



Los Angeles Bicycle Advisory Committee

Motion passed unanimously on October 6, 2020:

TO: Police Chief Michel Moore

CC: Councilmember Paul Koretz
Councilmember David Ryu
Captain Paulson, Wilshire Division
Scott Epstein, Chair, Mid City West Community Council
Philip Farha, Chair, Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee
Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles
Seleta Reynolds, General Manager, LADOT
Adel Hagekhalil, General Manager, StreetsLA
Greg Good, President, Board of Public Works

Dear Police Chief Moore,

Recently, Councilmember Paul Koretz's office contacted your department asking for your opinion on a project known as "[Uplift Melrose](#)" - a StreetsLA initiative that would have rehabilitated a 1.6 mile stretch of Melrose Ave between Fairfax Ave and Highland Ave with new trees, widened sidewalks, raised crosswalks, and a curb level bike lane. This stretch of Melrose is on LA's "[High Injury Network](#)" and there have been multiple serious injuries and deaths over the last two years due to traffic violence. In addition, the City's "[2035 Mobility Plan](#)" calls for a protected bike lane on Melrose. StreetsLA - in proposing the project - was trying to both implement the mobility plan and make the street safer for pedestrians and cyclists. Lastly, the project was in line with Mayor Garcetti's [executive directive 25](#), which instructed LADOT to submit a plan for a "comprehensive Citywide network of active transportation corridors." As the Bicycle Advisory Committee of Los Angeles, we are obviously interested in projects that implement our City's mobility plan and help increase safety for cyclists.

Responding to a council office inquiry about the project, Captain Paulson of the Wilshire Division sent the following email to Greg Martayan of Councilmember Koretz's office:



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From: Shannon Paulson <30253@lapd.online>

Date: August 25, 2020 at 3:34:56 PM PDT

To: Greg Martayan <gregory.martayan@lacity.org>

Subject: RE: Uplift Melrose August 26th Virtual Community Meeting

Hi Greg,

From an initial review, the intended changes appear to obviously result in a reduction of vehicular lanes of traffic – the imaging appears to show a singular lane of traffic each way. This would **undeniably have an impact on traffic flow on Melrose and creating traffic congestion and delays there**, and ultimately have an impact on parallel pathways and adjacent neighborhoods as people find alternative routes or get frustrated with the delays. There's no way to avoid the fact this would also result in more north/south traffic in those nice residential streets north and south of Melrose as drivers try to bypass the backlog on Melrose – that impacts safety and quality of life – **I would forecast more calls for unsafe speed in those neighborhoods and a higher likelihood of vehicle vs pedestrian accidents, stop sign violations, more people feeling not as safe walking their dogs and pushing their strollers on those streets.**

It would be up to the community at large to do the cost benefit analysis of what they gain as far as enjoyability on Melrose versus what they risk or give up (especially in the surrounding streets).

All of this would **undeniably have a direct impact on the ability of PD to respond** along this (previously) primary accessway to emergency locations on this stretch of Melrose, as well as (again) emergencies in adjacent residential neighborhoods.

I would also suggest a comprehensive study of the bike lanes. I have seen a lot of money and energy and planning go into some of these bike lanes in the City– which are fantastic for those who use them. But I think in many LA communities the use of these bike lanes have been exceptionally minimal (to almost zero) – this after surrendering very valuable vehicle traffic lanes to create them. I have also been part of conversations regarding their safety, as they design the lanes to be “two way” which results in some dangerous



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scenarios. I think immediately of the “two way” bike lane currently on Main Street downtown – where you have City Hall employees pulling out of that CH garage near Temple and they look right only as the traditional vehicle traffic on Main St is northbound, yet that bike lane along the curb is two -way. So you have a southbound bicycle coming along at 25 mph crossing them that the driver never see.

Shannon K. Paulson, Captain
Commanding Officer
Wilshire Area

LAPD is a valuable part of the Los Angeles ecosystem and everyone wants to be able to receive services quickly when needed. However, LAPD is *not* the Department of Transportation and Captain Paulson is not an urban planner. For the Captain to say that the project would “create traffic congestion and delays” and lead to “people not feeling as safe walking their dogs” on side streets is giving her opinion as fact to the council office when this is not her area of expertise. Her statement that Melrose was a “previously primary accessway to emergency locations” is also untrue, as it implies that Melrose today is a wide open street without vehicle traffic, which is not the case. Lastly, and perhaps most egregiously, her questioning of the overall investment of bike lanes in the City of Los Angeles, since in her opinion usage is “almost zero” and we use “very valuable vehicle traffic lanes to create them,” is giving her personal anti-bike bias as official LAPD policy to the council office, and also *has nothing to do with the project she was asked about*.

We all love our city and share our streets. We all have a right to get to where we are going safely, regardless of our chosen mode of transportation. There are many cities around the world - Paris, London, New York City - that have far narrower roadways than we have, and yet somehow their emergency services function uninhibited. We ask that the LAPD:

1- Be willing to adapt to progressive road redesign projects, even if it means a reduction in vehicle capacity. There is no law stating that the majority of our road space in Los Angeles has to be for vehicles; we’ve just chosen to make it that way. *Let a council office*



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know you'll be able to adapt to any road design, just like departments around the world.

2- Train your senior leadership on the 2035 Mobility Plan and the High Injury Network - our streets are often deadly for pedestrians and people cycling. *LAPD should be a partner in fixing the problem.*

3 - Get educated on the myth that redistributing road space from vehicles to other uses automatically means the degradation of emergency services. *This simply isn't true, as has been proven around the world.*

If we stand a chance of fighting climate change, we need to give people alternatives to cars, which produce the majority of California's greenhouse gas emissions. We ask that the LAPD be a partner in our city's transportation evolution, and not hinder progress on the basis of personal bias or misinformation.

We look forward to hearing from you and finding ways to ensure this doesn't happen again on another project. We would be delighted to invite Captain Paulson and/or the LAPD to a future LABAC meeting to reach a better understanding of the benefits of road redesigns and address public safety concerns that LAPD may have. For the previous ten years, we have had a standing item on our agenda each meeting for the LAPD, and would be delighted to have you.

Sincerely,

Glenn Bailey
Chair
Los Angeles Bicycle Advisory Committee

Jennifer Gill
Vice Chair
Los Angeles Bicycle Advisory Committee

Kent Strumpell
Chair, Planning Subcommittee
Los Angeles Bicycle Advisory Committee