

# West Hollywood Design District Streetscape Master Plan

## Pop-Up Workshops | Summary of Input from Participants

July 23, 2014 | 4pm – 7pm and July 26, 2014 | 9am – 12pm

### Pop-Up Overview

To gather input on the preliminary design schemes for the public gathering places identified in the Design District Streetscape Master Plan, the City hosted three pop-up workshops in late July. On Wednesday afternoon, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, the City held a pop-up event along Robertson North, in front of West Hollywood Park. The City worked with the Design District BID and Chamber of Commerce to widely publicize this event to businesses. The event was held between 4pm and 7pm to be convenient for businesses to stop by, look at the schemes, and discuss their concerns with City staff and the consultant team. On the following Saturday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, the City held two additional pop-up events from 9am to 12pm at Melrose /Norwich and Beverly /Robertson. Participants were invited to stop by, look at the schemes and “vote” for their preferred scheme with a dot. Comments were collected on post-it notes and comment cards. Below is a summary of the input. Detailed comments for each location are listed below in the following pages.

Public Gathering Place	Options	Total Votes (Dots)	Preferred Scheme
<b>Melrose/Norwich</b>	Natural Space	36	Natural Space (preferred by wide margin)
	Urban Plaza	10	
The public preferred the “Natural Space” scheme commenting that it solves a need for greenery in the area as there is “too much concrete.” Several participants mentioned that they preferred this space as a passive respite and not an event space as they City already has “enough event spaces” in close proximity at the West Hollywood Park.			
<b>Beverly/Robertson</b>	Central Fountain	16	Edge Fountains (preferred by narrow margin)
	Edge Fountain	22	
The public supports the idea of creating a gathering space with a water feature at this location. The adjacent businesses (Leica and Skin Laundry) are very supportive of the gathering space. Coffee Bean has some concerns over loss of parking that is immediately adjacent to their business. A few community members conditioned their support for the new public space on the replacement of parking lot spaces to curbside as shown on the plans.			
<b>Robertson North</b>	Curb	26	Curbs (preferred by wide margin)
	Curbless	5	
	Widen Sidewalks (parking on eastside) Maintain sidewalk width and parking	10 (+ 8 supportive comments) 0 (+ 4 supportive comments)	Widen Sidewalks (preferred by majority)
In general, community members and businesses are supportive of temporary street closures for special events or evenings provided that they occur after primary business hours (after 8pm). Both community members and business owners prefer the design scheme with curbs. Most of community members are supportive of widened sidewalks, which would require removal of parking from one side of the street (westside recommended). However, there are a few businesses that are concerned with the loss of any on-street parking.			
<b>Pedestrian Paseos</b>	Community members were unanimously in support for pedestrian paseos as part of future development in the district to improve walkability.		

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### **Melrose/Norwich Public Gathering Space**

#### **Preferred Scheme: Natural Space** (36 of 46 dots prefer scheme, a wide margin)

The public preferred the “Natural Space” design commenting that it solves a need for greenery in the area as there is “too much concrete” along Melrose Ave. Several participants mentioned that they preferred this space as a passive respite and not an event space as they City already has “enough event spaces” and many are close by at the West Hollywood Park.

#### **General Comments on Melrose Site and Area**

- Business representative interested in City providing financial assistance for façade improvements program for businesses adjacent to gathering places.
- Business representative mentioned that pedestrian access to PDC parking from Melrose is a “nightmare.” There is currently no safe connection to the parking garage from the street. One has to walk across an unsafe driveway, or walk to the main entrance of the building and navigate to the parking garage, which is “confusing.” A safe dedicated pathway from the street would help.
- Business representative interested in public valet parking to serve daytime design businesses that have clients who want to get in and out quickly; they are not leisurely shopping and will not park and walk from the PDC.
- Community member supports the proposed change from diagonal parking to parallel along Melrose to help calm traffic. Several community members mentioned that traffic is a problem on Melrose; at rush hour it feels like a parking lot.
- Community member would like streetscape plan to look at pedestrian lighting for crossings to improve safety.

#### **Urban Plaza Comments** (10 dots of 46)

- Likes plaza (2).
- Likes urban plaza but would raise and extend water feature throughout the site (similar to “Natural Space” design) so people can sit next to it.
- Likes the flow of this design like a walking avenue.
- Prefers lush, water-saving plants in green areas.
- Sees this space as a beautification rather than public usable space.
- Would like plaza space to be usable for musicians.
- Thinks that space is not really large enough for events.
- Does not want any events in public space, too close to residential neighborhood.
- Does not want any restaurant seating places in public area (2).

#### **Natural Space Comments** (36 dots of 46)

- Likes greener, more park-like option.
- Beautiful transition space between business and residential.
- There is a need for soft, natural space here. There is too much concrete already.
- Plenty of event spaces – need more natural spaces with landscaping (this option).
- Likes the idea of rotating (temporary) sculpture exhibit in this space.
- Wants to make sure that landscaping does not block visibility of businesses. Wants a nice public space that encourages more foot traffic to businesses.
- Sidewalk feels pinched where dining tables and chairs from restaurant take up space.

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- Important to understand homeless issues and make sure the site does not become unusable.
- Popular design elements included flat rocks for sitting, shallow stream, sculptural seating and sculpture.
- Really like the “natural space” for Norwich/Melrose. Afraid events would increase parking problems on a street that is already “tight.” Water design is GREAT! And boulders to sit, too!



Images of Melrose Pop-Up event with outdoor furniture provided by Design Within Reach and rug by FLOR.

### **Beverly/Robertson Public Gathering Space**

**Preferred Scheme: Edge Fountains** (22 of 38 prefer scheme, a small margin)

The public supports the idea of creating a gathering space with a water feature in the parking lot at Beverly/Robertson. Leica and Skin Laundry are very supportive of the gathering space. Coffee Bean has some concerns over loss of parking immediately adjacent to their business. A few community members conditioned their support for the new public space on the replacement of parking lot spaces to curbside as shown on the plans.

#### **Specific comments applicable to both concepts include:**

- Love idea.
- Provide valet parking.
- Make it as green as can be.
- Make it well lit.
- Make it not too comfortable to discourage extended stays.
- Concerns about illegal performances being set up in the gathering space – how will City handle that?
- Consider time of day in designing space.
- Take better care of street trees; City over-prunes them.
- Close park from midnight to 6am for security.
- Provide seating on the perimeter for the homeless with shade structure similar to bus shelter.
- Glad to see bike lanes on Beverly Blvd (part of Streetscape Master Plan); should be encouraged wherever possible.
- Too much red curb areas on Beverly. Concerned that homeless will congregate.

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### Effects of Gathering Space on Neighbors

- Add sign that says “No through traffic” or “Residential Neighborhood” on Bonner.
- Consider no left turn from eastbound Beverly to Bonner.
- Consider one way north/east on Bonner.
- Consider whether zoning should be modified given the gathering space in front.
- How will mini traffic circle affect neighbors? Provide examples.
- Concern that adjacent resident will not be able to get in or out of her driveway.
- Move gathering space west to edge of Leica and still provide traffic circle.

### Central Fountain Comments (16 dots of 38)

- Likes central fountain.
- Likes greenery at edges with less hardscape.
- Likes central fountain but with softer edges like the other one.
- Do not like terraced planters; would prefer just trees at edges.
- Would like sculpture/art rather than fountain. Concern is that fountain will attract homeless.

### Edge Fountains Comments (22 dots of 38)

- Prefers this design. City and business owners could use this space for events more easily than the other design.
- Maintain view to Leica Gallery.
- Would like trees that grow quickly and shade it. Too hot otherwise.
- Would like fountains to have benches.
- Bike racks are important.



Images of Beverly Pop-Up event.

### Robertson North

#### Preferred Scheme: Widened sidewalks and street with curbs

*(26 of 31 prefer scheme with curbs, wide margin of support)*

*(10 of 10 dots + 8 comments favor widened sidewalks with parking on eastside of street over maintaining sidewalk width and parking on both sides of street.)*

*(0 dots + 4 comments favor maintaining sidewalk width and parking on both sides of street).*

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In general, community members and businesses are supportive of street improvements to Robertson and temporary street closures for special events or evening weekends provided that they occur after primary business hours (after 7pm or 8pm). Both community members and business owners prefer the scheme with curbs. Most of the community and businesses (that attended) are supportive of widened sidewalks, which would require removal of parking from one side of the street (westside recommended). However, there are a few businesses that are very concerned with the loss of any on-street parking.

### General Comments

- Supports plan to improve Robertson, area needs facelift.
- Existing sidewalks (10ft) do not always accommodate wheelchair access; need widening for wheelchair access.
- Consider no on-street parking on either side of street after 6 pm.
- Would like more midblock crossings and larger crosswalk at park.
- Businesses should help pay for beautification of streets since they benefit.
- Love the curbsless design! Overall – excellent design and presentation!
- Glad you are having meetings updating community, would like to be kept abreast of any components connection to work near or adjacent to Cedars.
- The most important part of the project is creating parking for businesses owners, employees and clients. This is our number one concern.
- Consider underground parking beneath Robertson area of West Hollywood Park.

### Street Closure Comments

Most participants supported event or weekend evening street closure. Only one said “Don’t close the street” explaining that the City already has too many events.

Comments in favor of closure include:

- Loves closing street at night.
- Pedestrian only street at nights or events sounds great.
- I really like the idea of making North Robertson pedestrian-only on a regular basis.

Other comments regarding closure include:

- Need left turn lane on San Vicente if you close Robertson North.
- Nighttime closure needs more security and street cleaning/maintenance.
- Concerns with late night crowd, trash, urine. Concern with behavior with street closure.
- Interested in movable seating that can be lifted up and put back down (within street during closures); day/night activity.

### 15' Sidewalks/Parking on East Side (10 dots + 8 comments)

Note that participants at the Melrose/Norwich pop-up did not vote with dots on this option, but did leave comments in support, listed below.

- Widen sidewalks and lose parking.
- Narrow street to widen sidewalks for pedestrian improvements.
- Likes wider sidewalk even with trade-off of parking loss.
- Wider sidewalks – look to the future; encourage off-street underground parking.
- Don’t mind losing street parking if public parking is provided in hotel.

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- Supports widened sidewalks. Too much attention to business concerns.
- We moved here to make this a walkable neighborhood – even if there is parking loss.
- Concerns with loading for Abbey – prefer removal of parking on west side of street.
- Maintain residential permit parking during events/street closure.

### **10' Sidewalks/Parking Both Sides** (0 dots + 4 comments)

*Note that participants at the Melrose/Norwich pop-up did not vote with dots on this option, but did leave comments in support, listed below.*

- Need on-street parking during the day. OK with closure after 8 pm (Anawalt).
- Parking is always an issue. Don't see a lot of foot traffic. Don't need to widen.
- Leave parking.
- Do not narrow Robertson. It is narrow enough. Consider one way.

### **Curbs** (26 dots)

#### **Curbless** (5 dots)

- Spend \$ on details with landscaping and street furniture, not curbless.
- Bollards need to be high enough to be within field of vision.
- Perhaps have low fence at park entrance to street as a safety precaution for children in park and to delineate from sidewalk.

## **Pedestrian Paseos**

### **Widely supported**

The pop-up event presented a board on pedestrian paseos in the Design District. To improve walkability in the Design District, the City asked participants if they supported the idea of a pedestrian network in the area to be created over time through development in collaboration with property owners. Participants were universally supportive of the idea of paseos and discussed their desire for the spaces to be inviting, safe with sufficient lighting, and active with shops and restaurants that front the space to make for an engaging atmosphere.



*Images of Robertson Pop-up event.*