



October 10, 2023

Honorable Metro Board Chair Mayor Karen Bass
Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Follow-Up on Completing Regional Connector First-Last Mile Connections

Ms. Wiggins and Ms. Bass:

Thank you Ms. Wiggins for your response letter dated September 10, 2023.

Unfortunately, several streets at stations - including Flower/Hope Street and 2nd Street - remain in a condition that is in violation of the City's approved Downtown Street Design Standards, and these deficiencies need to be fixed.

It remains our hope that Metro is able to work with LADOT to correct bike facility missteps - by promptly adding approved low-cost walk and bike improvements, so Metro riders can safely get to new stations without needing a car.

Metro recently added protective bollards on eastbound 1st Street between Alameda and Vignes. We are asking for more of these sorts of quick-build low-cost common sense upgrades that would go a long way toward keeping Metro riders safe.

Please see the addendum for further specifics responding to certain assertions in your letter which we dispute, and detailing how Metro (with LADOT) can remedy the missing facilities.

Sincerely

Michael Schneider, Streets For All
Carter Rubin, NRDC
Eli Lipmen, MoveLA
Eli Akira Kaufman, BikeLA
Catherine Baltazar, Climate Resolve

Cc: Metro Board of Directors
L.A. City Councilmember Kevin de León
LADOT General Manager Laura Rubio-Cornejo



Completing Regional Connector First-Last Mile Connections - detail addendum:

The missing first-last mile facilities break down into two distinct groups:

1. Broadway and Grand Stations: missing implementation of City approved street standards
2. Little Tokyo Station: TIGER grant items omitted and/or downgraded

Group 1: Grand and Broadway Stations street standards

At the Grand and Broadway Stations, Metro construction did not follow the City's [DTLA Street Standards](#), approved in 2009. These standards are legally-binding city specifications for roadway width, and they include bike lanes which Metro failed to implement.

1.1 Grand Avenue Station

Your letter appears to state that, instead of following approved street standards (approved in 2009 after an extensive public input process, committee/commission/council hearings, etc.), Metro followed an unapproved and unreleased future City department plan for changes to Flower Street.

Metro installed a not-publicly-vetted design, different from what Metro approved in the Regional Connector EIR. Metro (and LADOT) apparently assumed that a future unapproved plan would not include bike lanes already approved in the Street Standards and the [Mobility Plan 2035](#).

Metro Grand Station area changes expanded car capacity with little to no regard for Metro riders arriving by foot or by bike. Modifying the current infrastructure there to match City/Metro plans would be prohibitively expensive. We urge Metro to implement a handful of easy low-cost bike/walk connections (and we will continue to advocate for any future Flower Street plans to prioritize the safety of Metro's riders - should the City's future plans ever come to a public approval process).

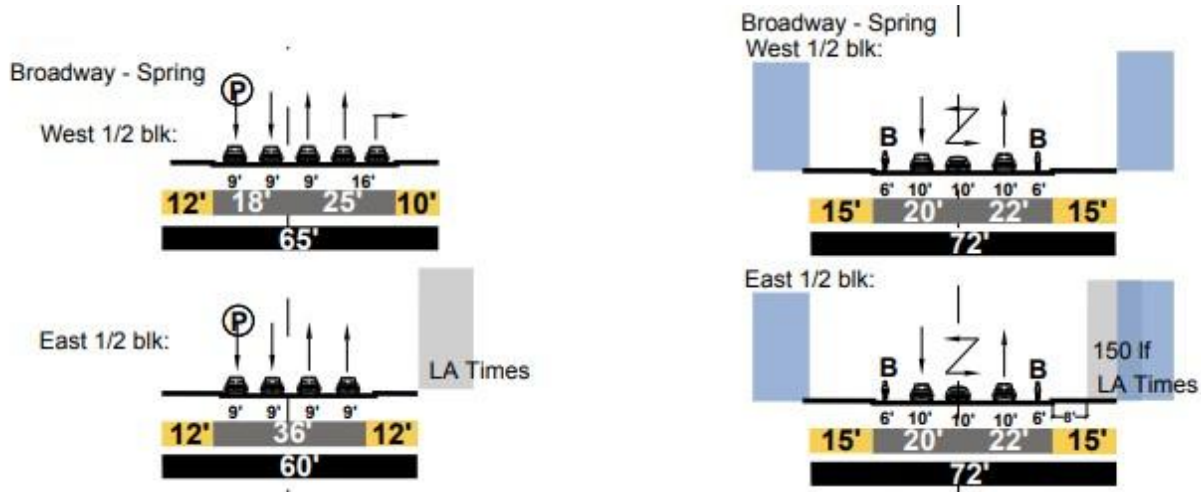
Remedy: Add bike/walk connections at Grand Station, including:

- Add missing crosswalk at Flower/Hope at the south leg of 2nd Place/Kosciuszko
- Add bike lanes:
 - Flower Street one-way (downhill) from 1st to 3rd
 - Hope Street one-way (uphill - west of station - protected) from 3rd to Kosciuszko
 - Hope Street one-way (uphill - east of station) from Kosciuszko to 2nd Street
 - 2nd/Kosciuszko (two-way - protected) from Flower to Hope



1.2 Broadway Station

At Broadway Station Metro did not implement the city’s approved street specifications. Metro widened 2nd Street where the City standard mandated it be narrowed.



Metro retained on-street parking on the south side of 2nd (directly in front of the station), despite the city having approved removing that parking. When Metro did work on that street, Metro was legally obligated to implement the City’s approved street standard.

Remedy: Remove parking on 2nd Street from Broadway to Spring, and add protected bike lanes.

Group 2: Little Tokyo TIGER facilities

Your letter asserted that several streets (included in the TIGER grant) are “not wide enough to accommodate dedicated bike lanes.” In truth, Metro’s excellent TIGER grant was very strategic and precise in selecting streets where bike facilities are feasible. We encourage you to review your more recent street width assertions; we’re confident that you will find that Metro’s initial TIGER assessment was correct, and Metro and LADOT did a great job selecting appropriate streets.

We’ve noted below that there are a couple of narrow pinch-points, and it appears that Metro (and LADOT) used these to omit multiple blocks of straightforward safety improvements - akin to throwing the baby out with the bath-water. Below we have specified context-sensitive solutions appropriate at narrow points.

Responding to specifics raised in your letter:



2.1 Little Tokyo bikeways along Central Avenue and Judge John Aiso Streets

TIGER specified unprotected bike lanes on Aiso Street (Temple to 1st) and Aiso's continuation on San Pedro Street (1st to 3rd). For **Aiso/San Pedro's** 2,000 foot long stretch, adding bike lanes is easy, with a short exception: immediately south of 1st, there is a half-block (three parking spaces, ~70 feet) where the street is too narrow to accommodate adding bike lanes without removing something.

Remedy: Add bike lanes on Aiso/San Pedro from Temple to 3rd, omitting the northbound bike lane (instead adding northbound sharrows) for a half-block south of 1st Street.

On **Central** between 2nd and 3rd, the 70-foot street width easily accommodates bike lanes.

On Central between 1st and 2nd, assuming that recently-added parking is there to stay, the 54-foot wide block can fit bike lanes (with no removal of travel lanes or parking) if travel lane widths are minimized at 10-10.5 feet.

Remedy: Add unprotected bike lanes on Central from 1st Street to 3rd Street, minimizing lane width where needed.

2.2 Little Tokyo bikeways along 1st Street

Your letter asserts that there is a conflict between Al Fresco dining (which we strongly support) vs. omitted 1st Street improvements. But there is no conflict because the missing 1st Street bike improvements (Los Angeles Street to San Pedro/Aiso) has no Al Fresco dining.

Three-quarters of the TIGER-specified upgrades here will be easy. Installing the westbound protected bike lane has no impacts on parking or travel lanes. Installing the eastbound protection between Los Angeles Street and Onizuka similarly does not impact parking or travel lanes.

The remaining area (eastbound from Onizuka to San Pedro) has 5 parking spaces, a loading zone, and a bus stop. In order to daylight protected facilities, the City often eliminates some parking when adding protected lanes. Given the lack of driveways, and existing fire hydrant and bus/loading areas, it appears feasible to add a parking protected bike lane at this location with no parking removal.

Remedy: Add protection to existing bike lanes on 1st from Los Angeles St to Aiso/San Pedro.

2.3 Bike lanes along the 1st Street Bridge over the LA River



According to Metro's TIGER scope, the bikeway on 1st Street was to be "raised cycletracks" between Vignes and Mission. On the bridge the eastbound bike lane is unprotected. Your letter states that the bridge's protected lane was omitted to provide eastbound drivers an extended turn pocket for left turns on to Mission Road, as "an important connection to the 101 freeway."

As currently installed, the extra 101 Freeway left turn lane appears excessive. Do drivers need a quarter-mile long (1,400-foot) turn lane there, with space for more than 70 cars to queue up? Wouldn't a quarter or a third of this length suffice?

The excessively long turn lane comes at the expense of protecting cyclists where most needed - where cyclists are in greater danger as they go uphill at much slower speeds than motorized vehicles. The bike lane should be, at a minimum, protected where the road is uphill.

Even where there is a left turn lane for drivers, it would be possible to add a full continuous protected bikeway, by minimizing lane widths: travel lanes 10-10.5 feet and bike lane 4.5 feet.

***Remedy:* Shorten the First Street eastbound left turn lane to 500-600 feet, to make space for a full-sized protected bike lane where 1st goes uphill through where it levels off (at least to the midpoint of the bridge). Continue protection to Mission by narrowing lane widths.**

2.4 Los Angeles Street between 1st and 2nd Streets

Minimum width lanes would make continuous protected lanes feasible on both sides of this block of Los Angeles Street. It is possible, though perhaps complicated, to work around loading zones and hotel frontage on the east side of the street.

***Remedy:* Add bike lane protection where it is straightforwardly feasible only on the west (southbound) side of the street.**

2.5 Ramirez Street/Center Street between Commercial Street and Vignes Street

Your letter asserts that the Ramirez bike lanes have "bollards in some locations" but that isn't true. The location, right behind Gateway Plaza, has no bollards; the bikeway is unprotected.



In TIGER, Metro specified protected bike lanes between Commercial and Vignes. Adding the bollard protection that you assert already exists can be done easily without impacting travel lanes or parking.

(Ramirez is used by Flyaway buses as a layover zone. A Flyaway layover and protected bike lane are compatible, but complicate a short stretch - around 100 feet. If the layover remains where it is, the bike lane and the layover zone should be swapped to create a parking-protected bike lane. Alternately, it may be possible to free up space for a longer bollard-protected bikeway by establishing an LAX Flyaway bus layover zone in a less trafficked area - such as just on Ramirez east of Center - about 400 feet east of the current layover.)

Remedy: add protection (including possible Flyaway parking-protection) on Ramirez/Center between Vignes and Commercial.