

# West Hollywood Design District Community Meeting

## Summary of September 29, 2014 Meeting

As of 10/13/2014

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### **Participants:**

Design Consultant: Pat Smith, Jeannie Olander

City of West Hollywood: Georgia Sheridan, Stephanie Reich, Laura Minnich, Christina Hon  
Participants

### **Meeting Purpose:**

- Provide an overview of the project scope, evolution, and next steps
- Present a synthesis of community input received at past community meetings, pop-up events and stakeholder meetings for the three proposed public gathering places.
- Discuss the draft final design concepts for three public gathering places and receive input to incorporate in the final document, which will be taken to Public Facilities Commission on November 12th. *(The final document will be an Appendix to the Design District Streetscape Master Plan with drawings and renderings to illustrate the preferred vision for the public gathering places and pedestrian paseo guidelines).*

### **Format of Community Meeting**

- Presentation of project and design concepts
- Q & A with community members. Specific questions included:
  - 1) Instead of a water feature, which was proposed by participants at the first Community Workshop, would participants consider an element that does not use water, such as a dry stream bed that would provide drainage and potentially infiltration of site runoff?
  - 2) Instead of the “soft, permeable” surface material (stabilized decomposed granite), which was proposed by participants at the first Community Workshop, would participants consider alternative materials? Options presented were Addapave (pebbles bound with resin) and permeable pavers (concrete or permeable stone such as porphyry).
  - 3) Does the community prefer permanent art elements or temporary art in the public spaces?

### **Summary of Q&A**

#### **General questions/comments**

- Suggestion to present project and design concepts to Transportation Commission
- Participant questioned how the funding would be allocated, specifically asking if money would come from new development on Robertson.

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### 1. Melrose/Norwich Public Space



In general the community was supportive of the preferred scheme (a natural, park-like setting). The community provided feedback on the following questions from City staff regarding the design –

- **Water conservation:** Some participants felt strongly that there should be some water in the site design, even if there is drought, as there are few places in the City where one can go see and hear water. Others felt the design should not include water and were concerned about the maintenance of a water feature. One participant did not think there should be a water element of any kind and was concerned that a water feature would collect a lot of trash. However, in general, the participants are supportive of a water feature at the site, provided that it does not use an “excessive” amount of water and can be designed to function without water, such as a dry creek bed.
- **Temporary vs permanent art:** Most participants prefer temporary art that could be changed over time to provide variety and interest. One participant said that he would prefer a high quality permanent piece and did not want to see mediocre, temporary art. Another participant noted that there is an opportunity for the art to be the focal point of the space.
- **Paving materials:** Several participants said they prefer a combination of high quality pavers that do not appear synthetic like Addapave. One participant suggested using paving materials that complement the adjacent space on the SW corner of Melrose/Norwich, or conversely, suggested that if the property owner of the SW corner renovated that it would be compatible with the new gathering place.
- **Amenities:** Several participants expressed that they would like to assure that there is plenty of seating in the space and more trees. One participant favored the urban plaza scheme over the natural scheme. He felt that the natural scheme should be simpler and accentuate the linear qualities of the park, rather than breaking up the space into small “rooms” as proposed by the participants in at the first Community Workshop. He prefers a simple space with an allee of trees. Another participant asked the group to consider establishing a specific concept or theme for the park space. The example he offered was changing art exhibits as a way to create an interesting, unique focus. In response, one resident said that a park does not need to have a reason, having a green,

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passive space is enough, and that the trees, plants, and stream are exactly what the participants of the first community workshop wanted to be in the Plan. Some participants mentioned that they would prefer the space without the sculptural kiosk, which was suggested by a community member during the first community workshop.

### 2. Beverly/Bonner Public Space



In general, the participants were supportive of the design with a flexible plaza space that allows for some parking along the east edge. Two residents expressed their appreciation for addressing residents' concerns about the previous design options. They were very pleased with the alternative Plan that eliminates the mini-traffic circle on Bonner and incorporates parking inside the plaza space. The community provided feedback on the following questions from City staff regarding the design –

- **Water conservation:** In general, the participants support a water feature provided that it does not use an excessive amount of water and can function when turned off. They like the idea of a water feature with jets that can be turned on and off. They do not like the idea of a pool of water that could attract homeless to bathe or throw things in the fountain. One participant said that if the fountains could noise from the street and traffic, then it may encourage people to linger in the space too long, something he did not want that to happen. Another participant suggested that it might be possible to tap into ground water to create the water feature since the water table is high. The group thought this suggestion was good, but likely too expensive due to the costs of pumping and filtration. One resident stated that the water element is best suited for the Melrose/Norwich site, rather than the Beverly/Bonner site.
- **Public art:** The participants support temporary art for this space over permanent art.
- **Paving materials:** The participants prefer materials that are high quality and do not appear synthetic like Addapave. They like the concept of use a different, but complementary paving material to designate the parking spaces, rather than using paint.

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- **Parking:** Some participants would like the new parking spaces along Bonner to be metered with short term parking (i.e. one hour or less) so that there is turnover to serve Coffee Bean patrons. They would like parking restrictions in the evening to prevent overnight parking in the neighborhood.
- **Events:** Some participants would like an event policy for the gathering place to monitor the type and number of events to avoid neighborhood impacts. Staff noted that currently, each business is allowed to have up to 12 events per year.
- **Traffic:** One resident said that she was not keen on the left turn lane from Beverly Blvd onto Bonner Dr. Staff explained that if this turn was prohibited, all traffic onto Bonner would have to be diverted to the end of the block, bringing more cars onto the residential street.

### 3. Robertson North

In general, the participants support the final draft design scheme for Robertson North, which includes: widened sidewalks *with curbs* and temporary street closures between Santa Monica Blvd and El Tovar on weekend evenings. The times and frequency of the street closures will be determined in the future following a pilot study.



The community had the following general comments –

- **Street closure:**
  - General support for closing the street for temporary events (most likely in evening after businesses are closed). One community member suggested that the closure could occur every evening. Another community member suggested that the

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community and City should be thinking of a long-term strategy for Robertson in terms of future development, land uses, and circulation.

- A community member asked if the street would be closed to bicycles during the temporary closure. Staff noted that bike would be allowed but there would need to be a rule to dismount and walk the bike through the space for safety.
- **Lighting:** Community supports special lighting along street to help define space and district, like the lanterns used for the Pride Festival along San Vicente.
- **Parking:** Community supports removing 23 metered parking spaces on one side of street to widen sidewalks. The group felt that an overall, district-wide parking strategy was ideal and would resolve parking issues far more effectively than keeping the 23 parking spaces (and not widening sidewalks). One community member asked if it is possible to remove parking from both sides of the street. Pat Smith clarified that removing parking on both sides may make the street too narrow for the Fire Department and other emergency vehicle access.
- **Paving:** The participants support repaving the street segment that is closed (between Santa Monica and El Tovar) with special paving materials to help distinguish the pedestrian space.

### 4. Pedestrian Paseo Network



Paseo Elements - Entry

#### Paseo (Pedestrian Alley) Characteristics

- Human scale: minimum 20'; average 25-30'
- Welcoming: entry wider, e.g., 40' x 40' or 1,600 sf
- Inviting and well lit:
  - daytime natural light - 80% open to the sky
  - night time - low level ped. lights/overhead/building walls
  - no dark corners or "dead ends"
- Vibrant experience: lined with dining, retail, other active uses
- Feels safe and active: transparent facades with entries
- Feels like an extension of the public sidewalk space
  - Paving/lighting same as sidewalk at entry; consistent with development project inside
  - mostly open to the sky like sidewalk
  - view from one street to the next

Paseos

The participants were supportive of a pedestrian paseo network in the district and the proposed guidelines to assure that the future paseos are inviting, attractive, and integrated into the larger Design District Streetscape Master Plan.