

SUBJECT: WEST HOLLYWOOD DESIGN DISTRICT STREETScape  
MASTER PLAN PUBLIC GATHERING PLACES

INITIATED BY: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
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STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

The City Council will consider approval of the design concepts for public gathering places and a pedestrian paseo network as Appendix C the West Hollywood Design District Streetscape Master Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt Resolution 14-\_\_\_\_ A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD TO ADOPT THE REVISED WEST HOLLYWOOD STREETScape MASTER PLAN AND APPENDICES AND TO DESIGNATE THE PLAN AS THE GOVERNING DOCUMENT FOR ALL STREETScape AND PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY IN THE DESIGN DISTRICT. (Attachment A)

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The West Hollywood Design District Streetscape Master Plan ("Plan") was unanimously approved by City Council on August 5, 2014. The goal of this Plan is to beautify the Design District with streetscaping enhancements (e.g. new street trees, lighting, street furniture), expand the amount of public space with wider sidewalks and new public gathering places, and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety. Together these improvements are intended to help unify the district, encourage pedestrian activity, and enhance the look and feel of the public realm to match the quality of design-oriented businesses in the area.

When approving the Plan, City Council directed staff to gather additional input from the community and local businesses on the design of large public gathering places identified in the Plan and explore design concepts for Robertson Blvd, north of Melrose, including the potential for a curbsless street, temporary street closures to create a pedestrian festival street, and the tradeoffs of removing some on-street parking to widen sidewalks.

Between May and October 2014, the City worked with the Pat Smith, the design consultant for the Master Plan, the Design District BID, the Avenues Working Group, residents, businesses, the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, and the community at large to develop community-supported design concepts for two new public gathering places, as well as a set of design guidelines for a potential network of pedestrian paseos in the Design District to expand public space and improve walkability.

Staff is requesting approval of the design concepts for the public gathering places and pedestrian paseo network. These design concepts would be added to the Master Plan as Appendix C to provide direction on the build-out of the public spaces at Melrose/Norwich and Beverly/Robertson and guidance on the design of future pedestrian paseos to be implemented through private development.

During the community outreach process, one of the key things staff heard from businesses and residents was the need for a district-wide parking strategy as there are several major public and private projects planned within the Design District that will impact the supply of parking. Staff is exploring parking strategies for the district and will return to City Council in 2015 to present the design concepts for Robertson, north of Melrose, along with parking strategies for the area to assure that these two elements are coordinated.



*Direction from City Council on Streetscape Master Plan*

When adopting the Plan, the City Council requested that prior to implementation staff should do the following:

- Work with to the community to gather input on the design of two large public gathering places to be sensitive to neighboring residents,
- Meet with the business community to discuss parking concerns, and
- Further explore the design of Robertson, north of Melrose, including a study of curbsless streets, temporary street closures to create a

periodic pedestrian festival street, and parking removal to widen sidewalks.

*Design Concepts for Public Gathering Places*

To support the development of a set of community-based design concepts for the public gathering places and Robertson, the City hired Pat Smith, ASLA (the lead consultant for the Design District Streetscape Master Plan) supported by traffic consultants Fehr & Peers and engineering firm, KPFF. Over the last six months, staff worked with the consultant team and community to develop the design concepts for the public gathering

places at Melrose/Norwich and Beverly/Robertson and the design of Robertson, north of Melrose.

As part of this effort, one additional task was included. Based on goals from the General Plan and interest from the community, the team worked with the community on developing a vision for a network of pedestrian paseos in the West Hollywood Design District that could be implemented over time with new development. The pedestrian paseos are intended to help break up long north/south blocks to create a more walkable street grid and enhance access to businesses, new public spaces and the West Hollywood Park.

### *Project Timeline and Outreach Process*

To assure that residents and businesses alike were engaged in the design visioning process, staff and the consultant team put together a comprehensive outreach plan that included three rounds of input through community workshops, pop-up events, neighborhood meetings, one-on-one meetings with businesses, and regular coordination meetings with city staff from the Planning, Public Works, Public Facilities, and Parking Divisions to vet design and policy questions.

Based on the input received during the outreach process, the design concepts evolved. During the first round of meetings, the team asked participants about their vision for the public spaces and took the public on a walking tour of the sites. At the second round of workshops, held in the future public spaces as pop-up events, the team presented two concepts for each site and a “look book” of photographs to illustrate ideas for landscaping, public art, seating, water features, and programming. Stakeholders identified which scheme they preferred and commented on design elements and programming to support the overall look and feel of the space. At the third round of workshops, the team presented revised site plans and renderings for each site and asked for input on more specific design details as there was support for and consensus on the final drawings presented. Attachment B summarizes the outreach process and Attachment C lists stakeholder meetings.

### *Melrose/Norwich Public Gathering Place*



The Melrose/Norwich public gathering place is located along the south side of Melrose across from the Pacific Design Center. By realigning the roadway (per the Design District Streetscape Master Plan), a linear area of excess public right of way is captured (approximately 7,200 square feet) to create a public space. For this site, the community prefers a park-like setting with ample landscaping, outdoor seating, temporary public art, and a dry-stream bed that runs through the site. Community members noted that they would like the space to be public and would not support outdoor dining for future restaurants to be allowed in the public space.



The linear park-like space addresses a perceived need for greenery in the area as there is “too much concrete.” Participants also mentioned that they preferred this space to be a quiet, “passive” space for reading, relaxation, etc rather than an “active” space to host festivals, performances, or organized events. The community participants initially envisioned a

“stream” that ran through the space, but with further discussion, prefer a “dry streambed” design that conserves water and is attractive with or without water, given the recent drought.

### *Beverly/Robertson Public Gathering Place*



The Beverly/Robertson public gathering place is located at the existing City-owned surface public parking lot on the north side of Beverly between Bonner Drive and Robertson Blvd. The space is approximately 5,000 square feet and fronts commercial

businesses (Coffee Bean, Skin Laundry, and Leica) and a private parking lot, accessed through the public parking lot.

The preferred design scheme by the community creates an urban plaza with shade trees, temporary public art, outdoor tables and chairs, landscaping, and series of fountains along the Beverly Blvd edge.



To address resident concerns regarding parking and safety, the space is functionally divided into two areas:

1. on the west side, a plaza with landscaping, fountains, and seating, and
2. on the east side, a drive aisle with metered parking, which can be closed to expand the public space for special events.

The entire space would be paved with a high quality permeable paver to ensure that both areas are visually integrated. The proposed concept includes six parking spaces on site and 10 new metered parking spaces on Bonner Dr. and Beverly Blvd., which create a surplus of seven parking spaces in the area, compared to the nine spaces on site today. To address concerns about water conservation, the site plan calls for a water feature that uses minimal water such as a fountain with jets, which can be turned off during droughts.

### *Pedestrian Paseos*

Currently, Robertson Blvd. is over 1,000 feet in length between Santa Monica Blvd. and Melrose Ave., which is almost triple the recommended length of a walkable city block (typically around 300 feet). The community is very supportive of a pedestrian paseo network to improve access between businesses and public spaces in the district.

Based on the input received at the community workshops, the design team developed a set of design guidelines for future pedestrian paseos in the district, to be implemented over time through redevelopment. The guidelines outline preferred design characteristics to assure that new pedestrian paseos are attractive and inviting at the entry, safe and well lit, easy to navigate with wayfinding signage, and incorporate interesting and active frontages along the length of the walkway to draw people to and through the space. Below is a rendering visualizing recommended design elements for future pedestrian paseos in the Design District.



### *Public Facilities Commission Feedback*

Staff presented the design concepts for the public gathering places and paseo network to the Public Facilities Commission on August 13, 2014 and on November 12, 2014 for review and input. Overall, the Commissioners were supportive of the design concepts for the public gathering places at Melrose/Norwich and Beverly/Robertson, and the pedestrian paseos. The Commissioner comments included –

- Support for the pedestrian paseo concept throughout the City.
- Support for water feature elements in the public spaces provided that they are designed “like art” to be aesthetically pleasing when in use, or when turned off (for water conservation).
- Request for staff to return to the Public Facilities Commission with the recommended design concepts for Robertson North before they go to City Council for consideration.

### *Next Steps*

Staff is currently pursuing grant funding to help implement the build-out of the public gathering places and streetscape improvements in the Design District Streetscape Master Plan. The design concepts for Melrose/Norwich and Beverly/Robertson will serve as a tool for grant applications. In addition to grant funding, Staff is looking for opportunities to advance the project through public benefits as part of new development and allocation of funds from the City’s Capital Improvement Program. The build-out of pedestrian paseos would occur through private redevelopment over time. Staff will modify the City’s Design Guidelines to include reference to the pedestrian paseo guidelines to assure they are incorporated into the review of future development projects.

### *Robertson (North of Melrose)*

The concept plans for Robertson, north of Melrose, will be brought separately to the City Council at a later date. Per City Council direction, staff gathered input from businesses and the community on curb versus curbside street design, a temporary street closure to create a pedestrian-only street for special events, and parking removal. Based on discussions with community stakeholders, staff is working on a district-wide parking strategy to assure that the City has a coordinated approach for parking in the area that

addresses future development and the West Hollywood Park Expansion prior to recommending changes to Robertson, north of Melrose. Valuable information and input was gathered from the community during the outreach process. This input will be integrated into the final design concepts for Robertson, north of Melrose, and presented to City Council with a cost estimate of proposed changes and a parking strategy.

CONFORMANCE WITH VISION 2020 AND THE GOALS OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD GENERAL PLAN 2035:

This item is consistent with the Commercial Sub-Area vision for the Melrose/Beverly District outlined within the City of West Hollywood's General Plan 2035: *Goal LU-11: Expand the Melrose/Beverly District as a national and international destination for high-end arts and design studios, offices, and related businesses.* Additionally, this item is consistent with policy M-3.2 of General Plan 2035: *Seek to prioritize space for pedestrians and bicycles in the design and improvement of public rights of way.* This item is consistent with Vision 2020, specifically the ongoing strategic program: Promote Economic Development While Maintaining Business Vitality & Diversity. It is also consistent with the Vision 2020 core value: Quality of Residential Life.

EVALUATION:

The construction plans and specifications for implementation of the design concepts for the public gathering places will be designed by an Urban Design/Landscape Architect and Civil Engineering consultant team in coordination with the City's Public Works Division to assure that the build-out meets City, as well as state and federal standards.

CEQA:

A Negative Declaration for the West Hollywood Design District Streetscape Master Plan was adopted by City Council on August 5, 2013. The Negative Declaration prepared for this project considered changes to the roadway as part of the recommended streetscape improvements, as well as the creation of new public spaces formed by converting public right of way, which are discussed in Section 3.5 of the Streetscape Master Plan. The Negative Declaration is still accurate and subsequent environmental review is not necessary for including Appendix C as part of the Plan because no substantial changes have been made.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH:

Goals relating to environmental sustainability and community health are incorporated throughout the Plan. Features such as improved pedestrian spaces and additional landscaping/green space encompass environmental sustainability and health.

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

Community Development Department  
Department of Public Works

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact at this time. The direct and indirect construction costs for the build-out of the Melrose/Norwich and Beverly/Robertson public gathering places are

estimated to be around \$1,000,000 for each site (two million dollars total). This estimate includes design, construction costs, construction management, and contingency fees should the project be completed within the next five years.

An implementation timeline for the West Hollywood Design District Streetscape Master Plan is still under development. Implementation of the Master Plan will depend on various factors including the availability of funding. Recently, staff applied for Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority grant funding for a portion of the overall project costs. Staff will continue to seek grant funding for various portions of the project, and explore other funding sources as the project progresses.

#### ATTACHMENTS

- A. Resolution 14-\_\_\_\_\_
- B. Summary of Public Outreach Process
- C. Summary of Stakeholder Meetings