtown Los Angeles south to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. allowing the construction of apartments as small as 250 square feet.

c. Exposition Corridor Zoning

Local elected officials commissioned a study that found that profitable development would require increasing the allowable density up to twice what is currently permitted. (Transit 'villages' for L.A.? - LA Daily News - September 3, 2006).

5. Insufficient Accommodations for Disabled Citizens

Along most of the median street-running section of the Expo Line, the 6 foot sidewalks on the south of Exposition sidewalk are two feet narrower than the 8 feet required for Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") compliance.

B. Agency Opposition & Reservations

**1. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
("LACMTA")**

The at-grade crossings of the Expo Line violate the Authority's own Transit Service Policy. (LACMTA Transit Service Policy Section 2.14 Planning Warrants - September 2005). The Planning Warrants, identified in Section 2.14 of the Transit

Service Policy, establish “minimum demand thresholds that are used to identify the most effective transit solution for a particular corridor.” 50,000 total daily boardings per day is the established threshold for “operating 100 percent within an exclusive right of way.”

Per the Authority’s own estimates, projected ridership for the entire Expo Line, including Phase 2, is 72,000 per day, 44% greater than the threshold established for full grade separation.

2. Los Angeles Unified School District (“LAUSD”)

a. Office of Environmental Health and Safety (“OEHS”)

The Office of Environment Health and Safety has formally opposed the project (OEHS Letter to PUC Staff - September 28, 2006), citing concerns about the associated risks with the at-grade design for the over dozen schools within 1-mile of the corridor, including the close proximity of several schools, specifically 2100-student Dorsey High School and 3800-student Foshay Learning Center. In their formal letter, LAUSD requests the elimination of “all rail-pedestrian conflicts along routes to school,” and also cites the impact on the health of school occupants due to the increased traffic and idling vehicles at school sites. The agency also states that interior and exterior noise level standard established by the American National Standards Institute and Collaborative for High Performance Schools cannot be exceeded at their school sites. ECU submits that noise alerts for at-grade crossings, which are PUC requirements, exceeds these standards.

b. Distance Criteria for School Sitting

The close proximity of the educational facilities to the tracks violates the LAUSD

OEHS Distance Criteria for School Sitting, which requires a rail line to be placed at least 128 feet from school property lines. The Dorsey High School property line is within 20 feet of the proposed at-grade alignment, where trains are expected to cross the Farmdale/Exposition intersection traveling 55 mph and Foshay Learning Center is within 50 feet of the proposed at-grade alignment, where trains are expected to cross at 35 mph. The Authority's applied for speed exceeds the 25 mph speed limit established for vehicles around schools; vehicles, which have far shorter stopping distance than the Authority's 225-ton trains, plus the ability to divert from hitting children, both of which make vehicle accidents with pedestrians less likely to result in fatal impacts, compared to train accidents with pedestrians.

c. Superintendent Roy Romer's Draft EIS/R Comments

Then LAUSD Superintendent Roy Romer, submitted comments to the Draft EIS/R suggesting the Figueroa trench at the University of Southern California ("USC") be extended beyond Vermont. (FEIS/R - Volume 2)

3. Los Angeles Fire Department ("LAFD")

The LAFD has expressed concern about the limited ability of responding to emergencies in the Figueroa trench.

4. Los Angeles Department of Transportation ("LADOT")

LADOT has formally expressed reservations about the Farmdale/Exposition crossings and Exposition Park event management plan. In a letter to the Authority from General Manager Gloria Jeff dated May 18, 2007 regarding the Exposition Park event management plan, the agency states:

“[As a result of the event management plan] traffic congestion at Exposition Boulevard and Vermont will cause major gridlock at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Vermont Avenue, thus prolong post event traffic congestion, and is not acceptable to LADOT.”

“The study proposes that, during a post event, passengers taking the westbound LRT from Coliseum event are required to line up in westbound traffic lanes on Exposition Boulevard east of Vermont Avenue and to be directed across Vermont Avenue on unmarked westbound travel lanes. This proposed operation is not safe for pedestrians.”

C. Insufficiently Mitigated & Unidentified Safety Hazards

The Authority’s applications have numerous deficiencies including, failure to identify and mitigate hazards that currently exist, and those that will result from their at-grade design.

1. Increased Left-Turns/Street Closures

The resulting street closures and elimination of left turn lanes, in some cases for 0.5-mile (Vermont to Normandie) or more, will increase their frequency at intersections with impatient motorists and large and increasing vehicular and pedestrian traffic volumes, in several instances as a result of transit stations. Examination of the Blue Line accident history shows that the overwhelming majority of accidents are a result of left-turns. (Summary of Metro Blue Line Train/Vehicle and Train/Pedestrian Accidents- LACMTA - June 2006). Increasing left-turns at high traffic crossings where the bulk of safety mitigation is reliant on signs and signals has proven to be ineffective in eliminating the safety and health risk.

Further, closing any streets that were not studied for closure in the FEIS/R is likely to lead to an increase in traffic on other streets, many in residential areas, and ECU or others may consider that such impacts warrant reopening the FEIS/R to accurately measure the modified project's impact on the local environment, including increased congestion and decreased air quality.

2. Failure to Include Accident History

"Information on highway-rail grade crossing collisions is also needed to assess safety and operations....[D]ata on collisions not involving trains but occurring at or near a crossing are useful. For example, non-train-involved collisions may indicate a deficiency in stopping sight distance such that a vehicle suddenly stops at a crossing, causing the following vehicle to hit the leading vehicle in the rear."

-United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Handbook Revised 2nd Edition - August 2007 (USDOT Grade Crossing Handbook 2nd Edition) at Pg. 51

ECU submits that failure to provide such data is a severe defect in the applications.

3. Idling Vehicles on the Tracks

Throughout the applications the Authority has failed to sufficiently mitigate for queuing vehicles on the tracks.

Of particular concern is the entire Flower Street portion, which is directly east of major arterial and I-110 alternative route, Figueroa Street, and varies between 200-450 feet in distance from the proposed crossings. The applications provide no explanation as to how left and right turns onto Figueroa Street from

eastbound traffic will not spill-over into Flower Street crossings.

4. Pedestrian Mid-Street Crossings

Residents, particularly risk prone youths, have a history of walking across the Exposition Blvd tracks at unmarked intersections. The Authority proposes no median barriers along the corridor in the median street running section to eliminate this activity, but instead proposes adding to the environment 225-ton trains operating at 35 mph over 240 times per day.

5. Sidewalk Capacity Insufficient to Handle Pedestrian Traffic Increases

In many crossing areas, existing sidewalk widths are insufficient to handle current pedestrian volumes, but especially future volumes that in many cases will drastically increase due the addition of a rail transit station.

The ADA recommends 8 feet width for all crossings, yet for almost the entire median street running portion on Exposition Boulevard, southern sidewalks are 6 feet, and included in that small width are street lamps, signals, signs, post office boxes, etc. Additionally, the need to squeeze two tracks in the alignment, which was built for only one, will push thoroughfare traffic closer to the sidewalks, which currently have a vehicle parking lane acting as a buffer. Further, an increase in east-west walking patterns is expected as a result of the numerous street closures. The hazard is substantial when coupled with the large special populations on the corridor and many expected pedestrian traffic surges at streets that lead to schools and places of worship, and are served by high ridership bus lines.

On the Flower Street portion, the rezoning and development is expected to lead to an increase in pedestrian traffic in the area, yet the Authority proposes

reducing sidewalk capacity by more than half in many portions.

6. Over Saturation of At-Grade Crossings

The US Department of Transportation establishes as one of the criteria of closure 5 crossings within a 1-mile segment. (USDOT Grade Crossing Handbook 2nd Edition at Pg. 80) In many sections of the Expo Line, more than five crossings occur within 1-mile, yet street closure is not an option. Grade separation remains the only safe solution.

7. Less than Optimal Line of Sight

a. Non-perpendicular Angled Crossings

Several crossings require motorists and pedestrians to approach the tracks at non-perpendicular angles, which limit their ability to view approaching trains and gauge their distance.

b. Landscaping

The Authority takes great pride in their FEIS/R requirement to create a “transit parkway,” which will surround the corridor and tracks with lush landscaping. As noble as the sentiment may be, ECU shares the concern, expressed repeatedly by the PUC Staff in the Authority’s PUC Field Diagnostics Meeting minutes, regarding the height of vegetation and trees, and considers them a likely impediment to line of sight. The type and height of landscaping is not specified in the applications. Even if less than lush vegetation is suggested, trimming will be based on funding from annual budgets, which is subject to the political winds of the day. ECU has no confidence that the trees suggested will not impede the line of sight for motorists, pedestrians or train operators, or that the trees will be

appropriately trimmed, especially since recent Los Angeles City Council budget cuts resulted in a drastic reduction in tree trimming services.

8. Failure to Develop Event Management Plans

Venues that are regularly used for high patron activities and will be significantly impacted by the Authority's proposed at-grade mitigation measures should have necessitated event management plans. The failure of the Authority to develop such plans for Galen Center and West Angelus Church of God in Christ activities illustrates the level of oversight consistent with the total disregard to pedestrian and motorist safety displayed throughout the Authority's applications.

9. Failure to Address Cyclist Safety

The applications fail to address safety issues of the planned street running bike lanes. In many applications, like Gramercy Place/Rodeo Road, the bike lane simply disappears.

The Authority provides no indication of what volume of bicycle ridership is anticipated, what traffic circulation is expected by bicycle riders through the LRT at-grade crossings, and thus no indication that specific risks or remedies have been considered.

The State of California requires protective helmets for all riders under 18 on public streets, which assumes that bike riding on public streets is a risk inherent activity. Whereas the grade-crossings applied for pass through the environments of Foshay Learning Center (Western/Exposition) and Dorsey High School (Farmdale/Exposition) where students and pedestrians under the age of 18 are likely to be riding bicycles, ECU has concerns with the lack of specific risk assessment by the Authority.

The mixture of Class I and Class II bicycle routes designed in a single corridor creates the risk of uncertainty and inconsistency within the bike riding envelope as each crossing presents a complexity that does not repeat itself and does not contain bike specific signalization or any safety margins for rider error. ECU believes that the inconsistency is also likely to create the risk of increased driver confusion as to predictable bicycle rider behavior.

Every year, 100 people on average are killed in bicycle accidents in California and thousands more are injured. ECU does not feel that the hazards inherent in the at-grade design of the bike lanes have been identified or mitigated.

10. Insufficient School Rail Safety Education Program

a. Transient Student Bodies

Whereas schools in other areas may have enrollments that are steadier, such is not the case at several educational institutions within a mile of the corridor. Therefore, a significant percentage of students would not receive the Authority's instructional rail safety program.

b. Competing Instructional Time

The additional safety programs will take away from important instructional time needed in the area where many schools are underperforming or have significant environmental issues with which to contend and must be addressed by school personnel.

c. Special Education Students

A significant number of special education students attend schools along the

corridor.

D. Expanded Explanation of Crossing Concerns

1. La Cienega Blvd/Jefferson Blvd, Parking Structure Driveway, & National Blvd/Jefferson Blvd

ECU has issue with the design of the La Cienega overpass. In addition to the blight associated with the structure, the retaining wall will limit the free flow of pedestrian and vehicular activity in an area currently being studied for a significant increase in development to deliver additional community desired services and housing opportunities.

2. Eastham Drive Pedestrian Access

The Authority provides no explanation of any pedestrian safety mitigation measures being implemented at the intersection. The Authority does not even provide the width of the crossing.

3. Hauser Blvd/Jefferson Blvd

ECU shares the concerns expressed in the DCA Civil Engineering Group report (DCA Civil Engineering Group email to EMLCA - December 11, 2006), which illustrate that per the California Standard Truck Turn Radius, the proposed crossing and access road is inadequate for semi-truck and trailer maneuvering. The result will be frequent and lengthy queuing on the tracks, and repeated disruptions to eastbound Jefferson Blvd traffic.

4. La Brea Avenue/Exposition Blvd, & Park Access Driveway/Exposition Blvd

ECU has issue with the design of the La Brea overpass. In addition to the blight associated with the structure, the retaining wall will alter the flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic in and out of the adjacent parking lot during Rancho Cienega Park events and limit access to Rancho Cienega Park.

The presence of current and future buildings directly adjacent to the north of the elevated alignment will result in an echo that bounces off the structures into the residential community, which will exceed federal noise standards. The noise pollution includes the ringing of bells from trains as they depart and arrive at the station.

ECU recommends that a shallow below grade open cut station be constructed with a staircase and ADA compliant ramps.

5. Farmdale Avenue/Exposition Blvd

The Authority's Farmdale crossing and adjacent area design is the poster child for the insufficient mitigation standards, and unreasonable level of risks expected to be assumed in the South Los Angeles area. In numerous respects the application and the FEIS/R are woefully deficient.

a. The Authority proposes designing the crossing with warning devices that sound only until the crossing gates reach a horizontal position, arguing that this lowered safety standard is acceptable at the crossing on the Expo Line that is among the most complicated and has the highest peak hour pedestrian traffic counts and special population crossings.

The Commission is the appropriate arbiter of all acceptable safety mitigation measures, and the complexity of the intersection and peak hour special population pedestrian and vehicular traffic indicate a need to drastically increase safety mitigation standards at this crossing, not diminish them by applying standards suggested for low-traffic suburban areas. ECU shares the Commission's staff strong reservations about reducing noise particularly at this crossing.

Further, the Authority claims the reduced safety mitigation measure is a "reasonable approach to balancing the safety needs and noise pollution issues for residents." The Authority has a well-established reputation that makes it ill equipped to calculate such measurements. Despite over a decade as the most deadly light rail line in the country, the Authority continues to operate the Blue Line without basic safety mitigation measures. To no surprise accidents still frequently occur, including on the day of the PUC Workshop (Truck Collides with Metro Train in Downtown LA - KABC website - July 18, 2007) and just last week (6 Injured When Truck, Blue Line Collide - KCBS website - August 27, 2007).

b. In the FEIS/R, noise and vibration measurements and engineering assumptions, in addition to the suggested mitigations, or more appropriately lack thereof, in the area the subject of the application, are severely deficient and should eliminate any confidence the Commission has in past, current or future measurements by the Authority.

Among these deficiencies are:

- i. The omission of any sound wall or noise mitigation measure on the north side of Dorsey High School, despite well-known Commission requirements for train horn alerts when approaching an intersection at

the applied speed of 55 mph, and exterior and interior school learning environment noise and vibration standards;

- ii. The omission of any vibration mitigation measures despite the close proximity of current and future Dorsey High School classrooms; and
- iii. The omission of any sound wall north of the tracks through the alignment from Crenshaw Blvd to Farmdale Ave.

Furthermore, ample precedent exists, in the form of the Gold Line, to illustrate that the Authority would be unwilling to abide by PUC orders to address noise and vibration impacts when they become apparent after completed construction and operation of the transit line. (Railing Against Noise, Pasadena Star News, December 29, 2006)

c. The Authority illustrates an unwillingness to address safety mitigation needs that they recognize within their own application. Applicant admits that vehicle queuing areas are necessary and jointly with Los Angeles Department of Transportation proposes:

“[T]hat the existing driveway just south of the Farmdale crossing be located further south to provide additional vehicle queuing length.”

The Authority’s admission for the need for a vehicle queuing area for the Dorsey driveway, and failure to provide similar queuing area directly east of the driveway on southern Exposition Blvd east of Farmdale is an inconsistency in the Applicant’s own insufficient effort to provide safety mitigation, and a clear failure to convincingly show that all potential safety hazards have been eliminated. The Authority, like ECU, likely recognizes that to create such a queuing area on southern Exposition east of Farmdale would require the

acquisition and demolition of residential property at a cost that exceeds a grade separation, while still not providing the safety of a grade separation.

d. The Authority's assessment of pedestrian traffic flow avoids appropriately calculating the increased pedestrian crossing on the east sidewalk of Farmdale due to the elimination of pedestrian crossings on the currently abandoned right-of-way east of Farmdale, and the avoidance of a "holding pen."

e. The current flow of pedestrian traffic is steady streamed with several minutes having peaks near or above 100 per minute, which is expected to increase, as current plans to increase the student and classroom capacity of Dorsey High School include expansion directly adjacent to the area of the proposed street realignment. By cutting off the steady stream to provide signalized east-west crossings and having the crossing gates pre-empt the traffic control plan, surges of pedestrians will descend on sidewalks and crosswalks currently too narrow to handle existing pedestrian traffic.

f. Even with the extravagant mitigation measures suggested by the Authority, the pedestrian simulation model still shows spill-over in the intersection, as recognized by PUC Staff (Consumer Protection and Safety Division Rail Crossings Engineering Section Meeting Notes - A.0701017 (LATTC Driveways); Proposed Farmdale crossing - April 24, 2007).

g. The "holding pen" on the northern portion of the track is insufficiently sized to handle pedestrians after they cross the tracks leading to pedestrian queuing on the tracks with 225-ton trains operating at 55 mph.

h. Traffic currently backs up to Jefferson Blvd, as students are picked-up and dropped off at Dorsey High School, whose property line is within 20 feet of the tracks, so ECU shares the PUC's staff concern regarding vehicle queuing on the tracks. (PUC Staff Letter to EMLCA (Comments on Preliminary Rail Crossing Hazard Analysis Report, rev. 3) – June 16, 2006 at Page3) ECU's concern is accented by the expansion plan, which will lead to more students being dropped off on the northern part of the campus and the intersection signalization.

i. The driveway for the motel on the northeast corner, which is slightly over 100 feet north of the crossing, and right turns from eastbound small Exposition Blvd can lead to vehicle queuing on the tracks.

6. Buckingham Road/Exposition Blvd

The narrow 2-lane road is a heavily used alternative to La Brea Ave and Crenshaw Blvd, as it is the only street in the 1.2 mile distance between the major arterials that crosses the four major east-west streets on the corridor: Jefferson Blvd, Exposition Blvd, Rodeo Road and Martin Luther King Blvd.

a. To the north end of the street at Martin Luther King Blvd and Buckingham Road is the very dense Baldwin Village community and Marlton Square, a large shopping area that is currently dormant and was at the time traffic counts were taken, yet is a planned for major residential and retail mixed-use development that will significantly increase the amount of vehicular traffic at the crossing.

b. Current northbound peak hour traffic backs up to Exposition Blvd, which is 0.1 mile from Jefferson Blvd. It is clear that implementing crossing gates and eliminating the right turn lanes on northbound and southbound Buckingham Road will disrupt the traffic flow, which heavily relies on steady north-south movement, and will lead to further idling cars and engines on the residential street and on the tracks.

c. Motorists have less than optimal line of sight due to the angled crossing, sound walls and landscaping. This is especially problematic for eastbound and westbound traffic on small Exposition, which frequently turns onto the crossing, often to make turns onto large Exposition Blvd. and currently leads to idling cars on the tracks.

d. Driveways to residences on both the eastside and westside of Buckingham exist less than 100 feet north of the crossing and can lead to unexpected disruption of traffic flow leading to vehicle queuing on the tracks.

e. The Applicant fails to provide sufficient queuing area north of the crossing for pedestrians, many of which are students.

7. Crenshaw Blvd/Exposition Blvd

a. The Crenshaw/Exposition crossing sits in the heart of a major redevelopment zone. The corridor is the commercial heart of the Southern California African-American economy. Maintaining and expanding pedestrian connections within the area is crucial to the fragile revitalization efforts, yet the Authority's design would reduce access within the area.

- b. To the northeast of the crossing is West Angelus Church of God in Christ, a 5000 seat place of worship, which in addition to featuring several large Sunday services maintains a full calendar of events, both spiritual-related and not, and at a minimum warranted an event management plan.

- c. The crossing is slightly over 300 feet north of the Rodeo Road/Crenshaw Blvd signalized intersection and slightly over 400 feet south of the proposed signalized 36th Place/Crenshaw Blvd. The Authority provides no indication that the increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic will not lead to queuing on the tracks.

- d. 300 feet east of the crossing is the entry and exit point for the parking lot of West Angelus Church, which will serve as the park-and-ride for the station during the workweek. The traffic impact of the parking facility on the intersection was never assessed in the FEIS/R, nor is it in the application.

- e. If the station is being built to allow for a Crenshaw LRT spur, the eastbound platform should be east of the intersection.

- f. The eastbound train platform is located in front of residential properties, which will be disturbed by the required alerts when trains enter and exit the station.

- g. The Authority provides no explanation regarding the omission of 4-quad gates at this crossing.

- h. The locations of the bus shelters are not identified in the application.

i. Al-Madinah school is a private educational facility that thereby is not under the jurisdiction of the LAUSD, but it remains within the 128 feet distance standard applied for public schools.

j. ECU shares the concerns expressed by the Authority's staff in the PUC Field Diagnostics Meeting No. 4 Minutes on November 6, 2006 at Pg. 4 that the large Exposition eastbound right turn will lead to accidents.

ECU submits that as suggested in the Preliminary Planning Study commissioned by the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission, the Authority's predecessor agency, a grade separation should be constructed at this crossing. (Exposition Right-of-Way Preliminary Planning Study Executive Summary, May 1992 Los Angeles County Transportation Commission Table S.3 page S-11). To avoid harming current efforts to fight off a community blight study or potential conflict with the Crenshaw Blvd scenic highway designation, ECU recommends a shallow below grade open cut station.

8. 11th Avenue-Degnan Blvd/Exposition Blvd

Vehicle queuing on the tracks can be expected.

a. Semi-trucks regularly back into the dairy delivery facility on the northwest corner of the intersection, unexpectedly blocking the entire narrow 2-lane street.

b. Eliminating direct access from the industrial properties to Exposition Blvd via the ROW, including the closure of the 10th Avenue/Exposition crossing will redirect most of the current industrial traffic that serves the industrial properties on Exposition Place to the Degnan Blvd/Exposition Place intersection, which is less than 200 feet south of the crossing and is too narrow to allow access to the road without blocking both lanes.

c. Degnan Blvd/Rodeo Road, a signalized intersection, is less than 150 feet south of Degnan/Exposition Place, which increases the safety risk of idled vehicles at the crossing.

9. 7th Avenue/Exposition Blvd

The unmitigated hazards and resulting delays due to pre-emptive crossing gates and an increase in industrial traffic at the crossing due to closures of adjacent crossings should be completely unacceptable to the Commission, which is responsible for the safety and health of the people of California. 7th Avenue is the major access road for Fire Station 34, which is responsible for the safety of the Leimert Park community, and thereby should be grade separated. ("Crossings frequently utilized by emergency vehicles....should be candidates for grade separations or the installation of active traffic control devices." USDOT Grade Crossing Handbook 2nd Edition at Pg. 79) Leimert Park is directly south of the crossing and has a large population of high risks citizens: African-American and elderly. ECU submits that any design that delays the delivery of emergency services is by its very definition deadly. The nature of the design in this area featuring an at-grade alignment with crossing gates and street closures is a clear illustration of the Authority's total disregard not just for the safety directly at crossings, but of entire communities.

Further, vehicle queuing on the tracks can be expected:

- a. Current traffic flow will be frequently and sporadically disrupted due to emergency services departing from Fire Station 34, which is less than 150 feet north of crossing. The street closures in the area will result in an increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic, including 6th Avenue Elementary School students, on narrow 2-lane 7th Avenue, as it is the only crossing between 11th Avenue and Arlington, a distance of 0.7 miles.
- b. Industrial traffic will be redirected to the 7th Ave/Exposition Place intersection, which is less than 200 feet south of the crossing and is too narrow to allow industrial trucks access to the road without blocking both lanes.
- c. The close proximity and presence of a street light at 7th Ave/Rodeo Road, which is less than 150 feet south of 7th Ave/Exposition Place increases the safety risk of idled vehicles on the crossing.

10. Arlington Avenue/Exposition Blvd

- a. The crossing is among the most extreme examples of line of sight obstruction on the entire Expo Line as motorists and pedestrians will be expected to approach the intersection in the middle of an S-curve. The Authority is completely incapable of eliminating the resulting blind spots without purchasing several properties on the western Arlington portion, which would still create an angled at-grade crossing at a cost competitive with a grade separation, while not providing similar safety of a grade separation.
- b. Queuing cars at the crossing can be expected as a result of current use patterns:
 - i. Several residential driveways are directly north of the property, directly south of the Rodeo Road/Arlington intersection, and to the southeast of

the crossing at a frequently patronized local market.

- ii. Vehicles traveling southbound on Arlington Ave frequently disobey the double yellow line and enter the local market on the southeast intersection of Rodeo and Exposition Blvd.
- iii. Cars frequently disobey the no peak hour parking signs located on the southbound side of Arlington Avenue, reducing traffic to one lane on this major arterial road that provides access to the I-10 freeway.

c. Development is expected on the currently vacant lot to the southwest corner of the intersection. Since the Authority proposes closing the 2nd Avenue/Exposition Blvd crossing, among the likely vehicular entry points are the northwest corner of Arlington and Rodeo or western side of Arlington. Either entry point would disrupt the current traffic flow plan and could eventually lead to cars queuing at the crossing.

d. The proposed at-grade crossing and adjacent street closures, will reduce vehicular entry points to the location and limit existing open pedestrian flow, harming economic redevelopment in a community that has a desperate need for many services and housing opportunities.

e. The required coordination with Arlington/Rodeo Rd will lead to an increase in the traffic pre-emption at the intersection to a level unacceptable for this major arterial road and is thereby likely to result in increased vehicular traffic on residential streets.

f. Traffic from the market and interruption from northbound Arlington buses stopping at the bus zone on the southeast corner of Arlington/Rodeo Rd are likely to disrupt current traffic synchronization plans, which assume the risk of idling southbound vehicles can be eliminated by clearing southbound Rodeo Road by holding northbound Arlington traffic at Rodeo Road.

11. Gramercy Place/Rodeo Road

a. Accidents frequently occur at the signalized intersection. The Authority proposes limited improvements to mitigate their root cause, the angled crossing at the intersection of two major streets, which is the only opening for north-south movement in the 0.5 miles between Arlington and Western Avenues and thereby leads to the violations of posted street signs. The activity should be expected to continue, if not increase due to the many proposed street closures.

b. The lengthy distance between the “Wait Here” lines and crossing is likely to result in queuing vehicles beyond the actual line, which coupled with the impeded line of sight is problematic.

c. ECU shares the concerns of LADOT staff regarding bicycle tire slippage when crossing the tracks. Like LADOT staff, ECU has no confidence bicyclist will use the three phase crossing and will instead ride across the tracks along the roadway. (Expo Field Diagnostics Meeting No. 4 Minutes, November 6, 2006)

12. Western Avenue/Exposition Blvd, Halldale Avenue/Exposition Blvd, & Denker Avenue/Exposition Blvd

The location of 3800-student Foshay Learning Center at Harvard Blvd/Exposition Blvd, suggest safety mitigation in this area should be maximized, yet the Authority offers no such remedies.

- a. Current sidewalk widths are insufficient to handle after school crowds, as students regularly walk in the street. They're undeniably insufficient to handle the increase in pedestrian activity that will result from the rail transit stop being added to the Western/Exposition intersection that is served by Western bus lines 757 and 207, which has the third highest ridership of any bus line in the Authority's entire system.
- b. The existing pedestrian tunnel at Harvard Blvd is open only when LAUSD has the resources to staff the tunnel, and the availability of its use still results in a sizable number of pedestrian crossings at Denker/Exposition and Western/Exposition. Use of the tunnel leads to an increase in pedestrian traffic to the even narrower southern crosswalk.
- c. Risk prone students regularly walk and run across the tracks yet the application shows no barrier to prevent this activity.
- d. Queuing in the intersection is likely, as current Western southbound traffic backs up several blocks and often includes the Authority's articulated buses.
- e. The CRA is currently planning to expand the Normandie 5 project area boundaries into the corridor, which will lead to an increase in development, and thereby pedestrian and vehicular traffic, yet the Authority's FEIS/R actually suggests the traffic on Western will decrease.
- f. The elimination of six of the eight current crossings in the 0.5 miles between Normandie and Western will lead to:
 - i. An increase in illegal U-turns and increase in pedestrians crossing the tracks illegally, many of them middle and elementary school children

walking to Foshay Learning Center and Weemes Elementary at Raymond Avenue/37th Street.

- ii. An increase in traffic in the residential areas.

13. Harvard Blvd Pedestrian Access

ECU submits that the design of this crossing should be below the shallow pedestrian tunnel.

14. Normandie Avenue/Exposition Blvd

a. The CRA is currently planning to expand the Normandie 5 area project boundaries into the corridor, which will lead to an increase in development, and thereby an increase in pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

b. Vehicle queuing on the tracks can be expected, as an alley is directly south of the crossing and several driveways to both residential and retail properties are located to the north. The 37th Drive/Normandie intersection is slightly over 200 feet north of the crossing.

15. Raymond Avenue/Exposition Blvd

Weemes Elementary School is located at Raymond Avenue/37th Street a few blocks north of the crossing. This results in over a hundred youths using the crossing per day who arrive from multiple directions. The elimination of all three of the crossings in the 0.4 miles between Raymond and Vermont Avenues will lead to an increase in illegal U-turns at Raymond and increase in pedestrians crossing the tracks illegally, among them, Weemes students.

**16. Vermont Avenue/Exposition Blvd, Menlo Avenue/Exposition Blvd,
Watt Way/Exposition Blvd, & Trousdale Pedestrian Parkway Passage**

The presence of an event management plan is a clear admission that the Expo Line poses a significant risk to pedestrians and motorists during University of Southern California/Exposition Park events.

- a. The risk is so great that minimal safety requires extreme mitigation measures, which would cause an unacceptable environmental impact on area residents if implemented regularly.
- b. The plan is heavily reliant on a substantial amount of manpower that requires allocation from annual budgets and thereby should provide no confidence to the Commission that they will actually be consistently fully funded.
- c. The frequency of Exposition Park events is likely to increase. In addition to being in the University Park CRA Redevelopment zone, the area is a designated major entertainment and sports zone.
- d. Application of these mitigation measures only during events fails to address the daily risks to motorists and pedestrians, of which a significant percentage are special populations, when an event is not taking place; and application of these mitigation measures during events, when pedestrian traffic volume is at its highest still fails to address the unacceptable and unsafe pedestrian-train conflict.

e. The fundamental deficiency in the event management plan as expressed by LADOT, is that it assumes an optional Trousdale station, which has not been funded. The pedestrian simulation movements assume that between 50-70% of Exposition Park event patrons who depart using the Expo Line will use this unfunded/phantom station. (Case 1 - 3 USC Expo Park Pedestrian Analysis Report for Expo Authority March 2007 Presentation DMJM Harris)

It is clear that the Authority recognizes that they are incapable of safely managing the large crowds and that Vermont Avenue, Exposition Blvd, and Menlo Avenue will be impacted far longer than claimed.

- f. Several daily conditions present significant hazards as well.
- i. Traffic at the Vermont/Exposition intersection exceeds design capacity and leads to interchanges at the I-10 and I-110 freeways. At the intersection the six lanes north of Exposition Blvd are narrowed to four lanes south of Exposition.
 - ii. The station can also expect frequent and large pedestrian surges as the intersection is served by Vermont bus lines 754 and 204, the Authority's most used north-south bus line in the entire system.
- g. The vast undeveloped land presents great opportunities to continue reviving the Figueroa corridor. The at-grade alignment and station design will inhibit this tremendous opportunity.
- h. The location of the southbound Vermont bus shelter is not illustrated in the application.

ECU agrees with the recommendations previously made by PUC staff

(Comments on Preliminary Rail Crossing Hazard Analysis Report, rev. 3 at Pg 4), former Los Angeles City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas (Don't Turn Exposition Park Into A Rail Yard, Los Angeles Times June 28 2001), the University of Southern California, former LAUSD Superintendent Roy Romer (FEIS/R Volume 2), among others who suggest that the Figueroa trench be extended. Only a station at Vermont with portals two hundred feet east of Vermont and 100 feet west of Watt Way is optimal. This allows the station to serve areas and destinations that would be served by the optional Trowsdale station, while still adequately serving Vermont.

17. Pardee Way/Exposition Blvd, Figueroa Street/Exposition Blvd, & Flower Street/Exposition Blvd

ECU shares the LAFD concerns regarding the lack of access points for emergency services in the trench design.

18. Jefferson Blvd/Flower Street

The crossing is directly adjacent to the Galen Center, a 10258 seat multi-use sports and entertainment venue that is owned and operated by the University of Southern California and is expected to host hundreds of events per year. The frequency of the events and the volume of associated pedestrian and vehicular traffic to and from the nearby parking facilities and around the adjacent I-110 freeway on and off-ramps suggest that at minimum an event management plan should have been constructed. Other defects include:

- a. Obstructed line of sight: The crossing is directly adjacent to a tunnel of a major arterial road and access point for the I-110 freeway.

b. Insufficient sidewalk width: Large and consolidated groups of event patrons can be expected to cross the intersection en route to the station and to the University Parking Center, a 2200 slot parking garage to the east of the intersection at Jefferson Blvd and Grand Ave. Sidewalk widths on Jefferson Blvd in front of Galen Center are substantially wider than the 10 and 12 feet proposed for Jefferson Blvd. Much wider widths are needed to sufficiently handle the frequent and large crowds.

c. Pedestrian queuing in the crossing: The placement of the ticketing machines at the base of the crosswalk, narrow station platform widths and timed pedestrian crossing countdowns are insufficient to handle large surges of Galen Center patrons.

19. 30th Street/Flower Street

Columns for the I-110 HOV lane are present on the northeast and southeast corners of the intersection impeding the line of sight.

20. HOV Lane/Flower Street & 28th Street/Flower Street

The Authority admits that current conditions at the crossing are not safe to the degree that they require an extreme “skip cycle” traffic phasing, where the Expo Line will only operate through the intersection while vehicular and pedestrian traffic is completely stopped (“all red”) with the trains alternating phases with 28th Street.

The all red skip cycle configuration could lead to a 135 second delay for southbound trains if they arrive in the cycle immediately after a northbound train, and delays of that magnitude would greatly increase pressure on the Authority to reduce the wait time likely by implementing a design that is even

less safe.

The Authority also admits that existing vehicular traffic is erratic, as nearly 1000 vehicles merge on the I-110 HOV lane during peak hours. ECU is concerned that under these conditions, motorists will be unable to determine whether the halted northbound trains are waiting or approaching, and they are likely to maneuver to avoid what will appear to be a head-on collision. In these conditions, the results of such avoidance can be catastrophic.

Additionally, ECU is concerned that the complicated crossing and many signs prevent eastbound 28th Street motorists from focusing on the most important requirement – no left turns.

21. Flower Street/I-110 Underpass, Adams Blvd/Flower Street, 23rd Street/Flower Street, & 23rd Street Pedestrian Crossing/Flower Street

ECU has several concerns with the Adams crossing:

- a. The proximity to the I-110 off-ramp (less than 200 feet east of the crossing) increases the risk of vehicles entering the crossing at a speed higher than posted limit.
- b. The close proximity of several schools: St. Vincent Elementary School and Orthopedic Magnet School are within 0.1 miles and Mount St. Mary's College is within 0.2 miles.
- c. Current traffic on this portion of Flower Street is very heavy and travels at high speeds, much higher than the posted speed limit.

d. The Authority's Hazard Analysis for Adams/Flower suggests that the level of service for this crossing declines from LOS B without the LRT to LOS D with the project.

e. On 23rd Street, a narrow two lane road, the close proximity of driveways east of the crossing, which lead into the Orthopedic Medical facility, a major trip generator for the proposed 23rd Street Station, is certain to lead to unexpected queuing at the 23rd Street/Flower crossing while cars enter and exit the driveway.

ECU recommends that the Authority construct a new bridge, similar to Mitigated Alternative 1b of the Exposition Park Branch Line Transit Corridor Route Final Environmental Impact Report (Los Angeles County Transportation Commission, October 1992). The bridge would emerge from a curved shallow below grade station at 23rd Street, behind the apartment building at 23rd and Flower Streets, and descend into an underground portal on under utilized HOV Frontage Road, which should be closed to eliminate the angled approach for vehicles heading southbound on Flower Street.

22. 21st Street/Flower Street

a. ECU is concerned about the line of sight due to the angled crossing, which may lead to motorists waiting in the crossing.

b. The close proximity of the crossing to 23rd Street is likely to lead to back-up from southbound Flower Street traffic impeding access across the crossing from the ramp.

23. Trade Tech Parking Driveway/Flower Street

ECU is concerned about the line of sight due to the angled crossing, and the

complex intersection with multiple signs in a narrow area, which will be confusing to approaching motorists.

24. Washington Blvd/Flower Street

a. ECU shares the concerns previously expressed by PUC Staff, regarding the lengthy north leg crossing (Expo PUC Field Diagnostics Meeting No. 3 Minutes Page 2 October 30, 2006.) The lengthy crosswalk coupled with the operation of 48-60 trains per hour leaves little opportunity for pedestrians who step into the crosswalk into the countdown cycle to safely travel the crossing and reach the opposite end of the intersection.

b. Pedestrians and motorists will likely be unable to determine whether idled trains at the northeast corner of the intersection are southbound Expo Line trains or eastbound Blue Line trains.

III. CONCLUSION

In consideration of the preceding issues and deficiencies delineated by ECU, it can only be concluded that the safety standards of the at-grade crossings before the Commission do not comply with those of the ECU communities and the public at large.

In the complex urban environment of the corridor with the current levels of pedestrian traffic, vehicular congestion, and high number of designated “special populations”, the Authority cannot support that the at-grade crossings are practicable. When compared to grade separated crossings, the ability of the Authority to mitigate all safety hazards to a level of community acceptance for public safety has not been convincingly shown.

The similarities of the proposed line to the Authority's Blue Line, which has commonalities in grade crossing design and mitigation solutions make it clear that the Authority does not learn from past experience as they claim.

The plethora of traffic and safety engineering solutions that are necessarily overlaid to even approach a minimal safety standard serves to create hazards of driver, bike rider and pedestrian confusion. The complexity and diversity of rail crossing safety solutions as they change from crossing to crossing in itself presents the risk of unpredictability. The failure of any one of these systems (a foreseeable event) will result in a likely Category I or Category II incident. ECU finds that while the engineering solutions and traffic circulations planned are amazing and admirable in their Rube Goldberg complexity, they do not satisfy the safety concerns of the ECU communities, nor do they satisfy the Commission's mandate to require and enforce the construction of safe rail crossings.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Date: September 7, 2007

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