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**EAGLE ROCK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
OFFICIAL PUBLIC-SCOPING COMMENT LETTER:**

**COLORADO BOULEVARD URBAN-DESIGN VISION STATEMENT, CRITICAL
SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS, AND NECESSARY ENHANCEMENTS TO ENSURE THE
VIABILITY OF COMMUNITY-SERVING SMALL-BUSINESSES.**

August 7, 2019

Mr. Scott Hartwell, Metro
One Gateway Plaza
Mail Stop 99-22-6
Los Angeles, CA 90012
VIA email: nohopasbri@metro.net

Dear Mr. Hartwell:

We declare that on August 6, 2019, a Brown Act noticed public meeting was held by the Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council (ERNC) at which a quorum was present. This consolidated comment letter passed unanimously with 1 abstention. As per the published meeting agenda, this comment letter does not bind the ERNC to a position on the current route-alignment of the BRT at this point in time. The purpose of this comment letter is as an urban-design vision-statement for Colorado Boulevard that defines baseline safety, and neighborhood-specific criteria applicable for Metro's Preliminary Engineering and DEIR for the currently proposed project:

Functionally and psychologically, Colorado Boulevard is the spine of our community and as such should be one of Los Angeles' Great Streets. Due to its history as a former-trolley line and later a former-state highway, its urban-design and functionality as a multi-model boulevard are currently not commensurate with its importance to Eagle Rock. We believe that any and all proposed transportation projects on Colorado Boulevard must further the following four interlocked goals in order to keep Colorado as the vibrant heart of our community:

- 1. Safety First/ Fully Implement Vision Zero**
- 2. Make Colorado a Street for All**
- 3. Make Colorado Boulevard Unique**
- 4. Preserve Small-Businesses**

These four goals have been aggregated from the many public comments, emails, and in-person conversations the ERNC and its members have heard over the years across multiple projects and initiatives. For years, the ERNC and other allied organizations including the The Eagle Rock Association (TERA), the local Chamber of Commerce, and Council District 14 have all worked together to secure funding to measurably improve the quality, safety, and business-viability of Colorado Boulevard. These initiatives have included the current Specific Plan which mandates specific development standards to enhance the pedestrian realm, the Take Back the Boulevard initiative (TBTB) that secured over \$12M in funding for pedestrian improvements and traffic calming, the more recent Rock the Boulevard (RTB) project which sought to extend the TBTB improvements to Eagle Rock Boulevard through a Caltrans ATP grant, as well as the ERNC's recent push to eliminate all haul-route staging for Scholl Canyon from our Boulevards. Because of this active, ongoing history of local participation, we believe that it is imperative that any Metro project complement and build on these existing initiatives and public-processes.

Towards that end, more complete and specific descriptions of each goal are provided below:

1. ***Safety First / Implement Vision Zero--Because Colorado was a state-highway before the 134 was built, traffic speeds and safety have long been a critical concern for the community, thus and all changes to the existing roadway must make our Boulevard safer for all.***

Primarily, traffic safety has been dealt with as an enforcement problem for LAPD to solve (such as when illegal drag-racing was a persistent problem). "Take Back The Boulevard" (TBTB) and the initial implementation of the bike-lanes where some of the first initiatives to focus on "right-sizing" the existing roadway design to the current, legal 35 mph speed limit.

All projects must continue along this path and must make steps towards fully implementing LA's Vision Zero in order to eliminate drivers killing pedestrians, bicyclists, and passengers. Additionally, all proposed physical upgrades must be designed to the actual street classification of Colorado Boulevard ("Boulevard II" per the Mobility Plan) to ensure that LAPD can continue to enforce the existing speed-limit without a dangerous, self-defeating escalation in speeds and speed-limits as mandated by state-law: <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-speed-limit-increases-20181211-story.html>.

In order to ensure that these fundamental safety improvements are not at cross-purposes with the underlying project objective for the BRT to be "Rapid Transit", Metro needs to additionally commit that this project will utilize all feasible technologies to provide quick service without necessarily creating substantial speed differentials between the busses and other vehicles. These measures should include at a minimum:

- A. Full and complete traffic signal prioritization for BRT buses (as well as emergency vehicles)
 - B. Off-vehicle fare-collection and all-door boarding to expedite stops
 - C. Raised loading platforms and expanded interior areas to expedite both wheel-chair and bicycle loading and access.
 - D. Real-time bus arrival information to allow riders to plan accordingly.
2. ***Make Colorado a Street for All-- Colorado is not just a functional connection through our neighborhood, it is where we all go to eat, shop, and meet our neighbors.***

While core parts of the Boulevard near the Eagle Rock Boulevard intersection are currently very successful, the entire length of Colorado from Pasadena to Glendale should be equally pedestrian-friendly and have spaces that benefit the surrounding community. This priority is already embedded in the City of Los Angeles' Mobility Plan 2035 which designates it as a "Comprehensive Transit Enhanced Street"--any and all projects must contribute towards these existing, adopted goals and to extending that same level of pedestrian-friendliness to the entire length of the Boulevard.

To this end, any and all projects should prioritize safe, effective multi-modal transit with gracious accessibility from the adjacent neighborhoods along the entire length of the street from Pasadena line to the Glendale city-limits. The currently proposed Metro project and station-location appear currently to provide access primarily to the portions of the community west of Townsend; the upcoming EIR and preliminary engineering processes must investigate options for adding a stop closer to Figueroa on the CalTrans grade-separated ramps to provide access to the eastern portion of Eagle Rock. This would be beneficial for both the residents of the area as well as for the concentrated employment base in that area while also reducing traffic speeds on the Caltrans fly-overs. As noted above, the existing character and safety of the Boulevard as a whole is detrimentally impacted by its history as a state-highway; any and all transportation projects must work to right-size the existing roadway design and correct the remnants of the Boulevard's history as an exclusively automotive street.

3. Make Colorado a Street for All-- Colorado is not just a functional connection through our neighborhood, it is where we all go to eat, shop, and meet our neighbors.

Colorado Boulevard should be on par with other Great Streets of the LA area such as Larchmont in Hancock Park, Honolulu in Montrose, Santa Monica in West Hollywood, or San Vicente in Brentwood. Enhancing site-specificity and neighborhood-differentiation through exemplary urban-design must be a prerequisite for Metro's BRT project or any other transportation project.

The existing tree-lined medians east of Eagle Rock Boulevard are already a step in the right direction; as a baseline, any consequential project (such as the proposed BRT) should commit to extending them along the entire length of our Boulevard to reinforce this area as a specific, unique community within Los Angeles and to further enhance Colorado's Mobility Plan designation as a Scenic Highway. These medians should also be used as opportunities for making the boulevard more sustainable in conformance with both the Mayor's *Executive Directive #5* and the previous work of Eagle Rock's Median Advisory Committee through intensive planting of drought-tolerant-trees, storm-water infiltration where practical, all-native landscape planting, public-art, among other measures.

The community and the Council District have already taken the lead in securing funding for pedestrian safety, traffic-calming, and multi-modal transportation improvements through TBTB and RTB (which as of now is still being reviewed for funding). The scope and funding of these already-expected improvements must be segregated from Metro's overall project cost--these funds and these improvements shall not be used to substitute for funding or improvements that the BRT project already must expend. This existing funding added to the overall project development cost should provide significant opportunity for ensuring that whatever project is executed on Colorado Boulevard can achieve an exemplary level of urban-design.

4. Preserve Colorado Small-Businesses--It is the small, unique businesses and restaurants that give Colorado its character.

All projects (the Metro BRT as well as TBTB) must ensure that both short-term construction disruptions as well as all long-term project impacts do not unduly impair these businesses. Old Town Pasadena, Eagle Rock Plaza, and Glendale already sufficiently cater to chain-stores and national brands; our Boulevard should always remain individual, local, and singular.

One of the main concerns that has been raised repeatedly by businesses is the loss of parking. Any design should commit to no net loss in existing public parking as a baseline and that any relocated parking be as proximate as possible to the existing locations so as to minimize the impacts on existing businesses. There are plentiful opportunities along Colorado to create additional on-street parking through removal of unused curb-cuts, removal of extraneous and illegal red-zones, right-sizing the existing LA parking-stall sizes, etc. as well as off-street opportunities to create additional off-street parking by adding parking meters to the existing, City-owned parking lots at the Library and City Hall (for example). Additionally, all transportation projects need to create opportunities for dedicated valet/ride-share-drop-off locations that never obstruct bus or bike lanes; forward-looking streetscape improvements such as these are a win-win opportunity for businesses and all transportation users--pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, passengers, and transit-riders.

Additionally, any project and public authority should have mechanisms and funded programs in place to minimize impacts on existing small businesses such as a dedicated Business Interruption Fund to mitigate impacts construction impacts. Such a fund would give Metro and its contractors a monetary incentive to execute the work as expeditiously as possible. Additionally, Metro needs to spearhead efforts to prevent displacement or 'pricing-out' of small businesses by national chains post-project. While this may be beyond Metro's specific purview, as the agency in charge of the project it is imperative that they take the lead in lobbying and coordinating with the City and Council District to ensure that appropriate legislation or Interim Control Ordinances are in place for the project area to minimize wholesale displacement of the character-defining small-businesses along Colorado.

Please place this letter in the official comments, and acknowledge its receipt via email to: **executive@ernc.la**. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Jesse Saucedo
President, ERNC

cc: [Office of Councilmember Jose Huizar](#)
[Office of Supervisor Hilda Solis](#)
[Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti](#)
[Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Los Angeles County District 3](#)
[Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Los Angeles County District 5](#)
[Ara Najarian, Metro Board, North County/San Fernando Valley Sector](#)
[John Fasana, Metro Board, San Gabriel Valley Sector](#)
[Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker, Metro Board, City of Los Angeles](#)
[Mike Bonin, Metro Board, City of Los Angeles](#)
[Paul Krekorian, Metro Board, City of Los Angeles](#)
[Scott Hartwell, Project Manager, Metro NoHoPas BRT project](#)