Los Angeles Times

$3.66 DESIGNATED AREAS HIGHER © 2026 MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2026 latimes.com

ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

A PEDESTRIAN uses the L.A. River Path near Lewis MacAdams Riverfront Park in Elysian Valley.

L.A. trying to find a bike path forward

Project along Los Angeles River plagued by an eight-mile gap with a billion-dollar price tag

By Mack Baysinger

Someday, you might be able to ride a bike from the western San Fernando Valley to Long Beach along the Los Angeles River. But not yet.

The longest unfinished stretch is the eight miles from Elysian Park through downtown to Maywood. For decades, advocates of the path have tried to complete those eight miles along the concretized river.

Yet a decade later, the unrideable gap remains. The ambitious project is mired in planning and bureaucratic complications, with groundbreaking still two years off and the cost nearly tripling to more than $1 billion — almost $24,000 per foot — documents reviewed by The Times show.

It looked like the prospects for the bike route to the sea were getting serious after Angelenos enthusiastically passed a half-cent tax for transit projects in 2016 that earmarked $365 million for the L.A. River Path.

At the time, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the lead on the project, priced out a simple path on one side of the river.

But by last year, the proposed designs were much wider and added seven pedestrian bridges. They also included sections where the path would be elevated, supported by beams. The changes responded to community input and comments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and L.A. Department of Water and Power, among others. Estimated completion of the initial phase is not until 2031.

Navigating the web of nearby structures, like active rail lines and historic bridges, is part of what makes the construction so complex, Metro says. An original $75 million set aside for unfore-

[See **Bike path,** A7]

Social media addiction faces big day in court

At the center of a $1.4-trillion lawsuit against Meta: whether the issue is even real.

By Sonja Sharp

A blockbuster battle in federal court is set to open in Oakland this month, pitting Silicon Valley against attorneys for the state of California in a $1.4-trillion contest with existential stakes and potentially eye-watering payouts.

In true Hollywood fashion, the record-smashing, celebrity-studded legal drama is also a sequel.

At the heart of the fight is an essential, hotly contested question: Is social media addiction even real?

Meta's answer, articulated across years of filings and months of litigation, is a resounding "no."

Earlier this year, Meta lost two groundbreaking civil suits in state courts, with juries in Santa Fe, N.M., and Los Angeles concluding its products were harmful to children in verdicts rendered just hours apart. The company is appealing both cases.

The damages were relatively small: $375 million to New Mexico for enabling child predators and $4.2 million to Kaley Glenn-Mills in Los Angeles for designing features to hook kids, figures well below Sandoz's generic drug price-fixing settlement and L.A.'s most recent dog-bite payout, respectively.

But the verdicts' impact was seismic.

On Thursday, a New Mexico judge ordered Meta to pay $567 million on top of the earlier damage judgment, ruling the company was a "public nuisance." In a July 29 earnings report, Meta said that the 2026 trials could "significantly impact" its bottom line.

Now, attorneys general in California and three other states are hoping to parlay that success into an unprecedented verdict in federal court, one that could prove far more significant — and orders of magnitude more costly — than any civil suit before.

The states allege Meta intentionally designed its products to addict kids and repeatedly lied to the public about it, telling parents and politicians its apps were safe for children while mining underage users for valuable data. The lawsuit seeks a startling $1.4 trillion in dam-

[See **Social media,** A6]

State aims to limit AI mental advice

As more people turn to chatbot 'therapy,' California is trying to restrict such use.

By Ana B. Ibarra

In a matter of a few clicks and keystrokes, anyone can find themselves deep in conversation with "Psychologist," a chatbot character that describes itself as an expert in "empathy" and "active listening."

It responds to messages of anxiety and sadness with reassurance. It asks questions and offers advice; it even responds with italicized nonverbal cues: "The psychologist's expression softens with compassion." In smaller font, a disclaimer reads: "This is A.I. and not a real person. Treat everything it says as fiction."

As more people turn to chatbots for mental health help and advice — including by some estimates 1 in 8 teens and young adults — legislators are in a race to keep up with the quickly developing technology. Among the latest efforts is a California bill that would add restrictions around the use of chatbot companions and other artificial intelligence-powered tools that people use to support mental healthcare or in lieu of professional help.

State Sen. Steve Padilla, a San Diego Democrat and the bill's author, said the intent is to draw a line: AI can be used for administrative purposes and to support clinicians, but it cannot practice psychotherapy.

"We're dealing with a new impactful technology that is unfolding and is deployed in our world at high speed, and

[See **Chatbot,** A8]

Longtime friendship ended with kidnapping and deaths

Saga of two men began in China, turned into mystery in Southland

By Matthew Ormseth, Hailey Wang and Terry Castleman

ARWEN CLEMANS Los Angeles Times

ZHENGFENG BO suspected he had been cheated when he financed this Pasadena apartment complex.

The two men met decades ago in China's far northwestern Xinjiang region.

In Southern California, Shukur Aikebaer and Zhengfeng Bo built quiet suburban lives. Aikebaer raised his three daughters in Chino Hills. Bo settled in Irvine.

Bo, 67, who had amassed a fortune doing public construction projects in China, hired Aikebaer as an assistant, and Aikebaer came up with investment opportunities for Bo, said Tony Lu, Bo's neighbor and friend.

But one of the deals in which Aikebaer, 60, acted as middleman — a plan to build a luxury apartment building in Pasadena — went south, according to Bo's civil attorney, Michael Chen. The building didn't turn a profit, and Bo became suspicious

[See **Bo,** A6]

Nonprofit CEO's pay is scrutinized

Over two years, chief received $1.6 million in salary, vacation and other compensation.

By Audrey McGlinchy

As public spending on homelessness has come under increasing scrutiny, a nonprofit that runs domestic violence shelters in Southern California has paid its CEO, who lives in Hawaii, more than $1.6 million in salary, vacation pay and other compensation for the last two years of tax filings, a sum that is several times larger than the compensation of executives running similar organizations.

In the nonprofit's 2024 tax form, the latest to be made public, Carol Adelkoff, the chief executive of 1736 Family Crisis Center, earned $742,181.

Adelkoff earned even more the year before. According to forms filed with the IRS, in 2023 she pocketed $907,923, a payout that included a $495,000 bonus, a number that exceeded her base pay at the time.

The next highest-paid employee that year, the nonprofit's finance director, made $206,000.

When asked about her pay, Adelkoff said the unusually high compensation was the result of a payout of unused vacation time that had accrued over the 40 years she has worked at the nonprofit. She said the kind of work ethic needed to grow an organization such as hers meant it was challenging to take time off.

"The salary didn't jump like that," said Adelkoff, who was earning a little over $400,000 a year before that number shot up in 2023. She said her base salary over the last several years has remained around $405,000, meaning that the vacation payout totaled roughly $824,000 over two years.

"It was simply a matter of reducing accrued vacation liability on the books and paying it out," Adelkoff said.

A letter sent to The Times from the center's attorney, Kerry Garvis Wright,

[See **Adelkoff,** A7]

Netflix makes commitment to film in L.A.

An executive calls city 'our home,' even as streamer builds major New Jersey complex.

By Cerys Davies and Wendy Lee

When Netflix brought the Will Ferrell golf comedy "The Hawk" to the Woodland Hills Country Club last year, it was the first big production to shoot there in more than two years.

Nearly 300 cast and crew members came through the gates. The production used more than 370 local vendors and shot at 41 locations.

For years, the club could count on that kind of work. Movie shoots and recurring TV shows such as "Curb Your Enthusiasm" and "SWAT" helped keep members' dues down and offset repair costs. But as big productions left Los Angeles, the golf course became a backdrop mostly for commercials, magazine spreads and social media shoots.

"A few clubs locally won't even allow a camera on-site, let alone film crews," said Rick Stegall, the club's general manager. "But our club is very open to it. ... There's just a lot of benefits."

"The Hawk," which premiered last month, was among 46 productions Netflix says it filmed in L.A. last year, and it's on pace to exceed that number this year.

Even as the streaming giant ramps up its filming outside California, Netflix executives say L.A. remains a vital film hub for the company at a time when the city has been reeling from the exodus of film crews. On-location film shoots dropped 13% in the second quarter from a year earlier, according to FilmLA.

"L.A. is our home. ... Our commitment is there to the city and state, and that, for me, is about showing up consistently with productions every year," Chief Content Officer Bela Bajaria said in an interview.

Like other studios, Netflix has benefited from improvements to California's tax incentive program intended to stem so-called runaway production, though Bajaria said the program is not as "comprehensive" as it needs to be.

"Even though we're defi-

[See **Netflix,** A8]

ERIC THAYER Los Angeles Times

WATERFRONT FUN

The new temporary amphitheater near the Queen Mary in Long Beach is a treat — if you're not expecting luxury. **ENTERTAINMENT, E1**

North Korea amasses windfall

Kim Jong Un's government raked in $22 billion in 2022-25, fueled by its arms sales to Russia. **WORLD, A3**

AI may amplify price gouging

Legislature falls behind on issue, Anita Chabria writes. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Voices **A11**

Weather
Warm with sunshine.
L.A. Basin: 89/69. **B5**

7 85944 00200 5